

News from GATES...

Georgia Association of Training, Employment and Supports



March 24th is Sine Die - Only Two Voting Days Remain

by Dawn A. Randolph, MPA
March 22, 2016



Session Schedule this week

The last two days of the legislature are Tuesday and Thursday, with adjournment on March 24th. There are no committee meetings scheduled, but there could be meetings that pop-up with announcements from the floor. Most of these will be conference committees to resolve differences in bills passed by each Chamber.

Budget Update

While the two versions were not that far apart budget negotiations did take a week longer than expected. Two conference committee meetings were held and this morning they resolved all differences. The budget is being printed and should be on the desks later today for a vote. Passing the budget is the only Constitutional requirement of the Legislature.

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Special
Announcements



**Thursday,
March 24
State Use
Council
Meeting**

10 AM
Sloppy Floyd Bldg
West Tower
18th floor, ATL

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 appears this bill is dead for the year unless it is amended to another bill or a special committee meeting occurs. **DEAD**

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 passed the House by a vote of 161-0 on Feb 23, 2016. While the bill did come out of the Senate Committee clean it was amended on the Senate Floor and passed the Senate March 14, 2016 by a vote of 53-0. The House disagreed to the Senate version with the amendment on March 16, 2016 and now the Senate must either rescind from its position and accept the original bill or a conference committee must resolve the differences so that both Chambers can pass the same bill. **On the MOVE**

Rep. Bubber Epps (R-Dry Branch) with several other Representatives introduced [HB 924](#) on February 4th and it quickly proceeded through committee for a full vote by the House on Crossover Day, Feb 29th, passing 159-13. This bill will give a state sales and use tax exemption to certain sales by qualified job training organizations. Although not specifically stated in the bill it is intended for the Goodwills in the state. The bill has been awaiting consideration by the Senate Finance Committee and there it has remained. Unfortunately with only two days left we may not see this bill pass this year. **No Change**

Representative Brett Harrell (R-Snellville) introduced a bill last week to allow profit corporations to benefit from a tax credit to help finance or own a home for persons with developmental disabilities. [HB 981](#) received a due pass from the House Ways and Means Committee last week and a 164-0 vote by the full House. It has been stuck in the Senate Finance Committee and unlikely to make it out this session. **No Change**

**Thursday,
March 24**

**Working
Wonders
Luncheon**

Noon

Sloppy Floyd Bldg

West Tower

Empire Room, ATL

**Friday,
April 29**

**GATES Board
Meeting**

10 AM

Nobis Works,
Marietta

**Friday,
June 10**

**GATES Annual
Meeting**

10 AM

Anderson
Conference Center,
Goodwill Middle
GA, Macon

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 House voted on the study committee resolution and approved it by a vote of 157-0 on March 2, 2016. The Study Committee must publish its report by December 1, 2016.

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*Charles Hall,
chall@asqinfo.net*

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Georgia Association of Training, Employment and Supports

100 Edgewood Avenue
Suite 975
Atlanta, GA 30303
Phone: 404-523-6674