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This Week in the Senate

February 3 - 5, 2020



Momentum is Picking Up

The Senate held a slightly abbreviated week, meeting for only three official legislative days. However, we made good use of each second of our time with lengthy days in chamber honoring guests and passing legislation, followed by committee hearings where we dove a little deeper into specific bills and resolutions. While the legislative machine can often take a while to get going, we have truly picked up momentum this week.

Tuesday, I had the privilege of inviting members of the University of Georgia (UGA) Chapter of the Blue Key National Honor Society to the Senate to recognize them for their service. This outstanding group of young people have already distinguished themselves from their peers with their commitment to academic excellence and dedication to leading a life of service to others. The UGA Chapter of Blue Key has even produced two current members of our Senate body: Sen. Jack Hill (R – Reidsville) and Sen. Blake Tillery (R – Vidalia). These students are always an inspiration to the Senate and show us that our future is in good hands.

We also took time this week to honor some of the bravest individuals who call Georgia home: our firefighters. It takes a truly selfless person to voluntarily put their life at risk to protect others from harm and our property from destruction. Sen. John Albers (R – Roswell), a volunteer firefighter himself, sponsored Senate Resolution 648 to acknowledge February 4, 2020 as Firefighters Recognition Day. It was a privilege to have firefighters from all across Georgia be with us at the Capitol to thank them for their bravery and dedication to our state.

While honoring deserving guests such as these is always an important part of the work we do at the Capitol, our top priority remains the budget. To respect this obligation, we made some adjustments to our legislative calendar that will allow us more time to examine budget proposals more closely. Senate Resolution 712, sponsored by Senate Majority Leader Mike Dugan (R – Carrollton), outlines the new schedule from legislative day 13 (February 18, 2020) until Crossover Day (March 12, 2020). This new schedule gives us all of next week to have conversations with the appropriate stakeholders in the budget process to ensure the final product contains input from everyone involved.

While we will not be convening for any official legislative days next week, your legislature is still working for all the people of Georgia. In the 12 legislative days to this point, we have packed in several votes in the Chamber and countless other discussions on bills in our committees. I am looking forward to watching these conversations turn into policies that continue to make Georgia as great as it can be. If there is anything my office can ever do for you, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Senator Butch Miller
President Pro Tempore, Georgia Senate

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3

Expanding the Definition of a Cremation Device

Senate Bill 296, sponsored by Sen. Bill Heath (R – Bremen), would add any furnace, vat or container used to cremate dead bodies to the definition of “cremation device.” SB 296 passed with a vote of 35 to 10. – **SB 296**

Supporting Iranian Protesters

Sen. Renee Unterman (R – Buford) sponsored Senate Resolution 554 which would support the rights of Iranian protestors to demonstrate freely and peacefully against the current Iranian regime. SR 554 passed by a vote of 31 to 17. – **SR 554**

Commending Heather Williamson

Senate Resolution 660, sponsored by Sen. Lindsey Tippins (R – Marietta), recognized Heather Williamson as the state recipient of the Technical College System of Georgia’s (TCSG) Georgia Occupational Award of Leadership (GOAL). Ms. Williamson is an early childhood care and education student from Central Georgia Technical College and was selected as the statewide winner out of 22 TCSG college GOAL recipients. – **SR 660**

Recognizing Simmone Crane

Sen. Lindsey Tippins (R – Marietta), sponsored Senate Resolution 661, which commended Simmone Crane as the statewide winner of the Technical College System of Georgia’s (TCSG) Exceptional Adult Georgian in Literacy Education (EAGLE) award. This award recognizes adult learners who have demonstrated a history of success in adult education classes. Ms. Crane attends West Georgia Technical College and was selected from a pool of 26 EAGLE delegates across the state. – **SR 661**

Honoring Leyner Argueta

Senate Resolution 662, sponsored by Sen. Lindsey Tippins (R – Marietta), recognized Leyner Argueta as the state winner of the Technical College System of Georgia’s (TCSG) Rick Perkins Award for Excellence in Technical Instruction. This award honors Ms. Williams as the TCSG’s Instructor of the Year for her teaching excellence in the field of business management at Georgia Northwestern Technical College. – **SR 662**

China Day at the state Capitol

Sen. Sheikh Rahman (D – Lawrenceville) sponsored Senate Resolution 686 which recognized the unique relationship between Georgia and the people of China and declared Monday, February 3, as China Day at the state Capitol. Among the attendees were Consul General Cai Wei and the National Associate of Chinese Americans. Together, the United States and China have been able to foster long and prosperous ties in culture, academics, and entrepreneurship. – **SR 686**



TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4

Defining Electric Scooters

Sen. Steve Gooch (R – Dahlonega) sponsored Senate Bill 159, which would provide for the definition of electric scooters and allow local counties and municipalities to exercise the power to regulate electric scooters. SB 159 passed with a vote of 47 to 0. – **SB 159**

University of Georgia Blue Key Day at the Capitol

Sen. Butch Miller (R – Gainesville) sponsored Senate Resolution 563 which recognized February 4, 2020, as Georgia Blue Key Day at the Capitol. The University of Georgia (UGA) chapter of the Blue Key Honor Society is dedicated to promoting leadership and academic excellence among UGA students. Sen. Blake Tillery (R – Vidalia) and Sen. Jack Hill (R – Reidsville) are both former members of the Blue Key Honor Society. – **SR 563**

Recognizing Dr. Gene Tyre

Senate Resolution 581, sponsored by Sen. Matt Brass (R – Newnan), commended Rev. Dr. Gene Tyre for his 60 years of pastoral service, his service as the Chairman of the Georgia Baptist Hospital Convention, and the various positions he has held within the Georgia Baptist Convention. – **SR 581**

