

News from GATES...

Georgia Association of Training, Employment and Supports



THE GATES PORTAL

Budget in Conference



by Dawn A. Randolph, MPA
March 20, 2017

Overview

Monday, March 20th, marks the 36th day of the session. This week the session will be in voting Monday, Wednesday and Friday and next week Tuesday and Thursday, ending March 30th. Legislators have slowed in their introduction of new bills and are focusing on resolutions in commendation of accomplishments, creation of study committees or local bills for cities and counties. Since this is not an election year the process has been more focused on issues that have consensus, although a few controversial provisions have been attempted to amend bills.

FY 2018 Budget

The Conference Committee held it's first open meeting at 8:30am Monday morning to do (what I like to refer to as) the opening bow in what is the dance of the budget negotiations. Chairman Terry England (R-Auburn), Chair of the House Appropriations Committee opened by stating, "Don't see us as having a lot of heartburn or disagreement." Chairman Jack Hill (R-Reidsville), Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee agreed, "There's a lot to feel good about...not a lot of policy difference." You can view their short exchange [here](#), you will have to wait about 7 minutes into the 12 minute video to see their short 5 minute exchange that is the Tango of budget negotiations. So far so good for the \$500,000 in state funds for training, employment and supports.

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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
Atlanta, GA

Legislation

Most of the bills we are following made it to the next chamber on Crossover Day. Those that did not could still have key elements amended into another bill. We will continue to track these bills during the final month of the session.

Service Animals

[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 the person liable for any property damage by a service animal. The bill has been assigned to the House Judiciary Non-Civil committee. **Not viable for passage this session.**

Rep. Kirby has also introduced [HB 473](#) which has similar provisions but also includes oversight by the Georgia Department of Human Services. HB 473 was introduced on February 22nd and has been assigned the House Health & Human Services Committee. **Not viable for passage this session.**

[HR 510](#) by Rep. Kirby creates the House Study Committee on Service Animals for Physically or Mental Impaired Persons comprised of five House members to examine how to handle legitimate versus "fake service animals". The resolution has been assigned to the House Special Rules Committee and is likely to be put into place before the end of the session. **No change.**

[HB 343](#) by Scott Hilton (R-Peachtree Corners) is an update to the criminal code to replace "mental retardation and mentally retarded" with the term "intellectual disability". The House passed the bill by 168-0 and it has been assigned to the Senate Judiciary Committee. **No change.**

[HB 475](#) by Rep. Buddy Harden (R-Cordele) addresses the placement, permission and appearance of collection receptacles on property not owned or leased by the owner of the collection receptacle. This bill passed the House 162-3. The Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee meet last Monday and worked on language requested by United Way of Atlanta and it passed out last Thursday. **Awaits Senate Floor vote.**

[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. Reported favorable out of the House Health and Human Services Committee on March 14th **Awaits**

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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House Floor vote.

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. **No change so the bill is not viable to pass this session.**

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. **No change so this bill is not viable to pass this session.**

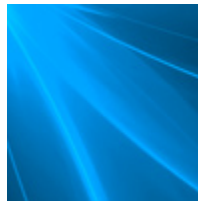
Study Committee Resolutions

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. **No change but as a House only Study Committee it is still viable for consideration.**

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Call for Information

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