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# This Week in the Senate

## March 18-22, 2019



### Five Days to Go

We have less than two weeks left to go until the end of the 2019 session. This week, the Senate debated and voted on 25 House Bills and Resolutions. Our members have also been very busy in committee meetings, vetting bills to meet next Thursday's deadline to pass bills out of committee. I want to commend our chairmen and committee members for all of their hard work in properly deliberating the legislation sent to our chamber from the House.

On Thursday we got one step closer to passing the Fiscal Year 2020 General budget – House Bill 31. Our Senate

Appropriations Committee has worked tirelessly to review the House version of HB 31 and to consider proposals presented by the governor and state agencies during our Appropriations Subcommittee meetings. On Thursday, the committee approved HB 31, making one change to the House version that I would like to highlight. The Senate raised the proposed teacher salary increase back to \$3,000, as originally proposed by Governor Brian P. Kemp. I am proud of our members for making this critical change which aims to keep our best and brightest in the state. Our children's education is a top priority, and I believe that we should reward and encourage the people who are in charge of it – our educators. I look forward to working with our colleagues in the House to come to an agreement on both chambers' proposals for HB 31.

Along with debating legislation and focusing on the budget, the Senate honored over 15 distinguished guests in the Senate Chamber. On Monday, I was proud to welcome the Consul General of Canada, Nadia Theodore, to the Senate. Ms. Theodore praised the relationship between Canada and the state of Georgia and emphasized that Canada is one of Georgia's biggest trading partners. I am honored to call her a great friend of mine and of the United States.

Lastly, I want to encourage everyone to keep up the hard work during the final stretch of this session. I want to thank the members for addressing and passing critical legislation that will positively impact the lives of all Georgians. I also want to thank the staff for doing everything behind the scenes to make us all look good. And I want to thank our aides for assisting with committee meetings and constituent services. It truly takes a village, and I thank each and every one of you for doing all you can to make the Senate run efficiently and effectively.

Please do not hesitate to reach out if our office can be of assistance with anything – our door is always open!

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

## MONDAY, MARCH 18

### **Providing Tax Exemptions for Poultry Diagnostics**

Sen. John Wilkinson (R – Toccoa) carried House Bill 35 which would establish a sales and use tax exemption for certain poultry diagnostics and disease monitoring nonprofit service labs. HB 35 passed with a vote of 48 to 4. – **HB 35**

### **Extending the Sunset Provision for Health Nonprofit Tax Exemptions**

House Bill 168, carried by Sen. Ellis Black (R – Valdosta), would extend the sunset provision for sales and use tax exemptions for nonprofit health centers and volunteer clinics from June 30, 2019, to June 30, 2024. HB 168 passed with a vote of 45 to 7. – **HB 168**

### **Updating Banking Regulations**

Sen. John F. Kennedy (R – Macon) carried House Bill 185 which would update regulations regarding banks, credit unions, money service businesses, money transmitters, sellers of payment instruments, check cashers and mortgage lenders as recommended by the Georgia Department of Banking and Finance. HB 185 passed with a vote of 52 to 0. – **HB 185**

### **Altering State Appraisal Provisions**

House Bill 192, carried by Sen. Steve Gooch (R – Dahlonega), would update Georgia’s provisions regarding the services Appraisal Management Companies (AMCs) provide to be in compliance with federal regulations. Under HB 192, the proposed oversight authority of the Georgia Real Estate Appraisers Board over AMCs is outlined along with the process for AMCs to register with the board. HB 192 passed with a vote of 52 to 0. – **HB 192**



### **Providing Mortgage Licensing Exemptions**

Sen. John F. Kennedy (R – Macon) carried House Bill 212 which would alter the definition of a “mortgage broker” as to exclude a retailer or retail broker of a manufactured or mobile home, or a residential industrialized building. HB 212 passed with a vote of 53 to 0. – **HB 212**

### **Environmental Protection Division Notification Exceptions**

House Bill 223, carried by Sen. Tyler Harper (R – Ocilla) and presented by Sen. Frank Ginn (R – Danielsville), would clarify that the application of pesticides, when conducted in the labelled manner, and air emission from animal waste at a farm do not require a notification to the Environmental Protection Division. HB 223 passed with a vote of 51 to 0. – **HB 223**



