

News from GATES...

Georgia Association of Training, Employment and Supports



THE GATES PORTAL

New VR \$\$\$ at the half-way mark



by Dawn A. Randolph, MPA

February 22, 2017

Overview

Friday, February 17th, marked the 20th day of the session, the half-way mark. As long as there is nothing to impede the progress of the session over the next six weeks we are set to finish on March 30th. Both the legislative and executive branches focused on the Budget. The Governor signed FY 2017 Amended budget and the House spent the week making their mark on the FY 2018 budget and sent it on to the Senate.

Amended Budget FY 2017

The House and Senate agreed on the very few changes each side made to the Governor's Amended budget for this fiscal year on Valentine's Day. There certainly was a lot of love going around as the vote was 52-0 in the Senate and 171-1 in the House. You can see the few changes [here](#). The Governor signed the budget the next day on February 15th. The budget is now at a record \$23.4 billion in state tax revenue. When you add up all the federal matching funds the entire budget is \$48.3 billion.

Key highlights of the FY '17 Amended Budget include:

- \$109 million to cover enrollment growth in K-12 education.
- \$28.6 million to address the increase in child welfare programs

In This Issue

[New VR \\$\\$\\$ at the half-way mark](#)

Special
Announcements



**Georgia State
Use Council
Mar. 23, 2017**

10 AM

Sloppy Floyd
Building, West
Tower, Conference
Room 1816-A

200 Piedmont Ave.
Capitol Square

- needs.
- \$27.3 million for state law enforcement officers 20% pay increase.
- \$16.8 million to address increased enrollment in dual enrollment for high school and college students called Move On When Ready.
- \$36.5 million economic development grants in OneGeorgia Authority and Regional Economic Business Assistance.
- \$50 million for a new Georgia Cyber Innovation and Training Center in Augusta.

Big Budget FY 2018

Last week the House Appropriations Committee also completed work on additions to the FY 2018 Budget and passed it on to the Senate. As I mentioned in the last legislative update I had the privilege to speak before the committee. You can view the four and a half hours of testimony [here](#). I am at the very end at 4 hour and 38 minute mark. As I talked about the importance of community programs I was asked how much we could use this year to move toward full funding for GVRA. I agreed \$500,000 would be very useful to provide anywhere from \$2.7 to 3 million in new funding. **Well.....the committee heard me and has appropriated \$500,000 in new funding to VR with match to total \$2.5 million.** While it is currently in the wrong line item (BEP) I will be working with the Senate to get it moved to the VR program. This is a huge win for us and I could use your help in thanking the following House members. You can link on their names to get their email or phone number. **A big THANK YOU this week will go along way.**

Human Resources

[Dempsey, Katie M.](#) Chairman
[Broadrick, Bruce](#) Vice-Chairman
[Benton, Tommy](#)
[Epps, Bubber](#)
[Harden, Buddy](#)
[Henson, Michele](#)
[Howard, Henry "Wayne"](#)
[Kirby, Tom](#)
[Morris, Greg](#)
[Oliver, Mary Margaret](#)
[Taylor, Tom](#)

Now it is on to the Senate Appropriations Human Development and Public Health Subcommittee which meets at 7:30am February 23rd.

Legislation

Finally some legislation impacting people with disabilities. Here are a few bills moving through the process.

[HB 288](#) by Rep. Tom Kirby (R-Loganville) clarifies a person with a disability, whether physically or mentally impaired, has the ability to be guided or accompanied by a service animal, replacing dog throughout the code section. It also provides penalties to anyone misrepresenting themselves as a service animal trainer, handler or breeder. It also adjusts the code to ensure no one harass a service animal while holding

Atlanta, GA

Working Wonders Recognition Luncheon

Mar. 23, 2017

Noon

Sloppy Floyd Building, West Tower, Empire Room

200 Piedmont Ave.

Capitol Square
 Atlanta, GA

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*Charles Hall,
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the person liable for any property damage by a service animal. The bill has been assigned to the House Judiciary Non-Civil committee.

[HB 343](#) by Scott Hilton (R-Peachtree Corners) is a update to the criminal code to replace "mental retardation and mentally retarded" with the term "intellectual disability". The bill has been assigned to the House Judiciary Non-Civil committee.

[SB 4](#) by Sen. Renee Unterman (R-Buford) creates the Georgia Mental Health Treatment Task Force. This creates a committee to include legislators, state agency officials and advocates to examine mental health and substance abuse services. The bill passed the Senate February 7, 2017 by a vote of 44-0. It awaits consideration by the House Health and Human Services Committee.

[SB 118](#) by Sen. Renee Unterman (R-Buford) extends the age of benefits for children with autism from 6 to 21 years. Last year Senator Unterman successful moved her bill to cover children with autism in private insurance plans but limited that to children up to age 6. This bill moves that to age 21. The Senate Insurance and Labor Committee quickly reviewed and approved the bill for due passage. It awaits a vote by the Senate.

[SB 144](#) by Sen. Ed Harrison (R-Columbus) has introduced a bill to designate lottery funds for veterans services. The bill would direct funds to services and programs to aid with post-traumatic stress disorder, homelessness, health insurance support, disability benefits, veterans service organizations, centers and commissions, long-term care, and employment or employment training. The bill has been assigned to the Senate Higher Education Committee.

Study Committee Resolutions

[HR 318](#) by Rep. Tom Kirby (R-Loganville) creates the House Study Committee on Inclusive Postsecondary Education to evaluate and make recommendations on the opportunities for students beyond high school in higher education. The resolution has been assigned to the House Special Rules Committee.

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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



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