

## News from GATES...

Georgia Association of Training, Employment and Supports



# THE GATES PORTAL

## ACTION NEEDED before Crossover Day



By Dawn A. Randolph, MPA  
GATES Legislative Consultant

The legislature met for four days this past week frantically trying to get as many bills passed out of committee and through each chamber as possible. It started with the House and Senate both passing the FY 2011 Amended Budget with no conference committee - an unprecedented occurrence in recent memory. A little over \$18 million in state funds was agreed on by both Chambers and awaits the Governor's signature. Then the House quickly moved to pass the FY 2012 full budget, first out of the Appropriations Committee on Thursday and then the House Floor on Friday for \$18.3 million.

Unfortunately with the loss of all federal stimulus funding and still uncertain revenue with unemployment high the House was very cautious in adding too much to their budget. In addition they had to come up with an additional \$250 million to fund state health insurance for state employees, which will require state workers and teachers health premiums to rise about 20%. They also had to give the Department of Labor authorization to pay for the first installment of interest of federal funds borrowed for the Unemployment Trust Fund, estimated to be about \$24 million due in September.

This coming week the legislature will meet for two days, Monday and Wednesday. Wednesday will be day 30, or crossover day. Bills must

### In This Issue

[Crossover Day](#)

\*\*\*\*\*

Special  
Announcements



**State Use  
Council Meeting**  
Thursday, Mar. 24  
10 AM  
Floyd Tower

**Working  
Wonders Day  
Luncheon**  
Thursday, Mar. 24  
12 Noon  
Floyd Tower

**GATES Board  
Meeting**  
Friday, Apr. 29

be passed by at least one chamber to be considered for action by the other chamber for this session. Now, this doesn't preclude a measure from being tacked on as a rider to another bill, but it makes it difficult to get an original bill passed as proposed. The remainder of the week will be taken up by the Senate to review the FY 2012 budget; these meetings will start on Tuesday.

#### **ACTION needed in the next 24 hours**

Unfortunately the House did not seek to restore any funding for contracts in Vocational Rehabilitation for the FY 2012 Budget. Our message is the same, targeted now at the Senate Insurance Committee chaired by Senator Jack Murphy. If no one from your county is on this committee please contact the Chair of the committee and your local Senator. Here is the link to all Senate members <http://www.senate.ga.gov/senators/en-US/SenateMembersList.aspx>. This is a new budget subcommittee and most of these Senators will be unfamiliar with Voc Rehab programs so please take some time to educate them on your work. This committee will meet on Tuesday at 1pm to review the FY 2012 as passed by the House last week.

#### **The Message:**

*Voc Rehab community providers are taking a bigger cut than most areas of state government and should not be hurt greater than other programs. Please be fair when voting on cuts and restore funding to these vital programs. We serve people with disabilities to develop successful employment. These cuts hurt the consumer directly in a time of economic instability. (Insert your program's example of how the cut will hurt people). The current cut is \$391,362 as recommended by the Governor and about an 11% reduction in contracts.*

#### **Senate Insurance Appropriations Subcommittee**

Chair: Senator Jack Murphy (R-Cumming) 404-656-7127 or [jack.murphy@senate.ga.gov](mailto:jack.murphy@senate.ga.gov)  
Senator Don Balfour (R-Snellville) 404-656-0095 or [don.balfour@senate.ga.gov](mailto:don.balfour@senate.ga.gov)  
Senator Robert Brown (D-Macon) 404-656-5025 or [robert.brown@senate.ga.gov](mailto:robert.brown@senate.ga.gov)  
Senator Greg Goggans (R-Douglas) 404-463-5263 or [goggans@vzw.blackberry.net](mailto:goggans@vzw.blackberry.net)  
Senator Tim Golden (R-Valdosta) 404-656-7580 or [tim.golden@senate.ga.gov](mailto:tim.golden@senate.ga.gov)  
Senator Steve Thompson (D-Marietta) 404-656-0083 or [steve.thompson@senate.ga.gov](mailto:steve.thompson@senate.ga.gov)

#### **Major Legislative Issue**

Reminder: **The Comprehensive Revision of the Tax Code** is still on the table. Rep. Mickey Channell (R-Greensboro) with Majority Leader Larry O'Neal (R-Bonaire) as co-sponsor introduced [HB 385](#) on Tuesday March 1, 2011 co-signed by top Republican House Leaders. The bill is 127 pages and almost completely mirrors the recommendations of the

9:30 AM  
Location - TBA

\*\*\*\*\*

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

\*\*\*\*\*

**Special Council on Tax Reform and Fairness** to reform Georgia's tax code. A special joint committee (Co-chaired by Rep. Channell and Senator Bill Heath) was appointed to handle the bill and Rep. Channell explained that if the joint committee agrees to a version it would move directly and simultaneously to the House and Senate for floor votes. This could happen on the 40<sup>th</sup> day of the session.

Politically there are many that feel this bill cannot move forward as proposed because there are so many major changes to the tax code. But there are also many who do not want to postpone a major tax overhaul like this to an election year. It is uncertain what will happen to the tax reform initiative at this point. GATES will be watching vigilantly and let you know when such legislation moves.

[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](#)



Try it FREE today.

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

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