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# This Week in the Senate

## January 14-17, 2019



### The Senate Convenes in 2019

The Georgia Senate convened on Monday, January 14, 2019, for the beginning of the first session of the 155th General Assembly with a new Senate President, Lt. Governor Geoff Duncan, and five new members — Senators Greg Dolezal (R – Cumming), Sally Harrell (D – Greater Atlanta Area), Zahra Karinshak (D – Duluth), Sheikh Rahman (D – Lawrenceville) and Randy Robertson (R – Cataula).

I want to congratulate the leadership for both the Majority and Minority Caucuses. Sen. Mike Dugan (R – Carrollton) will serve as Majority Leader, Sen. Steve Gooch (R – Dahlonega) will serve as Majority

Whip, Sen. John F. Kennedy (R – Macon) will serve as Majority Caucus Chair, Sen. Larry Walker (R – Perry) will serve as Majority Caucus Vice-Chair and Sen. John Wilkinson (R – Toccoa) will serve as Majority Caucus Secretary. Sen. Steve Henson (D – Stone Mountain) will serve as Minority Leader, Sen. Harold Jones II (D – Augusta) will serve as Minority Whip, Sen. Gloria Butler (D – Stone Mountain) will serve as Minority Caucus Chair, Sen. Emanuel Jones (D – Decatur) will serve as Minority Caucus Vice-Chair and Sen. Nan Orrock (D – Atlanta) will serve as Minority Caucus Secretary.

The Committee on Assignments completed standing committee assignments and announced several chairman changes – Chairman Sen. Frank Ginn (R – Danielsville) will serve as Chairman of the Economic Development and Tourism Committee, Sen. P.K. Martin (R – Lawrenceville) will serve as Chairman of the Education and Youth Committee, Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick (R – Marietta) will serve as Chairman of the Ethics Committee, Sen. Ben Watson (R – Savannah) will serve as Chairman of the Health and Human Services Committee, Sen. Lindsey Tippins (R – Marietta) will serve as Chairman of the Higher Education Committee, Sen. Bill Cowsert (R – Athens) will serve as Chairman of the Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee, Sen. Renee Unterman (R – Buford) will serve as Chairman of the Science and Technology Committee, Sen. Jen Jordan (D – Atlanta) will serve as Chairman of the Special Judiciary Committee, and Sen. Bruce Thompson (R – White) will serve as Chairman of the Veterans, Military and Homeland Security Committee.

Along with changes in the Senate, the first legislative day represented the start of a new chapter for leadership in Georgia. Governor Brian P. Kemp was sworn into office. He later delivered his first “State of the State” on January 17, 2019. We look forward to working with Governor Kemp to pass legislation that will support the initiatives he outlined in his address – raises for teachers, funding for school safety, support for law enforcement, job growth, broadband expansion and access to quality health care for all Georgians. We also look forward to working with the Governor on our legislative priorities, which we will unveil soon.

As we head into budget hearings next week, as well as the remainder of the 2019 session, please do not hesitate to reach out to my office if there is anything we can do for you. It is my honor to serve once again as your President Pro Tempore and I look forward to assisting each of you this upcoming year. My office door is always open.

**Senator Butch Miller**  
President Pro Tempore, Georgia Senate

## MONDAY, JANUARY 14

### Senate Votes to Adopt Senate Rules for the 2019-2020 General Assembly

Senate Resolution 4, sponsored by Sen. Butch Miller (R – Gainesville), codifies the Senate rules for the 2019-2020 Georgia General Assembly. Changes were made to the rules in order to establish traditional practices and alter certain Senate committee rules and procedures. SR 4 passed with a vote of 33 to 21. – **SR 4**

### Sen. Butch Miller Elected President Pro Tempore of the Senate

Sen. Butch Miller (R – Gainesville) was unanimously elected to serve as the Senate President Pro Tempore for the 155th Georgia General Assembly. This will be Sen. Miller's first full term as the President Pro Tempore, after serving as Pro Tempore for the second session of the 154th Georgia General Assembly.

### Former Senator and Current Georgia Supreme Court Justice Charles Bethel Swears in Senators

Recently appointed Georgia Supreme Court Justice Charles Bethel administered the oath of office to all 56 senators elected to the 155th Georgia General Assembly. President Pro Tempore Sen. Butch Miller (R – Gainesville) introduced the former state Senator as a "friend to every person in this chamber."



## TUESDAY, JANUARY 15

### Senate Welcomes Esteemed Dermatologist, Dr. Rutledge Forney

Senate Resolution 9, sponsored by Sen. Nikema Williams (D – Atlanta), welcomed Dr. Rutledge Forney, who served as Doctor of the Day, to the Senate. Dr. Forney has been selected by her fellow doctors as one of Atlanta's Top Doctors. Her practice, Dermatology Affiliates, is located in Midtown Atlanta. – **SR 9**

### Senate Celebrates Clayton State Day at the Capitol

Sen. Gail Davenport (D – Jonesboro) sponsored Senate Resolution 10 recognizing January 15, 2019, as Clayton State University Day at the state Capitol. Clayton State Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Kevin Demmitt thanked the senators for their continued support of academics in Georgia. – **SR 10**



### Senate Approves Adjournment Resolution

Senate Resolution 14 was sponsored by Sen. Mike Dugan (R – Carrollton), outlining legislative days through February 8, 2019. The schedule is as follows: January 15th, legislative day 2; January 16th, legislative day 3; January 17th, legislative day 4; January 28th, legislative day 5; January 29th, legislative day 6; January 30th, legislative day 7; February 5th, legislative day 8; February 6th, legislative day 9; February 7th, legislative day 10; February 8th, legislative day 11. – **SR 14**

## WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16

### Senate Congratulates Franklin County Softball Team on their State Championship

Senate Resolution 8, sponsored by Sen. John Wilkinson (R – Toccoa), recognizes the Franklin County softball team for winning the state Fastpitch Softball Championship. The Franklin County softball team has a proud tradition of excellence with a record of 30 wins and 9 losses. – *SR 8*



## THURSDAY, JANUARY 17

### Governor Kemp Gives the State of the State Address

Governor Brian P. Kemp delivered his first annual State of the State address in which he highlighted his priorities and budgets for the 2019-2020 fiscal year. He discussed economic development, specifically the Georgia First Commission, and his goal to become the number one state for small businesses. Gov. Kemp also emphasized investment in education and Georgia's youth, announcing a \$3,000 pay raise for public school teachers and a \$69 million allocation for school safety. He lamented the losses in agriculture due to Hurricane Michael and thanked former Governor Nathan Deal, Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue and Georgia Agriculture Commissioner Gary Black for their aid in the wake of this natural disaster. Additionally, the governor highlighted corrections reform, honored the six officers that lost their lives last year in the line of duty and announced his allocation of \$500,000 towards a gang task force to improve public safety and fight drug trafficking. Gov. Kemp's budget would allocate \$1 million to create a Medicaid waiver plan.



Budget hearings will be held on **TUESDAY, JANUARY 22 AND WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23**  
in Room 341 of the Georgia State Capitol.

The Georgia Senate will reconvene at 10:00 a.m. on  
**MONDAY, JANUARY 28.**