

## News from GATES...

Georgia Association of Training, Employment and Supports



# THE GATES PORTAL

## Legislative Update



By Dawn A. Randolph, MPA  
GATES Legislative Consultant

As we exit January, the General Assembly will have burned up 9 days of the 40-day session. More has occurred politically in the last few weeks but very little legislatively. The session began with the official leadership change in the House of Representatives. As Speaker David Ralston (R-Blue Ridge) took the gavel change was everywhere. The House elected Rep. Jan Jones (R-Alpharetta) as Speaker Pro Tem, the first woman to serve a high leadership position in the Georgia General Assembly. By the end of the first week many key committee chair positions were moved around.

The first move Ralston made was to de-flock the Hawks. Those special positions created by Richardson to stack a committee meeting. Hawks would swoop in to a committee with or without a quorum to eviscerate legislation not in favor with the Speaker or to send a bill aloft when it appeared dead. Each Hawk, Rep. Clay Cox (R-Lilburn), Rep. David Casas (R-Lilburn) and Rep. John Lunsford (R- McDonough) cleaned out his nest by the end of the first day.

Next Rep. Austin Scott (R-Tifton) "resigned" his chair of the Governmental Affairs Committee. Scott is running for Governor. And so it went, one after another offered up their seats to allow the new Speaker to build his own team. By the end of the week, while there was not a wholesale change across the board, there were changes in key committee and leadership positions. Those promoted pledged to Ralston a strong commitment to restore a more open process and integrity and for the first time in many years there did seem to be a more open environment.

## In This Issue

[Legislative Update](#)

[Scholarship  
Competition](#)

\*\*\*\*\*

## Special Announcements



\*\*\*\*\*

*GATES  
Board of  
Directors  
Meeting*

February 5,  
2010 9:30 AM  
Goodwill Office  
in Decatur

Committee	Out	In
<i>Rules</i>	Earl Ehrhart (Powder Springs)	Bill Hembree (Winston)
<i>Insurance</i>	Tom Knox (Cumming)	John Meadows (Calhoun)
<i>Government Affairs</i>	Austin Scott (Tifton)	Mark Hamilton (Cumming)
<i>House Human Resources Budget Subcommittee</i>	Mark Butler (Carrollton)	Penny Houston (Nashville)
<i>Budget and Fiscal Affairs Oversight</i>	Penny Houston	Richard Smith (Columbus)
<i>Higher Education</i>	Bill Hembree	Len Walker (Loganville)
<i>Human Relations and Aging</i>	Len Walker	Clay Cox (Lilburn)
<i>Special Committee on Small Business and Job Creation</i>	New committee	John Lunsford (McDonough)

On the Senate side a few Senators moved around due to some vacancies created over the summer and fall. Senator Curt Thompson (D-Norcross) replaces Senator Ed Tarver (D-Augusta) who took a judicial appointment with the Obama Administration. Senator Ron Ramsey (D-Lithonia) was placed on the Judiciary Committee and Senator Jack Murphy (R-Cumming) is now on the Transportation Committee.

Following years of tradition the Governor gave his State of the State Address on Wednesday the first week. The speech was more of a farewell address from an outgoing CEO. He provided a few glimpses of his budget around teacher pay and mental health funding. But mostly he opined about the economy and governing in tough times.

The second week of the session was set aside for budget hearings when all the state agency heads give their budget presentation to legislators. As we have seen over the past few years the statewide elected officials did not present expect, of course, for the Superintendent of Schools. Commissioner Michael Thurmond did not present but we are expected to hear from him during the subcommittee process.

The budget was finally revealed during this week. At first glance we are very relieved that Vocational Rehabilitation did not take a large cut. The Governor has proposed cutting only \$51,820 to contracts in both FY 2010 Amended and the full FY 2011 Budgets. We also did not see Voc Rehab assumed under Workforce Services. Compared to so many other health and human services programs this is a great way to begin when faced with a total state budget cut of \$1.2 billion. We must be vigilant because the entire state budget is propped-up with new funding from a health delivery provider fee of 1.6% on hospitals and Care Management Organizations (CMOs). Without this fee or tax all healthcare providers could see up to a 16% cut to their reimbursements. And cuts would be needed from other state agencies

\*\*\*\*\*

*VR-LT/CRP  
training*

February 16,  
2010 9:00 -  
4:30  
Goodwill of  
North Georgia  
3337 Buford  
Highway  
Atlanta, Ga 30329

Directions:  
Northeast Plaza  
Shopping Center  
Take I-85 North to  
North Druid Hills,  
turn Left.  
Go to Buford  
Highway and turn  
Right.  
Shopping Center is  
1/2 mile on the  
Right.

\*\*\*\*\*

*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](mailto:chall@asqinfo.net)*

\*\*\*\*\*

as well.

By the end of the first month of the session with 31 days to go there are many tough decisions to be made. Commissioner BJ Walker (DHS) and Commissioner Frank Shelp (BHDD) present the details of their budgets to the House on Thursday, January 28th. Commissioner Michael Thurmond (DOL) presents his budget to the committee on Monday, February 1st. Whatever does happen, we are operating on funding from the mid 2000's and it is an election year. There are many competing factors pressing on every legislator. Tighten your seat belts and be prepared to reach for the phone!

[back to top](#)

## disABLEDperson Inc. Spring 2010 National Scholarship Competition for College Students with Disabilities

disABLEDperson, Inc.

is excited to announce our Spring 2010 nationally based scholarship competition for college students with disabilities! This competition begins on January 11, 2010 and ends on March 1, 2010 for the award of \$1000.00 (one thousand dollars)!

To participate, follow these simple steps: Write an essay with no more than 750 words (prompt can be found at <http://www.disabledperson.com/scholarships/2> ). After reading the prompt, click on the "Register Now" link below, that will take you to a form. Fill out the form completely and paste your essay into the form.

A few reminders: Please keep in mind that the form must be filled out completely. We cannot accept incomplete or fraudulent forms. Spelling and grammar is imperative. Please submit carefully edited drafts only. Important! You need to "Sign up now" on disABLEDperson.com as a community member! Simply click the "Sign up now" link at the top right of the site and register. Its simple! In order to qualify, the student must be enrolled in a 2 or 4 year accredited college or university in the United States of America. They must be a full-time student and U.S. citizen (minimum of 12 credits for undergraduate, 9 credits for graduate). Unfortunately, we are not able to award scholarships to high school students or college students who are not attending classes full-time. Upon winning, the student will prove disability through their Disability Student Services department. We define disability as: "A disadvantage or deficiency, especially a physical or mental impairment that interferes with or prevents normal achievement in a particular area, something that hinders or incapacitates."

Be sure to submit your entry before the March 1, 2010 deadline. The winner will be announced on our web portal [www.disABLEDperson.com](http://www.disABLEDperson.com) on March 15, 2010. All decisions made by disABLEDperson, Inc. are final.

The scholarship link is <http://www.disabledperson.com/scholarships/2>

Thank you and good luck!

Diana Corso  
Executive Director  
disABLEDperson Inc.  
760-420-1269

[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](mailto:chall@asginfo.net)



## GATES

*Georgia Association of Training, Employment and Supports*

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

[Forward email](#)

 **SafeUnsubscribe**

This email was sent to by [callen@asginfo.net](mailto:callen@asginfo.net) |  
Rapid removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).



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