

News from GATES...

Georgia Association of Training, Employment and Supports



Move It, Move It!

by Dawn A. Randolph, MPA
January 21, 2016



Session Adjournment Resolution

We may still have cold winter days as this session comes to a close. Friday, Jan 22, 2016 the House and Senate agreed on the schedule for the rest of the session. You can view [HR 1114](#) and know each day they will be in session over the next 30 days. That is right, we have already completed 10 days this session. They have planned for March 24th to be Sine Die (last day of the session).

Budget Update

What is even more expedient is the budget process. Both Speaker David Ralston and Chairman Jack Hill promised to keep to a tight budget schedule. In fact the House will approve the Amended FY 2016 budget this week. Each Subcommittee meets today, Tuesday, January 26, and then the full House Appropriations committee meets on Wednesday, Jan 27th. Therefore at the moment there are no changes to report. During the Joint subcommittee hearings last week Executive Director Greg Schmiege reported on the progress GVRA had made since its creation because the only difference in the budget for FY 2016 passed last year as amended this year was a mere \$2,411 in additional funds. I am not even sure what you can buy in state government for \$2,411.

All sarcasm aside, Director Schmiege did a very good job outlining the challenges GVRA faced at the beginning and how far it had come in three and half years. Rep. Mary Margaret Oliver (D-Decatur) was amazed that GVRA had addressed the waiting list. Director Schmiege explained that they had developed a plan to engage everyone on the list as soon as they could. The contract with BDI and CVI call centers using their expertise to move 65% of people into services.

In This Issue

[Move It, Move It!](#)

Special
Announcements



State Use Council Meeting

Thursday
January 28, 2016
10:00 AM
Sloppy Floyd
Building, West
Tower, Conference
Room 1816-A
200 Piedmont Ave.
Atlanta, GA

**GATES
Board Meeting**

Senator Butch Miller (R-Gainesville) commended GVRA for the job they were doing and the progress made over the past three and half years. Senator Miller asked what it would take to bring down all the federal dollars. Director Schmieg explained Georgia has never pulled down the full federal grant and we still need \$8 million to fully fund the agency. He noted the MOU with the Department of BHDD and the partnerships with Tech Schools were very important. The critical \$900,000 appropriated this fiscal year was crucial to closing the gap. Finally, efficient operations and being completely independent in all functional areas would help maximize current state dollars. By the end of this fiscal year GVRA will finally be in control of all agency infrastructure, including IT.

Since they want to move the budget quickly the Joint Budget Subcommittees only reviewed the Amended FY 2016 budget. The FY 2017 Big Budget should be under consideration starting next week.

Senate Bills

No new Senate bills under consideration or introduced at this time.

House Bills

Rep. Don Parsons (R-Marietta) bill [HB 201](#) to update the law governing the "**telephone system for the physically impaired**" passed the House on March 13, 2015 by a vote of 169-0. Although the bill received a vote on Crossover Day the Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee never gave it a hearing. It is now awaiting consideration by the Senate Committee.

As a result of several House Study Committees and the strong advocacy of many in the disability community several key members of House leadership have signed on to support [HB 768](#). The Georgia ABLE legislation (Achieving a Better Life Experience) will allow families to create and contribute to tax-exempt accounts that can fund qualified expenses to support people with disabilities. The bill has been assigned to the House Ways and Means Committee.

Study Committees

Rep. Penny Houston has introduced [HR 979](#) to create a House Study Committee to examine programs that provide reading services to the blind and visually impaired. The Study Committee would be comprised of seven members; including four Representatives, The PSC Executive Director, The Director of the Board of Regents Public Library Service, and a representative of the Center for the Visually Impaired. The Resolution has been assigned to the Special Rules Committee. If the Study Committee is approved it must publish its report by December 1, 2016.

Friday
February 5, 2016
10:00 AM
Center for the
Visually Impaired
739 West
Peachtree Street,
Atlanta, GA

THE PORTAL is a regular publication of GATES. If you have staff or others associated with your organization that you would like to receive THE PORTAL, please send their email address to:

*Charles Hall,
chall@asqinfo.net*

[Back To Top](#)

Call for Information

THE PORTAL is a communication tool for GATES and GATES members. If you have stories about your organization, staff announcements, program descriptions, or other information you want to share with other GATES members, please send the info to Charles Hall, chall@asginfo.net



GATES

Georgia Association of Training, Employment and Supports

100 Edgewood Avenue
Suite 975
Atlanta, GA 30303
Phone: 404-523-6674

GATES, 404-523-6674, 44 Broad Street, Suite 503, Atlanta, GA 30303