



## Georgia Senate Press Office Staff

**Andrew Allison**  
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**Kessarin Horvath**  
*Senior Communications Associate*

**Bianca Theodore**  
*2020 Broadcast Aide*

**Caleb Rudin**  
*2020 Communications Intern*

**Caleb Torres**  
*2020 Communications Intern*

**David Howell**  
*2020 Broadcast Intern*

**Keenan Rogers**  
*2020 Senate Photographer*

201 Coverdell Legislative Office Building  
18 Capitol Square S.W.  
Atlanta, GA 30303  
p: 404.656.0028

**Edited by:**

**Steve Tippins, Chief of Staff**  
**Senate President Pro Tempore Office**  
[steve.tippins@senate.ga.gov](mailto:steve.tippins@senate.ga.gov)  
**321 State Capitol Building**  
**404.656.6578**

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# This Week in the Senate

## January 27- 31, 2020



### Budget Hearings and Passing Legislation

The Senate's week concluded Friday after five full days of legislative business. While last week the Senate dedicated it's time to budget hearings and analyzing the financial needs of Georgia's State Agencies, this week we were fully devoted to the committee process and passing legislation.

Last week, Governor Kemp addressed a joint meeting of the Senate and House Appropriations Committees in order to outline his budget proposals for the Amended Fiscal Year 2020 budget and the General Fiscal Year 2021 Budget. Lawmakers also had the opportunity to hear from representatives of many of Georgia's state departments and agencies and ask them questions about their financial needs for the upcoming fiscal year. We were also reassured by many of our state agency heads that while budget cuts are indeed coming, this won't lead to a disruption of vital state services and programs.

This past Tuesday, the Senate passed House Bill 444, carried by Sen. Brian Strickland (R – McDonough), which would make slight adjustments to Georgia's Dual Enrollment program. The Dual Enrollment program has been incredibly popular since its inception and, over time, its budget has steadily increased. Because of this, some basic guardrails needed to be installed to prevent the program from outgrowing the state's ability to sustain it. House Bill 444 will preserve the Dual Enrollment program for future generations of students.

Thursday, Gov. Brian Kemp signed his first bill of the 2020 Legislative Session. House Bill 276, which was passed by the Senate two weeks ago in the form of a conference committee report, sets forth clear guidelines on how sales tax revenue from internet retailers should be collected. Under previous Georgia Law, internet retailers (known as "marketplace facilitators") were required to remit sales taxes back to the state. However, the law as written made it difficult for the state to actually collect the taxes that were owed. This bill eliminates that uncertainty and makes the collections process more efficient. With an effective date of April 1, the state should quickly see the financial impact of the collections of this additional revenue.

With the end of our third week of the session, it is apparent that we still have much work to do. The groundwork we are laying now in analyzing the budget and vetting bills in committee will pay off soon, specifically when these pieces of legislation come to the Senate floor for a vote. If I can ever be of any service to you, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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

## MONDAY, JANUARY 27

### Senate Congratulates Gatewood Schools Varsity Football Team

Sen. Burt Jones (R – Jackson) commended the Gatewood Schools Varsity Football Team for winning the Class AA Championship Game of the Georgia Independent Schools Association. The Gatewood Varsity Football Team has won the state title in back-to-back years under head coach Jeff Ratliff. – **SR 580**

### Southwest Georgia Day at the Capitol

Sen. Freddie Powell-Sims (D – Dawson) recognized January 27, 2020, as Southwest Georgia Day at the state Capitol. Sen. Sims highlighted leaders and members of the Southwest Georgia community for their work and dedication to the region. It was attended by various members of the community including Marion Ross Fedrick, the President of Albany State University, Shaunae Motley of United Way and members of the Morehouse School of Medicine.

### Senate Recognizes Bishop Reginald Jackson

Sen. Michael Rhett (D – Marietta) welcomed Bishop Reginald Jackson, the presiding prelate of the Sixth Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME), to the Capitol. The AME was founded in 1816 and has over 500 churches in Georgia. Bishop Jackson and the AME were honored for their work across the state of Georgia.

