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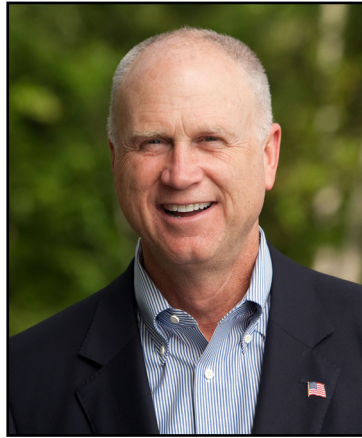
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This Week in the Senate

April 2, 2019



We Have Adjourned – *Sine Die*

They say that the journey is always more important than the destination. Nothing truer can be said about the General Assembly's sometimes-rigorous, sometimes-contentious journey to Day 40, which culminated this week when, on April 2, we in the Senate adjourned *Sine Die*. It is, of course, important to note that, along this journey, we in the Senate were ably assisted:

Many thanks, for instance, go out to Senate Budget and Evaluation, which worked both ends of the candle as they assisted Chairman Jack Hill (R – Reidsville) with preparing a working budget.

Thanks are also owed to the thirty-plus Administrative Assistants and to our Senate Staffing Office, without whom the business of legislature – constituent services; managing meeting notices; keeping minutes; and etc. – couldn't have taken place.

Gratitude is also owed to our Senate Research Office, without whom none of our proposed legislation would have found traction in the process. Government – even state government is a complex system these days. It takes diligent research to amend and reform the many machinations of the state. Hence, SRO's assistance is, and has been, invaluable.

Also invaluable is the Office of Senate Press. Weekly, they are responsible for churning out this very publication in addition to their other day-to-day responsibilities. There are, in fact, 56 members of the Senate, all of whom need their columns, weekly newsletters and press releases to always get disseminated immediately. Senate Press has been ably up to this challenge. I can't thank them enough.

Lastly, I must of course thank my colleagues, as well as the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the House and our newly elected Governor, without whom no measure this session would have reached final passage. There were momentous bills, like HB 481. There were constitutionally mandated bills, like HB 31. And there were, of course, scores of bills that never made the limelight, but which were vetted and researched and scrutinized throughout the committee process. Around these bills, my colleagues and I came together, found compromise where we could and did our best to answer the charge that the voters gave us: to make Georgia a better place than we found it.

While *Sine Die* is always a celebration, keep in mind that our work as legislators is not done. We in the Senate, as we progress through the interim, will remain responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars; and we will continue to diligently study the many issues that remain before the General Assembly. We will continue to forge ahead with initiatives that bring Georgians just a little more freedom in their everyday lives; we will continue to develop legislation that leaves a little more money in the pockets of our working men and women; and we will continue to make Georgia a safe and secure place in which to live and work and raise families.

As always, please reach out to my office with any questions or concerns. And, again, thank you all.

Senator Butch Miller
President Pro Tempore, Georgia Senate

TUESDAY, APRIL 2 – *Sine Die*

Limiting Student Scholarship Organizations

House Bill 68, carried by Sen. Greg Dolezal (R – Cumming), would prohibit organizations that give, or are owned, operated or affiliated with organizations that give accreditation to schools from being able to register as a student scholarship organization. HB 68 passed with a vote of 52 to 0. – **HB 68**

Conservator Access to Digital Assets

Sen. Jesse Stone (R – Waynesboro) carried House Bill 70 which would allow a conservator to access the digital assets of a minor on a case by case basis. The bill would also allow a conservator to pay any bond premium from the estate, upon the request of the guardian. HB 70 would also establish how fees would be allocated during the process of the appointment of a conservator and would make other changes to bring state law in line with the Uniform Enforcement of Foreign Judgements Act. HB 70 passed with a vote of 51 to 0. – **HB 70**

Sale of Alcohol Near Certain Colleges and Retail Package Stores Tasting Events

House Bill 76, carried by Sen. Bill Cowsert (R – Athens), would create an exemption to the current ban of the sale of distilled spirits within 200 yards and wine and malt beverages within 100 yards of a college campus. This exemption would apply to college campuses if they are owned and operated by a private international college specializing in art and design and located within a historic district. Additionally, HB 76 would permit alcohol tasting events to occur in retail liquor stores with limitations including: 52 tastings per year, one event a day, one and a half ounces per pour and a four hour limit. Stores would be required to notify localities when tasting events occur. HB 76 passed with a vote of 47 to 9. – **HB 76**



