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This Week in the Senate

January 13-16, 2020



The Senate Convenes in 2020

Monday, January 13, 2020, marked the first day of the second session of the 155th Georgia General Assembly. With a new session always comes new changes, and this year was no different. Senator Lee Anderson (R – Grovetown) was appointed to serve as the Chairman of the Senate State and Local Governmental Operations Committee, and Senator Chuck Payne (R – Dalton) was appointed to serve as an Ex-Officio member to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

However, the biggest change we experienced this week was the absence of one of our dearest friends and colleagues, Senator Greg Kirk, who passed last month, far too soon, at the youthful age of 56. No words here can truly convey the warmth and conviviality of his friendship, nor can they express the pangs we feel in his absence. He was God's most faithful servant on Earth, and I will miss him dearly. My love and prayers will continue to stay with his wife, Rosalyn, and the Kirk family, always...

During this first week, the Senate wasted no time getting legislation passed. House Bill 276, carried by Senator Chuck Hufstetler (R – Rome), was taken off the table on Monday and passed in the form of a conference committee report on Thursday. House Bill 276 will benefit Georgia by establishing a more efficient process to collect the sales tax owed to the state by certain e-commerce businesses, which help our state fund vital programs and services.

On Thursday, Governor Brian Kemp gave his second annual State of the State Address, in which he outlined a few of his priorities for the rest of the legislative session. Among them: cracking down on gangs and human trafficking; reforming our adoption code; and fulfilling his pledge to provide teachers with a \$2,000 pay raise. Governor Kemp has my complete support on all these initiatives, and I look forward to working with him and his team to turn them into law.

Next week, Senate and House Appropriations Committees will spend time listening to the heads of Georgia's state agencies to determine funding needs for the upcoming fiscal year. This process will be a challenging one this year, but we were elected to serve as good stewards of your taxpayer dollars and we are up to the challenge.

There are still 36 legislative days remaining until our business under the Gold Dome concludes. If you ever have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to my office. It is an honor and a privilege to serve as the President Pro Tempore and I look forward to continuing to update you on our progress as the session continues.

Senator Butch Miller
President Pro Tempore, Georgia Senate

MONDAY, JANUARY 13

Paying Tribute to Sen. Greg Kirk

Sen. Greg Kirk (R - Americus) was honored with a moment of silence during morning roll call. In addition to a ceremony conducted by the Sergeant-at-Arms, multiple senators paid tribute to the Senator during points of personal privilege.

Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms Addresses the Senate

The Senate welcomed Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms as a special guest to speak about the partnership between the City of Atlanta and the state of Georgia. Mayor Bottoms noted that there is a special bond between the city and the state and spoke further on all of the great things accomplished over the last year. Mayor Bottoms also expressed her excitement for the continued positive relationship between both entities.

Senate Sets First Fourteen Legislative Days

Sen. Mike Dugan (R - Carrollton) presented House Resolution 879 which outlines the legislative calendar for the first fourteen days of the legislative session. The schedule is as follows: January 13th (Legislative Day 1), January 14th (Legislative Day 2), January 15th (Legislative Day 3), January 16th (Legislative Day 4), January 27th (Legislative Day 5), January 28th (Legislative Day 6), January 29th (Legislative Day 7), January 30th (Legislative Day 8), January 31st (Legislative Day 9), February 3rd (Legislative Day 10), February 4th (Legislative Day 11), February 5th (Legislative Day 12), February 6th (Legislative Day 13) and February 10th (Legislative Day 14). - **HR 879**



TUESDAY, JANUARY 14

Senate Celebrates Clayton State Day at the Capitol

Sen. Gail Davenport (D - Jonesboro) sponsored Senate Resolution 539, which officially recognizes January 14, 2020, as Clayton State University Day at the state Capitol. Clayton State University is celebrating their 50th anniversary this year and university administrators recognized the support of the Georgia Senate in helping with their continued academic success. - **SR 539**

Dalton Day at the Georgia Capitol

Sen. Chuck Payne (R - Dalton) recognized the annual “Dalton Day” at the Capitol by presenting each member of the Senate with a commemorative doormat. This year’s doormat features the Atlanta Braves logo and was produced in Dalton, Georgia, which is well known across the country for its carpet and rug production.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15

Senate Committees Begin to Meet

Committee meetings were held this week for the first time this session. In the meetings, committee members were introduced, rules were adopted and some committees began hearing bills.

During the 2020 Legislative Session, the Senate Committee meeting schedule can be found [here](http://calendar.legis.ga.gov/Calendar/?Chamber=Senate): <http://calendar.legis.ga.gov/Calendar/?Chamber=Senate>

During the 2020 Legislative Session, the Senate Committee broadcast schedule can be found [here](http://www.senate.ga.gov/spo/en-US/videobroadcasts.aspx): <http://www.senate.ga.gov/spo/en-US/videobroadcasts.aspx>

Archives for Senate Committee meetings can be found on each committee's page [here](http://www.senate.ga.gov/committees/en-US/SenateCommitteesList.aspx): <http://www.senate.ga.gov/committees/en-US/SenateCommitteesList.aspx>

THURSDAY, JANUARY 18

Governor Kemp Delivers the State of the State Address

Governor Brian P. Kemp delivered his second annual State of the State address in which he highlighted his priorities for the 2020 Legislative Session. At the start of the address, Gov. Kemp highlighted some of Georgia's many successes over the year, including its title as the number one state to do business, its record low unemployment, and the expansion of over 65,000 private-sector jobs. For the upcoming legislative year, Gov. Kemp discussed priorities concerning education, including funding a \$2,000 raise for educators, as well as allocating money for public safety improvements, specifically in the areas of reducing gangs and cracking down on human trafficking. Another initiative unveiled by Gov. Kemp was the creation of a professorship at the University of Georgia dedicated to researching Parkinson's Disease. This was done in honor and recognition of U.S. Senator Johnny Isakson, who was in attendance. Gov. Kemp concluded his address by stating his excitement to begin another session and continuing to put Georgians first.

Senate Votes to Approve Conference Committee Report

The Senate agreed to the Conference Committee Report on House Bill 276, which expands the definition of a dealer to include marketplace facilitators. The bill will require marketplace facilitators to collect and remit retail sales tax if they facilitate sales of at least \$100,000 in value to Georgia customers. The Conference Committee Report on HB 276 passed with a vote of 40-9. - *HB 276*



Budget hearings will be held on [TUESDAY, JANUARY 21](#) AND [WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22](#) in Room 341 of the Georgia State Capitol.

The Georgia Senate will reconvene at 10:00 a.m. on [MONDAY, JANUARY 27](#).