Honoring Georgia Firefighters

Sen. John Albers (R – Roswell) sponsored Senate Resolution 648, which declared Tuesday, February 4, 2020 as Firefighters Recognition Day to honor firefighters across the state. Georgia is home to 30,000 firefighters, spread across 900 fire departments. Sen. Albers welcomed members of the Georgia Firefighters Association to speak on behalf of the state's firefighters. – **SR 648**

Celebrating Georgia Equine Youth Day

Senate Resolution 667, sponsored by Sen. John Wilkinson (R – Toccoa), recognized February 4, 2020, as Georgia Equine Youth Day at the state Capitol. Sen. Wilkinson was joined by two world championship competitors, as well as the winner of the National Equine Quiz Bowl. The program provides the opportunity for younger generations to foster care and respect for animals. – **SR 667**



WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5

Creditable Service Requirements for the Employees' Retirement System of Georgia

Sen. William Ligon (R – Brunswick) sponsored Senate Bill 26 which would allow the Employees' Retirement System of Georgia to count past service in the Georgia Defined Contribution Plan as creditable service. SB 26 passed with a vote of 51 to 0. – **SB 26**

Military Service as Creditable Service

Senate Bill 47, sponsored by Sen. Ellis Black (R – Valdosta), would allow up to 60 months of certain military service to count as creditable service under the Employees' Retirement System of Georgia. SB 47 passed with a vote of 47 to 0. – **SB 47**

Updating Contingent Beneficiaries

Sen. Ed Harbison (D – Columbus) sponsored Senate Bill 262 which would allow a beneficiary to make a new election or nominate another contingent beneficiary if they elected option two in the Employees' Retirement System of Georgia and were predeceased by the previous contingent beneficiary. SB 262 passed with a vote of 52 to 0. – **SB 262**

Ad Valorem Decals for Manufactured Homes

Senate Bill 289, sponsored by Sen. Jeff Mullis (R – Chickamauga), would remove the requirement that mobile homes display a decal indicating that Ad Valorem taxes were paid. SB 289 passed with a vote of 50 to 0. – **SB 289**

Congratulating the Banks County High School's Girls Softball Team

Sen. John Wilkinson (R – Toccoa) sponsored Senate Resolution 556 which commended the Banks County High School's Lady Leopards girls softball team for their win in the Class 2A Georgia High School Association Championship Game. The Lady Leopards finished the season ranked 1st in Class 2A, 11th in Georgia and 21st in the nation. – **SR 556**

Celebrating Morris Brown College Day

Senate Resolution 614, sponsored by Sen. Donzella James (D – Atlanta), recognized February 5, 2020, as Morris Brown College Day at the state Capitol. Morris Brown College was chartered in 1885 under the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Sen. James was joined by Dr. Kevin James, the President of Morris Brown College, and Rev. Chuck Barlow, a trustee of the college. – **SR 614**

Honoring the National Multiple Sclerosis Society

Sen. Matt Brass (R – Newnan) sponsored Senate Resolution 625 which celebrated February 5, 2020, as State Action Day for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society (NMSS). NMSS is dedicated to finding a cure for multiple sclerosis (MS), a neurological disease of the central nervous system. NMSS recently announced a new multiyear plan to dedicate \$38.7 million in funding to 123 research projects across the nation. – **SR 625**



Recognizing the John Milledge Varsity Football Team

Senate Resolution 640, sponsored by Sen. Burt Jones (R – Jackson), congratulated the John Milledge Varsity Football Team on the Class 3A Georgia Independent School Association’s (GISA) State Championship Game, for the second time in four seasons. The John Milledge Varsity Football Team is led by Coach J.T. Wall who was honored this season as the GISA Coach of the Year. – **SR 640**

Public Health Day at the State Capitol

Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick (R – Marietta) sponsored Senate Resolution 653 which recognized February 5, 2020 as Public Health Day at the state Capitol and honors the Georgia Department of Public Health for their hard work in protecting the lives of Georgians. Representatives from public health districts across the state were in attendance to serve in shifts as doctors of the day. – **SR 653**

Commending the Usher’s New Look Leadership Academy

Senate Resolution 682, sponsored by Sen. Nikema Williams (D – Atlanta), honored the Usher’s New Look Leadership Academy for preparing students with 21st-century skills applicable to their post-secondary education and the workforce. Usher’s New Look has served over 50,000 youth across the nation and serves 600 students each year in Georgia. – **SR 682**

Pre-K Week at the State Capitol

Sen. P.K. Martin (R – Lawrenceville) sponsored Senate Resolution 695 which will celebrate the week of October 5-9, 2020, as Pre-K Week at the state Capitol. Georgia has a nationally renowned Pre-K program that has served over 1.6 million students since it was started. Georgia is one of only nine states to have at least half of the state’s youth attend the Pre-K program. – **SR 695**

Senate Approves Adjournment Resolution

Sen. Mike Dugan (R – Carrollton) sponsored Senate Resolution 712 which would outline the legislative calendar through Day 28 of the legislative session. The schedule is as follows: February 18 (Legislative Day 13), February 19 (Legislative Day 14), February 20 (Legislative Day 15), February 21 (Legislative Day 16), February 24 (Legislative Day 17), February 25 (Legislative Day 18), February 26 (Legislative Day 19), February 27 (Legislative Day 20), February 28 (Legislative Day 21), March 2 (Legislative Day 22), March 3 (Legislative Day 23), March 4 (Legislative Day 24), March 5 (Legislative Day 25), March 9 (Legislative Day 26), March 10 (Legislative Day 27) and March 11 (Legislative Day 28). – **SR 712**



**The Georgia Senate will reconvene at 10:00 a.m. on
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18.**