### **Revising Policies for Division of Insurance Providers**

Sen. P.K. Martin (R – Lawrenceville) carried House Bill 368 which outlines procedures for the division of domestic insurers into two or more insurers and allows the Insurance Commissioner to review and approve proposed divisions. HB 368 passed with a vote of 46 to 5. – **HB 368**

### **Authorizing Medication Aides to Administer Liquid Morphine to Hospice Patients**

House Bill 374, carried by Sen. Dean Burke (R – Bainbridge), would authorize trained medication aides to administer liquid morphine to hospice residents in certain circumstances. HB 374 would also limit the amount of morphine kept in a hospice facility. HB 374 passed with a vote of 48 to 1. – **HB 374**

### **Updating the Internal Revenue Code**

Sen. Chuck Hufstetler (R – Rome) carried House Bill 419 which would update Georgia Code to conform with federal Internal Revenue Service regulations, including revising provisions related to partnership tax returns and an election to pay. HB 419 passed with a vote of 49 to 0. – **HB 419**

### **Providing Guidelines for Mariculture Development**

House Bill 501, carried by Sen. William Ligon (R – White Oak), would authorize the Department of Natural Resources to implement guidelines and regulations on the oyster and shellfish industries in Georgia. HB 501 passed with a vote of 35 to 19. – **HB 501**

### **Senate Recognizes Trevor Lawrence**

Sen. Bruce Thompson (R – White) sponsored Senate Resolution 125 which commended Clemson University starting quarterback Trevor Lawrence, a native of Cartersville, for leading the Clemson Tigers to their 2018 NCAA Football National Championship win. – **SR 125**

### **Honoring Former GBI Director Vernon Keenan**

Senate Resolution 211, sponsored by Sen. Bruce Thompson (R – White), welcomed Vernon Keenan to the Capitol and commended him for his 45 years of service in the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI). Beginning his career as a special agent in 1973, Mr. Keenan was appointed Director of the GBI in 2003 and was re-appointed in 2011. – **SR 211**

### **Senate Welcomes Philanthropist Charles Johnson**

Sen. Burt Jones (R – Jackson) sponsored and presented Senate Resolution 297 with Sen. Freddie Powell Sims (D – Dawson). The resolution commended Charles Johnson for his work with the Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of Georgia. After the unexpected passing of his wife Kira during the birth of their second son, Mr. Johnson dedicated his life to raising awareness surrounding the issue of maternal mortality. – **SR 297**

### **Honoring Radio Personality Ken Hicks**

Senate Resolution 373, sponsored by Sen. Jeff Mullis (R – Chickamauga), recognized Tri State Gospel Hall of Fame inductee and radio host Ken Hicks for his contributions to Georgia's culture and arts. Mr. Hicks has been nominated for induction into the Country Radio Hall of Fame this year. – **SR 373**

### **Recognizing Georgia Tech President “Bud” Peterson**

Sen. P.K. Martin (R – Lawrenceville) sponsored Senate Resolution 375 which commended Dr. G.P. “Bud” Peterson upon his retirement as president of the Georgia Institute of Technology. In Dr. Peterson's 10 years as president, enrollment at Georgia Tech has increased by 69 percent. – **SR 375**



## TUESDAY, MARCH 19 & WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20

### Committee Work Days

Senate Standing Committees met to vet and debate House Bills that made it to the Senate after the Crossover Day deadline on March 7th.

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## THURSDAY, MARCH 21

### Updating Georgia Code Regarding Motor Vehicles

House Bill 225, carried by Sen. Tyler Harper (R – Ocilla), would make clerical updates to Georgia Code regarding safe operations of motor vehicles carrying hazardous waste and provide clarification regarding regulations. HB 225 passed with a vote of 49 to 0. – **HB 225**

### Extending the Sunset Provision on Joshua's Law

Sen. Brian Strickland (R – McDonough) carried House Bill 226 which would extend the 1.5 percent surcharge on traffic citations from June 30, 2019, to June 30, 2022. This provision is a part of Joshua's Law that raises the cost of traffic citations to fund the Georgia Driver's Education Commission. HB 226 passed with a vote of 46 to 4. – **HB 226**



