

## News from GATES...

Georgia Association of Training, Employment and Supports



# THE GATES PORTAL

## Crunch Time



by Dawn A. Randolph, MPA

### Governor's Proposal Makes Voc-Rehab a 'Stand-alone' Agency

Governor Deal announced at Developmental Disability Day on February 16<sup>th</sup> he would proceed with a compromise bill to answer the calls for VRS to be an independent agency. Under his leadership he is committed to addressing the important needs of people with disabilities to achieve economic security through employment. The new legislation will create a Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency with a Board and Executive Director appointed by the Governor. The board will be comprised of nine individuals, five of those consumers or family members. The Agency will be administratively attached to the Department of Human Services (DHS). As the process moves forward it will be determined the administrative functions (finance, budgets, HR, personnel, etc) to be provided by DHS and what will VRS provide internally. The Governor's Office of Planning and Budget is charged with identifying all the VRS funding to bring fully into the new agency. Because of the short time frame the House Human Relations and Aging Committee held a hearing Thursday (2/23) and passed out the bill ([HB 1146](#)). Yesterday (2/27) the House Rules Committee scheduled a vote for the House Floor today. At 2:15 PM this afternoon (Tuesday -2/28), **the HOUSE passed HB1146 by a vote of 140 YES and 16 NAY.**

Upon examining this bill carefully, last week the GATES Board voted to support this new bill and created a white paper with

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#### Special Announcements



***VRLT/GATES Meeting***  
**April 18, 2012**  
**Location: Macon VR Leadership Team and GATES members meet to discuss programs, activities and cooperative projects. More detail to be announced later.**

***ARMS Meeting***  
**April 20, 2012**

measurable policy objectives. [Click HERE to view this paper.](#)

### **Budgets on the MOVE!**

The FY 2012 \$18.5 billion Amended Budget passed the Senate 51-1 on Thursday, February 23, 2012 with only a few minor changes from the House version. The Senate also had to contend with a lowered revenue estimate from Governor Deal due to the flat revenue collections in December and January. Thus lowering the revenue estimate by \$47 million. The FY12 budget is still \$2 billion below the 2009 state budget. The two primary areas of increased funding for the mid-year budget are to cover increased enrollment in K-12 education and restore cuts in Medicaid. Now the House and Senate Conference Committee will meet to iron out their small differences.

**FY13 BUDGET** - The House moved to work on the FY 2013 budget. Vice Chair Katie Dempsey (R-Rome) presided over her committee to hear from both Commissioner Mark Butler and Commissioner Clyde Reese about their budgets. The previous day the new bill had been introduced in the House to move Vocational Rehabilitation Services out of the Department of Labor to create a stand-alone agency administratively attached to the Department of Human Services. The clock is ticking to get the budget out of the House and over to the Senate by crossover day, currently planned for March 7<sup>th</sup>.

### **Legislative Schedule**

This week the House and Senate will meet Monday through Wednesday, work on the budget Thursday and Friday, then come back next week to move the budget and several bills across to the other chamber by Wednesday, March 7<sup>th</sup>. You can log on anytime to watch either chamber at 10am.

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Location: Tommy  
Nobis Center  
1480 Bells Ferry  
Rd  
Marietta, GA

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Charles Hall,  
[chall@asginfo.net](mailto:chall@asginfo.net)*

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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

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