Sales and Use Tax Exemptions for Organ Donation Centers and Shooting or Fitness Memberships

Sen. Chuck Hufstetler (R – Rome) carried House Bill 85 which would provide a sales and use tax exemption for nonprofit organ donation centers and on the membership and initiation fees incurred by joining a shooting or physical fitness club. HB 85 passed with a vote of 47 to 5. – **HB 85**

Updating Georgia's Insurance Code

House Bill 99, carried by Sen. Burt Jones (R – Jackson), would make updates to Georgia's Insurance Code. Specifically, the bill clarifies definitions related to insurance, removes outdated deadlines and provides provisions for captive insurance companies. HB 99 passed with a vote of 52 to 0. – **HB 99**

Georgia's State-wide Business Court

Sen. Jesse Stone (R – Waynesboro) carried House Bill 239 which would add provisions for Georgia's state-wide business court including the location of the court, the appointment of the judge, the court's jurisdiction and the compensation of the judge. HB 239 passed with a vote of 51 to 0. – **HB 239**

Maintaining Physical Evidence

House Bill 282, carried by Sen. Renee Unterman (R – Buford), would increase the amount of time required by law enforcement to maintain physical evidence related to a sexual assault case from 10 years after the initial assault of the victim to 30 years from the date of the arrest of the perpetrator. If no arrests are made, physical evidence must be kept for 50 years. HB 282 passed with a vote of 55 to 0. – **HB 282**

Updates to TAVT

House Bill 365, carried by Sen. Chuck Hufstetler (R – Rome), would make several updates to Title Ad Valorem Tax (TAVT) on vehicles by lowering the TAVT rate from 7 percent to 6.6 percent from July 1, 2020, and June 30, 2023. Additionally, it would make updates to the ‘fair market value’ definition used to determine TAVT for new and used vehicles. This bill also clarifies that TAVT would not be imposed on the transfer of title between legal entities that are owned by the same person. Lastly, this bill eliminates the sales and use tax on rideshare, taxi and limo services and imposes a 50 cents per ‘for-hire ground transportation’ and 25 cents per ‘for-hire shared ride’ excise tax. HB 365 passed with a vote of 42 to 7. – **HB 365**

Revising Georgia’s Child Support Code

Sen. Jesse Stone (R – Waynesboro) carried House Bill 381 which would make numerous grammatical and organizational corrections to Georgia’s Code section on child support. HB 381 passed with a vote of 55 to 0. – **HB 381**

Joint Authorities Providing Certain Information

Sen. Bill Cowsert (R – Athens) carried House Bill 406 which would require joint authorities, including joint authorities that have revenue sharing agreements with local governments, to provide certain information pertaining to real and personal property, current agreements and contracts, and information related to taxation to the Department of Revenue Commissioner and the State Auditor. HB 406 passed with a vote of 52 to 0. – **HB 406**

Amending the Shore Protection Act

House Bill 445, carried by Sen. Ben Watson (R – Savannah), would amend the Shore Protection Act by creating a new definition for “dynamic dune field” and specifying where construction may be permitted on one. The bill would create exemptions for minor construction projects, subject to approval by the Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources. HB 445 passed with a vote of 35 to 21. – **HB 445**

Electric Bicycles

Steve Gooch (R – Dahlonega) carried House Bill 454 which would establish use and safety rules for three different classes of electric assisted bicycles. The classes are determined by the equipment used to provide assistance to the bike rider and the max speed the devices reach. HB 454 passed with a vote of 52 to 1. – **HB 454**

DNA Collection for Felony Offenders

House Bill 470, carried by Sen. William Ligon (R – White Oak), would require that DNA samples be taken from individuals currently incarcerated or on probation for a felony charge, including those sentenced as a first offender. HB 470 also clarifies that the Georgia Bureau of Investigation would purge the DNA samples of individuals who had their felony charges dismissed or upon acquittal. HB 470 passed with a vote of 48 to 0. – **HB 470**



Payments to and Bank Accounts of Deceased People

Sen. Burt Jones (R – Jackson) carried House Bill 490 which would require an affidavit to be present for a bank to allow families of a dead person with no will and testament to obtain funds of up to \$15,000. Additionally, it raises the amount a bank can pay to a family member, from \$10,000 to \$15,000, if the deceased dies with a check made in their name. HB 490 passed with a vote of 43 to 7. – **HB 490**