### Changing Deposition Payment Methods

House Bill 246, carried by Sen. John F. Kennedy (R – Macon), would require the state to pay the cost of depositions in the same manner that it does for other, nonjury criminal proceedings. HB 246 passed with a vote of 50 to 0. – **HB 246**

### Allowing State Revenue Officers to Use State Vehicles

Sen. Randy Robertson (R – Cataula) carried House Bill 279 which would allow certified law enforcement officers or special agents appointed by the Commissioner of the Department of Revenue to use a department motor vehicle while off duty. Provisions would be subject to the commissioner's discretion regarding usage and reimbursement. HB 279 passed with a vote of 43 to 5. – **HB 279**

### Revising Language Regarding Retirement Communities

House Bill 300, carried by Sen. Bill Cowsert (R – Athens), redesignates "continuing care retirement communities" as "life plan communities," and provides a revised definition in Georgia Code. HB 300 passed with a vote of 52 to 0. – **HB 300**

### Revising the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council's Authority

Sen. Tyler Harper (R – Ocilla) carried House Bill 325 which would lower the time that the Peace Officer Standards and Training (P.O.S.T.) Council is required to keep records on P.O.S.T. certified officer investigations from 50 to 30 years. HB 325 would allow the Council to destroy records after 30 years, or sooner if the officer is deceased and the case required no investigation other than intake of the complaint. HB 325 passed with a vote of 49 to 4. – **HB 325**

### Providing a Lien for Nonprofit Fire Departments

House Bill 387, carried by Sen. Jeff Mullis (R – Chickamauga), would allow private, nonprofit volunteer fire departments to file a lien on a property if services rendered go unpaid. HB 387 passed with a vote of 51-1. – **HB 387**

### **Revising Consent Notices**

Sen. Randy Robertson (R – Cataula) carried House Bill 471 which would revise the implied consent script for chemical testing notices for hunting or operating a watercraft under the influence of alcohol or drugs. The revision would state that only the refusal of a blood or urine sample may be used against the defendant in a court of law. HB 471 passed with a vote of 50 to 2. – **HB 471**

### **Creating the Georgia Behavioral Health Reform and Innovation Commission**

House Bill 514, carried by Sen. Greg Kirk (R – Americus), would create the Georgia Behavioral Health Reform and Innovation Commission. This commission would conduct a comprehensive review of Georgia's behavioral health system, including substance abuse recovery incentives, and recommend any necessary changes to current law. HB 514 passed with a vote of 54 to 0. – **HB 514**

### **Genocide Prevention and Awareness Month at the Capitol**

Sen. Elena Parent (D – Atlanta) sponsored Senate Resolution 107 which recognized April 2019 as Genocide Prevention and Awareness Month at the Capitol. Members of the American Jewish Committee Atlanta Regional Office were honored for their public awareness campaign, ACCESS, which works to educate Georgians on contemporary instances of genocide. – **SR 107**

### **Celebrating the Retirement of Yvette Johnson Hagins**

Senate Resolution 144, sponsored by Sen. Donzella James (D – Atlanta), commended Yvette Johnson Hagins upon her retirement from the Meridian Education Resource Group. Ms. Hagins was recognized for her commitment to improving health care services in Georgia. – **SR 144**



### **Remembering Paul Burke Johnson**

Sen. Emanuel Jones (D – Decatur) sponsored Senate Resolution 273 which honored the life and memory of Paul Burke Johnson, a pioneer in the radio industry during the Civil Rights Era. Mr. Johnson began his career at America's first African-American owned and operated radio station, WERD, and eventually earned his own show, "The Burke Johnson Show." – **SR 273**

### **Accomplishments of Cameo's Larry Scott Blackmon Recognized**

Senate Resolution 278, sponsored by Sen. Lester Jackson (D – Savannah), commended lifelong public servant Larry Scott Blackmon for his musical, cultural and professional accomplishments. Mr. Blackmon was commended as a "pioneer and a proud Georgia citizen." – **SR 278**

### **Recognizing Stockbridge Day**

Sen. Brian Strickland (R – McDonough) sponsored and presented Senate Resolution 370 with Sen. Emanuel Jones (D – Decatur) which declared Thursday, March 21, as Stockbridge Day at the Capitol. The Senate celebrated the City of Stockbridge for its economic development, public services and small town culture. – **SR 370**

