

News from GATES...

Georgia Association of Training, Employment and Supports



THE GATES PORTAL

Crossover Day Complete - 10 voting days left



by Dawn A. Randolph, MPA

March 9, 2015

Session highlights

The legislature will be in session Wednesday-Friday this week marking Wednesday, March 18th as the 31st day of the 40-day session. Last week the House and Senate focused on bills each chamber wanted to get over to the other side by Crossover Day. This past Friday, March 13th marked the 30th Day, Crossover Day for the session.

Last week the Senate completed the FY 2016 Budget in private subcommittees. The full Senate Appropriations Committee is scheduled to pass out its recommendations Wednesday morning at 8am. The session is on track to finish by April 2nd.

Budget Update

The Senate Subcommittees of Appropriation worked on their recommendations in closed door meetings. There were no public hearings. Senator Jack Hill (R-Reidsville) announced late on Friday they would present their budget recommendations Wednesday morning. No one knows what priorities the Senate has set for the big budget.

Legislation Round-up

Senate Bills

In This Issue

[Crossover Day Complete](#)

Special
Announcements



***State Use
Council
March 26, 2015
Location: Sloppy
Floyd Twin
Towers, Capitol
Square
10:00 AM***

***Working
Wonders
Recognition***

The **Autism Spectrum Disorder Insurance Coverage** ([SB 1](#)) has been assigned to the House Insurance Committee where it has met with strong opposition in the past. No change in bill status for the entire month of February; however, since it passed the Senate it is still alive for the session.

Senator Lindsey Tippins (R-Marietta) bill [SB 2](#) helps **high school students seeking a vocational education in a technical college** to be awarded a high school diploma to assist with their educational achievements at a younger age. The Senate passed the bill February 3, 2015 by a vote of 56-0. The House Education Committee recommended a due pass March 3rd.

Senator Greg Kirk (R-Americus) first bill [SB 53](#) extends a sunset clause from last year's bill to grant authority to authorize a "1013" by a **Licensed Professional Counselor** (LPC) to evaluate and recommended involuntary commitment for a person in mental health or substance abuse crisis to a longer term inpatient status. Because was a sunset clause of March 15th granting this authority to LPCs the House moved the bill through quickly with a floor vote February 25th passing the bill 134-23 and the Governor signed the bill On March 10th ensuring there would be no gaps.

Senator Donzella James (D-Atlanta) bill [SB 57](#) to require **motorized wheelchairs** and scooters that operate on public sidewalks and other roadways to be equipped with reflectors did not receive consideration this session and is held over until next session as it did not make it out by Crossover Day.

The **Governor's Task Force on Blind and Visually Impaired Persons** is a bill to "investigate how state services and initiatives can be developed or improved for blind and visually impaired persons" and provide a report by November 1st each year to the Governor recommending specific legislation. The bill ([SB 66](#)) sponsored by Senator Lester Jackson (D-Savannah) was reviewed by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee (Senate HHS) on Thursday, February 19th. While the committee asked Senator Jackson to make some changes to the bill to include the report going to the House and Senate Health and Human Services committee chairs and including any recommendations for policy changes it never was considered again and in its original form as a joint committee has failed for this session. However, Senator Jackson has prepared a Senate only study committee in [SR 459](#). This would be a privileged resolution and has been assigned to the Senate Health and Human Services Committee but is not required approval by the House.

During this past week a House Resolution was introduced by Rep. Katie Dempsey (R-Rome) to initiate a **joint study committee on postsecondary education and employment options for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities** and was numbered [HR 642](#). The bill has been assigned to the House Higher Education Committee and requires a report by December 2015. However, since this resolution did not pass over by Crossover Day it cannot be

Luncheon
March 26, 2015
Location: Empire
Room Sloppy
Floyd Twin
Towers
Noon

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

considered as a joint study committee this year and may either be held over until next year or possibly change to a House only study committee.

House Bills

Rep. Brooks Coleman (R-Duluth) who chairs the House Education Committee is sponsoring a bill to **eliminate the Georgia High School Graduation Test**. [HB 91](#) has several key legislative co-sponsors such as House Appropriations Chairman Terry England (R-Auburn). It also provides for previous students who did not pass the graduation test to ask to be granted a high school diploma. It appears this bill could be very beneficial for students with learning and development disabilities. The bill passed the House Floor by a vote of 172-0 on Thursday, Feb 12th and was given a due pass recommendation by the Senate Education and Youth Committee on March 5th.

House members have attempted to create a version of the federal Family and Medical Leave Act by introducing bills to allow **employees to use sick leave to care for family members**. This year Rep. Tommy Benton (R-Jefferson) and several others in a bi-partisan effort have again put their support behind [HB 92](#). The bill did not receive consideration by the House Industry and Labor Committee and will be held over until next year.

Rep. Al Williams (D-Midway) and a few other Democratic House members have sponsored the **Georgia Fair Pay Act** in [HB 151](#). The bill would require state agencies to pay their vendors within 30 days or pay 12 percent per annum interest on the amount. The bill directs the state accounting office to establish rules and regulations to handle the various aspects of invoice payment and disputes. The bill did not receive consideration by the House Governmental Affairs Committee and will be held over until next year.

The **Transportation Funding Act of 2015** ([HB 170](#)) by Rep. Jay Roberts (R-Ocilla) passed the House by a vote of 123-46 with a few changes. It has been assigned to the Senate Transportation Committee. While the bill is not polling well across the state there is talk at the Capitol that this must be accomplished in a non-election year. It is likely the bill will pass in some form this session. The Georgia Budget and Policy Institute has been tracking the bill and you can read a current analysis of the bill [here](#).

The **Home Care Patient Protection Act** ([HB 183](#)) is sponsored by Rep. David Knight (R-Griffin). The bill revises "the definition of private home care provider to include contractual arrangements with licensed independent contractors". It appears this bill is an attempt to monitor, investigate and regulate those homes under the supervision of a contracted entity. The House passed the bill by a vote of 162-2 and it has been assigned to the Senate Health and Human Services Committee.

Rep. Don Parsons (R-Marietta) bill [HB 201](#) to update the law governing the **"telephone system for the physically impaired"** passed the

House on March 13th by a vote of 169-0. Since it received a vote on Crossover Day it is still alive for the session. It will be assigned to a Senate Committee later in the week.

There is a slight change proposed to the **Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Act** in [HB 209](#) sponsored by Rep. Wes Cantrell (R-Woodstock) to change the attendance requirement for eligible students from the prior school year to the prior semester and provide written notice to parent's of a student eligibility for the scholarship. On Crossover Day the bill finally received a vote and passed by 168-4. Therefore it is eligible for the Senate to consider this session and awaits assignment to a Senate Committee.

There seems to be a concern over the composition of the **State Board of Hearing Aid Dealers and Dispensers**. Rep. Amy Carter (R-Valdosta) bill [HB 232](#) changes one of the members appointed to the Board that provide licenses for dispensing hearing aids and regulate to a non-industry member or professional. In addition there will be a requirement for a criminal background check and 20 hours of continuing education for renewal of a dispenser's license. The bill passed the House by 165-5 and was assigned to the Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee.

Rep. Robert Dickey's (R-Musella) bill to replace the Governor's Office of Workforce Development with The Workforce Division under the Georgia Department of Economic Development and create the **State Workforce Development Board** with [HB 348](#) received full House support by a vote of 160-7. The bill has been assigned to the Senate Insurance and Labor Committee and will certainly be passed this session.

[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

100 Edgewood Avenue
Suite 975

Atlanta, GA 30303
Phone: 404-523-6674

[Forward email](#)



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



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