

## News from GATES...

Georgia Association of Training, Employment and Supports



# A session lite on bills but fast on budget

by Dawn A. Randolph, MPA  
February 15, 2106

### ***Session Schedule this week***

The legislature will be in Tuesday-Friday with floor activity in both Chambers in the morning and some committee meetings in the afternoon. A bill of interest is finally moving, [HB 796](#), Georgia ABLE legislation, is on the agenda of a House Ways & Means Income Tax Subcommittee Tuesday afternoon, see details below.

### **Budget Update**

The Senate passed the Amended FY 2016 Appropriations Bill by a vote of 49-0 on Wednesday, February 10, 2016. Since there are only [three pages](#) of very minor differences it should not take long for the House and Senate to work through them and come to a compromise for the bill to then go to the Governor long before the end of this month.

Each House Subcommittee of Appropriations are scheduled to meet Wednesday, Feb 17th from 7:15-9:00am to offer their changes and additions to the FY 2017 big budget in room 341 of the Capitol. If you have time to watch the presentations you can view the committee meeting [here](#). The Human Resources Subcommittee, which is responsible for GVRA, is scheduled for 8:30am.

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Special  
Announcements



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**NOTE:** You can continue to call [members of the House Human Resources Subcommittee](#). Just scroll down to find the Committee list near the end of the webpage. All you need to do is click on their name and it will take you to their page to find their email or office phone number. **We are supporting an additional \$900,000 in state funds to close the gap further on fully funding GVRA.**

You can view the Governor's Budgets online [here](#). You can also follow budget tracking documents for the House [here](#) and the Senate [here](#). Tracking documents show the changes at each stage of the budget process.

### **Senate Bills**

No Senate bills of interest under consideration or introduced at this time.

### **House Bills**

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 13, 2015 by a vote of 169-0. Although the bill received a vote on Crossover Day the Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee never gave it a hearing. It is now awaiting consideration by the Senate Committee. **NO CHANGE**

As a result of several House Study Committees and the strong advocacy of many in the disability community several key members of House leadership have signed on to support [HB 768](#). The Georgia ABLE legislation (Achieving a Better Life Experience) will allow families to create and contribute to tax-exempt accounts that can fund qualified expenses to support people with disabilities. The bill has been assigned to the House Ways and Means Committee and put in the Income Tax Subcommittee. **The bill is on the agenda for Tuesday, Feb 16th in room 133 of the Capitol at 3pm.**

Representative Tom Kirby (R-Loganville) and several others on both sides of the aisle are supporting [HB 796](#) to enhance the rights and responsibilities for service animals. While the bill defines fines up to \$2,000 and up to 30 days in prison for those impeding the rights of individuals accompanied by a service animal it also cleans up language and broadens the rights from service and guide dogs to all service animals. The bill has been assigned to the House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee and awaits consideration. **NO CHANGE**

A bill has been introduced to exempt housing for people with physical disability from the ad valorem tax. Representative Spencer Frye (D-Athens) introduced [HB 809](#) last week on January 25, 2016. The bill has been assigned to the House Ways and Means Committee. **NO CHANGE**

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## Study Committees

Rep. Penny Houston has introduced [HR 979](#) to create a House Study Committee to examine programs that provide reading services to the blind and visually impaired. The Study Committee would be comprised of seven members; including four Representatives, The PSC Executive Director, The Director of the Board of Regents Public Library Service, and a representative of the Center for the Visually Impaired. The Resolution has been assigned to the Special Rules Committee. If the Study Committee is approved it must publish its report by December 1, 2016. **NO CHANGE**

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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)



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