Time Limit to Apply for Execution of a Writ of Possession

House Bill 492, carried by Sen. Jesse Stone (R – Waynesboro), would require applicants for execution of a writ of possession to apply within 30 days of issuance of the writ. House Bill 492 passed with a vote of 50 to 1. – **HB 492**

Grounds for Continuance

House Bill 502, carried by Sen. John F. Kennedy (R – Macon), would update Georgia Code regarding continuance requests. This update would apply to members of the Georgia General Assembly, legislative staff, Legislative Counsel and other state agencies who wish to file for a continuance or stay when they are the lead counsel or part of the counsel in a pending civil or criminal proceeding. The continuance or stay would be applicable seven days prior to session, including special sessions, convening, length of any session, three weeks following Sine Die, during scheduled meetings including national conferences, board meetings and caucus, committee and study committee meetings. HB 502 passed with a vote of 52 to 0. – **HB 502**

Classifying “Equitable Caregivers”

House Bill 543, carried by Sen. Randy Robertson (R – Cataula), would allow certain courts to classify an individual as an “equitable caregiver.” HB 543 outlines the qualifications of “equitable caregivers” which would include individuals who have “fully and completely undertaken a permanent, unequivocal, committed responsible parental role in a child’s life.” HB 543 would also provide the proper forms potential “equitable caregivers” would file to the court. HB 543 passed with a vote of 54 to 1. – **HB 543**

Removing Certain References from Georgia Code

Sen. Matt Brass (R – Newnan) carried House Bill 553 which would remove references to certain Boards and Councils throughout Georgia Code. HB 553 would also prohibit an employee of an establishment that sells alcohol from soliciting to consume alcohol from the establishment. HB 553 passed with a vote of 49 to 0. – **HB 553**

Georgia-North Carolina-Tennessee Boundary Line Commission

Sen. Greg Dolezal (R – Cumming) carried House Resolution 51 which would create the Georgia-North Carolina-Tennessee Boundary Line Commission, responsible for establishing the correct boundary lines between those states. The Commission would be composed of a total of six members appointed by both the Lt. Governor and Speaker of the House and would be required to file a report on its findings by December 2020. HR 51 passed with a vote 47 to 2. – **HR 51**



SPECIAL ORDERS

Senate Agreements

The Senate agreed to the House Substitute as amended on the following:

SB 2 (54-2)

SB 9 (51-0)

SB 68 (53-0)

Senate Agreements

The Senate agreed to the House Amendment to the Senate Substitute on the following:

HB 79 (49-1) **HB 424** (53-0)

HB 213 (51-4) **HB 478** (49-0)

HB 224 (49-3) **HB 512** (51-0)

HB 239 (53-2) **HB 514** (52-0)

HB 373 (52-0) **HB 516** (29-25)

Senate Agreements

The Senate agreed to the House Substitute on the following:

SB 7 (53-1) **SB 138** (51-1)

SB 15 (42-11) **SB 142** (53-0)

SB 31 (53-2) **SB 171** (47-0)

SB 83 (53-0) **SB 190** (52-0)

SB 103 (53-2) **SB 227** (48-7)

SB 120 (54-0) **SR 67** (53-1)

Senate Agreements

The Senate agreed to the House Amendment to the Senate Amendment on the following:

HB 551 (50-1)

Conference Committee Reports

The Senate agreed to the Conference Committee Report on the following:

SB 72 (48-5) – Senators from the 7th, 31st, 53rd

SB 214 (42-8) – Senators from the 1st, 9th, 47th

HB 324 (34-20) – Senators from the 17th, 28th, 46th

Senate Insists

The Senate insisted on its position on the following legislation and conference committee nominees were appointed but no action was taken on the report:

SB 200 – Senators from the 51st, 7th, 25th

Senate Receded from Amendment

The Senate receded from the Senate Amendment to the Senate Substitute on the following:

HB 322 (48-2)

Senate Disagreement

The Senate disagreed to the House Substitute on the following:

SB 195

Senate Disagreement

The Senate disagreed to the House Amendment to the Senate Substitute on the following:

HB 99



The Georgia Senate has **ADJOURNED SINE DIE!**