

News from GATES...

Georgia Association of Training, Employment and Supports



THE GATES PORTAL

And they're off...



By Dawn A. Randolph, MPA
GATES Legislative Consultant

Before I get into the election line-up let me say that we made it through the session with the smallest cuts possible. The Senate accepted the cuts proposed by the Governor and approved by the House. So the \$288,627 remained the same throughout the process. While none of us wanted any more cuts it was certainly a great victory compared to other programs that received millions and millions in funding cuts. The state budget ended up at \$17,890,512,513. A little over the \$4 billion in cuts in 2 years from the high of \$22 billion appropriated for FY 2008.

Many would like to put the longest session in over a century, ending on April 29th, behind them. But the issues will live on as we move in to election mode. A few issues, such as transportation and ethics received some incremental improvements; however, nothing so monumental to declare a final victory. Education took financial pounding and there will be school systems faced with serious financial gaps. However, the state budget did not dictate furloughs as in the past. Agencies were given discretion over how they would implement many of the budget cuts. Unfortunately, every manager knows that most of the money is for employees and labor, so a reduction in force may be inevitable for some state departments and agencies.

Now for the electoral lay of the land. It is certain there will be a new Commissioner of Labor in January 2011. With Commissioner Michael Thurmond's decision to move on to run for the US Senate against Senator Johnny Isakson the position became open. The best chance of moving into office or moving up to a higher elected position is to try for a vacant seat. Since Commissioner Thurmond's decision came so late in the session, during the week of qualifying we saw four individuals take

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[GATES Annual Meeting](#)

Special Announcements



*GATES Board
Meeting*

10 AM

May 14, 2010

Location -

New Ventures, Inc.
LaGrange

*GATES Annual
Meeting and
Training*

the plunge.

First Rep. Mark Butler (R-Carrollton) threw his hat into the ring. You will recall that Rep. Butler was awarded the *Legislature of the Year Award* by GATES in 2009. As the Chairman of the House Human Resources Budget Subcommittee he was very engaged during the first round of budget cuts and helped to mitigate the impact. However, when Speaker Ralston took over in January he changed up several committee assignments. Since Rep. Butler had been closely aligned with Speaker Richardson he lost his chairmanship. A big disappointment to all of us that worked with him over the years and yet no surprise that he would seek a new challenge in a statewide campaign.

Next [Darryl Hicks](#) qualified. Hicks ran for Secretary of State in 2006 and went all the way to a run-off against Rep. Gail Buckner. Butler prevailed to become the Democratic Candidate but later lost to Karen Handel in the General Election. Hicks is from Fayetteville and has qualified to run as a Democrat. His website says that he has "two decades of corporate management experience".

Then Rep. [Melvin Everson](#) (R-Snellville) qualified as a Republican. Rep. Everson served for 23 years in the military. He was first elected to the State House in 2004.

Finally, in the very last moments of qualifying on Friday, April 30th former Speaker of the House Terry Coleman (D) qualified to run for the Labor Commission seat. Rep. Coleman was a long veteran of the State House until Speaker Murphy lost his seat in 2001 and Rep. Coleman was elected to Speaker for the 2002-2004 sessions. The next year was the upset of the House by Republicans. Rep. Coleman decided not to seek office after that session and was selected to serve as the Deputy Commissioner of Agriculture in 2006.

So the line-up for the July 20th contests is Hicks versus Coleman in the Democratic Primary and Butler versus Everson in the Republican Primary. Give the candidates a few days to get their websites up and running and take a look.

Of course there are many, many important races up and down the ballot, probably the most candidates in several generations. You can locate all the candidates at a special site at the Georgia Secretary of State, please view visit this website.

<http://qual.sos.ga.gov/qualifyingindex.asp>

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GATES Annual Meeting

June 10, 2010
Location - TBD

*State Use
Council Meeting
Thursday
June 24, 2010
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@asginfo.net*

SAVE THE DATE - June 10, 2010

Don't miss the 2010 GATES Annual Meeting.
During the meeting there will be a

'Meet the Candidates Forum for Commissioner of Labor'!!!

All four candidates have been invited.
GATES is pleased to host this FORUM to give members of the Voc-Rehab and disability community an opportunity to hear the candidates and ask questions concerning their plans for future Department of Labor programs.

Location and other Annual Meeting details to be released soon in the PORTAL

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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



GATES

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