

News from GATES...

Georgia Association of Training, Employment and Supports



THE GATES PORTAL

Bills Crossover and FY 2013 Budget in the Senate



by Dawn A. Randolph, MPA

This past week was exciting and very busy. It began with the discussion in the House of funding for FY 2013 (See House Budget and Research Office for tracking documents). Monday morning the subcommittees met to make their recommendations and the full House Appropriations Committee met that afternoon to pass it on to the full House. In these discussions the House subcommittee recommended partially restoring the cuts to contracts. On Tuesday the Senate Subcommittee of Appropriations on Human Relations heard from Commissioner Clyde Reese and Commissioner Mark Butler about their FY 2013 Budgets.

Senators need to hear from all GATES member beginning TODAY (Monday - 3/12) to request a total restoration of the 2% proposed cuts. Call your Senator and ask him or her to restore all cuts to Voc Rehab providers in the FY 2013 budget to ensure the new Agency has as much funding as possible to begin as a stand-alone agency attached to DHS. Please make an extra call to Senator Renee Unterman (R-Buford), Senator Jack Hill (R-Reidsville) and Senator Tommie Williams (R-Lyons). You can track the Senate FY 2013 budget [here](#).

Commissioner Reese did a good job explaining how an attached agency, as outlined in [HB 1146](#), would function along-side DHS. He said DHS has other agencies attached and they provide administrative functions to them as requested or needed by the independent agency which can range from personnel to financial to technology to policy

In This Issue

[Bills Crossover and FY 2013 Budget](#)

[Nominations Open](#)

[Spring Board Meeting](#)

[Annual Meeting](#)

Special
Announcements



**State Use
Council Meeting
Thursday, March
22, 2012
10:00 AM
Location: Floppy
Floyd Twin Towers
Bldg. 18th floor.**

Spring Board

support. These arrangements will require a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that the independent agency will then pay DHS to provide. The new agency can choose to perform all these functions completely with its personal, contract them out, or examine functions performed in DHS that can benefit VRS.

There is good news for the state budget - February revenues were up 7% to help meet the budget expectations for FY 2012. There has been great concern about the stagnant revenue collections throughout this fiscal year. Decreased unemployment and increased revenues is critical to economic recovery. Currently Georgia has a 9.2% unemployment rate compared to the Nation at 8.3%.

Speaking of unemployment, [SB 447](#) passed the Senate reducing the length of unemployment benefits from 26 weeks to between 12-20 weeks. The sponsor, Senator Fran Millar's goal is to help Georgia repay the Federal Government \$736 million while opponents argue Georgia will be the worst state for the unemployed if the measure makes it into law.

Wednesday was crossover day, when a bill must make it out of its originating chamber to the other side. It was a very long and contentious day. The House passed out the FY 2013 budget. However, both chambers passed TANF /Medicaid drug testing bills requiring applicants to be drug tested and pass before they can receive benefits. There are many constitutional and procedural concerns with these bills; if implemented as written the policy could create barriers for people with disabilities and mental illness. The Senate passed [SB 292](#) and the House passed [HB 861](#).

There are other initiatives by Governor Deal to streamline government and minimize administrative overhead. Rep Doug Collins' (R-Gainesville) bill, [HB 642](#) creates the Georgia Services Administration. This new agency will transform the former DOAS (Department of Administrative Services) into a mega state administrative agency. The State Property Commission and the State Personnel Administration functions will come into this new agency.

HB642 also increases the purchasing authority for agencies without having to bid to \$25,000, currently it is \$5,000. This is good news for GEPS and the State Use Program. Agencies will now be able to award contracts under \$25,000 based on performance and not necessarily the lowest bid. In many cases a company would bid low to get the contract and then underperform. It would take 3 to 6 months to pull the contract and then the agency had to re-bid . . . and the cycle started over. This bill is now in the Senate Government Oversight Committee.

Monday, March 12th is the 31st day. The calendar is currently scheduled to Day 37th for March 22nd. This will definitely allow for the session to conclude by the end of March.

[Back To Top](#)

Meeting

April 12, 2012

9:00 AM

Location: Goodwill of the Coastal Empire

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

Location: Tommy

Nobis Center

1480 Bells Ferry

Rd

Marietta, GA

Annual Meeting

June 7-8, 2012

Location: TBA

Details coming soon

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@asginfo.net

Nominations Open for GATES Board of Directors



This year GATES has two Directors with terms expiring.

Director - Post 2
(term expiring 6/30/12)

Kim Cantrell kcantrell@gwisr.org
Goodwill of the Southern Rivers

Director - Post 5
(term expiring 6/30/12)

Leigh Couch leigh@ceisite.com
Creative Enterprises

Directors can only serve two consecutive terms before they have to rotate off their Post for at least one year. For Post 2 - Kim is in her first term and is eligible to be re-nominated for a second term. For Post 5 - Leigh is completing her second term and cannot be re-nominated to Post 5.

Per the BYLAWS, Keith has appointed the 2012 Nominating Committee to include our current President and two past Presidents - Keith Kennedy, Cheryl Cornett-Earley and Wayne McMillan. The Nominating Committee will accept recommendations for Directors (Post 2 and Post 5) until April 1. In early April the Nominating Committee will meet and decide on the names to submit to the membership for each of the open positions. At the Annual Meeting in June, in addition to the Nominating Committee's report, nominations for Directors can be made from the floor.

If you would like to serve as a Director, or have recommendations for someone to serve please contact a member of the Nominating Committee or email Charles Hall at chall@asginfo.net.

[Back To Top](#)

GATES Spring Board Meeting

All GATES members are invited to the Spring BOARD meeting to be held at Goodwill of the Coastal Empire in Savannah on Thursday, April 12 at 9:00 AM. Lunch will be provided. Please contact Charles Hall, (chall@asginfo.net) if you plan to attend so we will have an accurate count for lunch.



[Back To Top](#)

ANNUAL MEETING Mark Your Calendar



The GATES Annual Meeting will be June 7-8 - Location To Be Announced. The Annual Meeting Planning Committee began their work earlier this month. More details to come soon. The meeting will kick off with afternoon training and a networking evening function on June 7. Workshops and training programs are planned for the morning of June 8 with a recognition luncheon closing the meeting.

[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

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

[Forward email](#)



Try it FREE today.

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

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