## FRIDAY, MARCH 22

### Clarifying Health Insurance Notification Requirements

House Bill 128, carried by Sen. John F. Kennedy (R – Macon), would exempt parties involved in a medical malpractice claim from the requirement to notify the Georgia Composite Medical Board if the settlement resulted in the low payment in a “high/low” agreement, regardless of the verdict. HB 128 passed with a vote of 43 to 3. – **HB 128**

### Requiring Financial Education for Public Retirement System Trustees

Sen. Chuck Hufstetler (R – Rome) carried House Bill 196 which would require public retirement system trustees to complete education related to their fiduciary duties under the system. HB 196 passed with a vote of 47 to 1. – **HB 196**

### Establishing the Georgia Data Analytic Center

House Bill 197, carried by Sen. Renee Unterman (R – Buford), would direct the Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget to establish a functioning Georgia Data Analytic Center before September 1, 2019. HB 197 specifies that the Center would securely maintain and transmit state health care data in accordance with HIPAA privacy standards. HB 197 passed with a vote of 50 to 0. – **HB 197**

### Clarifying Level 1 Freeport Exemptions

Sen. Chuck Hufstetler (R – Rome) carried House Bill 405 which would clarify that affiliates of a party eligible for level 1 Freeport exemptions are included in the exemption, and that the remanufacture of products would be eligible for the substantial modification part of the exemption. Additionally, HB 405 defines a qualifying “affiliate.” HB 405 passed with a vote of 47 to 0. – **HB 405**



### Living Infants Fairness and Equality (LIFE) Act

House Bill 481, carried by Sen. Renee Unterman (R – Buford), states that abortions could not be performed after a heartbeat is detected, with certain exceptions – rape, incest, when a pregnancy is medically futile, or in cases of a medical emergency of a pregnant woman. Under HB 481, the ‘unborn children’ with heartbeat would be included in the state population and would be considered a person for the purposes of taxation, civil damages and disclosures. HB 481 passed with a vote of 34 to 18. – **HB 481**

### Determining The Fair Market Value of Real Property

Sen. John Albers (R – Roswell) carried House Bill 507 which would allow data concerning income-producing property to be ‘considered,’ instead of ‘utilized,’ when determining fair market value for the income approach for-



### **Honoring Rapper T.I.’s Community Service Efforts**

Senate Resolution 69, sponsored by Sen. Donzella James (D – Atlanta), commends Clifford Joseph “T.I.” Harris, Jr. for his musical talent and philanthropic contributions to Atlanta. Currently, T.I. mentors youth at the Paulding County Detention Center and is working to revitalize the Center Hill neighborhood with his program “Buy Back the Block.” – **SR 69**



### **Celebrating the Retirement of Bill Edge**

Sen. Gloria Butler (D – Stone Mountain) sponsored Senate Resolution 327 which honored William M. “Bill” Edge, Jr. upon his retirement. Bill Edge led a long and distinguished career in news radio and was commended for his dedication to the welfare of all Georgians. – **SR 327**

### **Children’s Day Celebrated at the Capitol**

Senate Resolution 354, sponsored by Sen. Valencia Seay (D – Riverdale), commended the nonprofit organization Voices for Georgia’s Children and recognized Friday, March 22, as Children’s Day at the Capitol. Voices for Georgia’s Children works to encourage lawmakers to consider the impact of public policy on all aspects of a child’s life. – **SR 354**

### **Recognizing the Marion County High School Girls Basketball Team**

Sen. Ed Harbison (D – Columbus) sponsored Senate Resolution 356 which commended the Marion County High School girls basketball team for their 2019 GHSA A State Championship win. Marion County won the championship game with a final score of 50 to 38. – **SR 356**

### **Celebrating the Sharon Elementary Robo Knights**

Senate Resolution 378, sponsored by Sen. Sheikh Rahman (D – Lawrenceville), congratulated the Sharon Elementary Robo Knights on their First Lego League Championship win. The First Lego League Robotics Competition encourages real-world solutions through discovery, innovation, impact, inclusion and teamwork. – **SR 378**



**The Georgia Senate will reconvene at 10:00 a.m. on  
MONDAY, MARCH 25.**