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## TUESDAY, JANUARY 28

### Dual Enrollment Act

House Bill 444, carried by Sen. Brian Strickland (R – McDonough), adjusts the number of credit hours allowed under the dual enrollment program to a maximum of 30, while also limiting the grade levels allowed to participate. It also restricts the credit hours students take to primarily core courses. HB 444 passed with a vote of 34 to 18. – **HB 444**

### Senate Honors Principal Kerensa Wing

Sen. Renee Unterman (R – Buford) sponsored Senate Resolution 571, commending Ms. Kerensa Wing, principal of Collins Hill High School, for her dedication of over 30 years of service to the Gwinnett County School District. Ms. Wing was also named National Principal of the Year and Georgia Principal of the Year in 2019. – **SR 571**

### Senate Recognizes Georgia Economic Developers Association

Sen. Frank Ginn (R – Danielsville) sponsored Senate Resolution 578, highlighting members of the Georgia Economic Developers Association on their efforts to improve the business climate in Georgia. The hard work of economic developers around the state has led to Georgia being ranked as the number one state in which to do business for six straight years. – **SR 578**



### **Senate Congratulates Dr. Ángel Cabrera**

Sen. P.K. Martin (R – Lawrenceville) sponsored Senate Resolution 603, which congratulates Dr. Ángel Cabrera for being named the 12th President of the Georgia Institute of Technology. Dr. Cabrera was named President of Georgia Tech on September 1, 2019, after previously serving as the President of George Mason University in Virginia, where he became the first Spanish-born citizen to serve as President of an American university. – **SR 603**

### **Jackson-Butts County Day at the Capitol**

Senate Resolution 621, sponsored by Sen. Burt Jones (R – Jackson), recognizes January 28, 2020, as Jackson-Butts County Day at the state Capitol. The city of Jackson, as well as Butts County, have a rich history including having the oldest state park in the country. – **SR 621**

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## **WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29**

### **Senate Commends Morgan Wheeler**

Sen. Steve Henson (D – Stone Mountain) sponsored Senate Resolution 587, which recognizes and honors Morgan Wheeler for his dedication to public service across the state of Georgia. Before his current involvement with the Secretary of State's State Licensing Board, Mr. Wheeler previously served with both the DeKalb and Walton County Departments of Planning and Development. – **SR 687**



## **THURSDAY, JANUARY 30**

### **Senate Welcomes Congressman Barry Loudermilk**

United States Congressman Barry Loudermilk (GA – 11) visited the Georgia State Senate to provide an update on work being done at the federal level to benefit Georgia. Rep. Loudermilk urged his former colleagues to find common ground to solve the unique issues facing Georgia. Before serving in the United States House of Representatives, Rep. Loudermilk served as both a Senator and Representative in the Georgia General Assembly from 2005 to 2013.

### **Recognizing the Georgia–Japan Trade Relationship**

Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick (R – Marietta) sponsored Senate Resolution 541 which highlighted the positive cultural and economic relationship between Georgia and Japan. Sen. Kirkpatrick welcomed Consul General of Japan Kazuyuki Takeuchi who spoke about his continued enthusiasm for a strong and prosperous economic relationship between Georgia and Japan. – **SR 541**

### **Lunar New Year Celebrated in the Senate**

Sen. Renee Unterman (R – Buford) sponsored Senate Resolution 572, which celebrated the Lunar New Year. Sen. Unterman and her special guests spoke to the unique history of this holiday around the world and wished for a peaceful and prosperous Lunar New Year for all Georgians. – **SR 572**

### Senate Recognizes Savannah Day

Senate Resolution 623, sponsored by Sen. Lester Jackson (D – Savannah), recognized multiple community leaders from the Savannah area for Savannah Day at the Capitol. The special guests included Charlie Smith Jr., Detective Agaria Gibbs and Dr. Patricia M. Stewart. All three individuals were recognized for their contributions to their communities throughout the years. – *SR 623*

### Senate Welcomes Tybee Island Youth Council

Sen. Ben Watson (R – Savannah) welcomed the Tybee Island Youth Council to the Senate and thanked them for their hard work in bringing awareness to the conservation efforts on Tybee Island. The Council thanked the members of the Senate for their previous support of Highway 80 and beach renourishment projects on Tybee Island.

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## FRIDAY, JANUARY 31

### International Holocaust Remembrance Day at the Capitol

Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick (R – Marietta) sponsored Senate Resolution 573 which recognizes January 27, 2020, as International Holocaust Remembrance Day at the state Capitol. Monday also marked the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau and the occasion was commemorated by unveiling a new Capitol exhibit honoring survivors and liberators. Sen. Kirkpatrick was joined by Israeli Consul General Anat Sultan-Dadon, as well as members of the Georgia Commission on the Holocaust. – *SR 573*



**The Georgia Senate will reconvene at 10:00 a.m. on  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3.**