

News from GATES...

Georgia Association of Training, Employment and Supports



THE GATES PORTAL

Sine Die...



by Dawn A. Randolph, MPA
April 4, 2017

Overview

That's a wrap. The 2017 Georgia legislative session ended just a little over 30 minutes after the clock passed over into March 31st. Last year we also went after midnight and it was determined that a day does not end in the legislative rules at the stroke of midnight but when it is gavelled to a close. As usual they attempted to get all the bills finalized during the last day, but some did not make it. Now the Governor and his staff have 40 days from March 30th to sign or veto bills. Unfortunately the majority of bills we followed did not make it out alive and will have to be considered next year. All bills are put back into the last committee they came out of to start the process again.

FY 2018 Budget

If you missed it, last week the budget was settled two weeks ago with [HB 44](#) voted out of both chambers Wednesday March 22nd. The House passed the final version of the budget 172-1 and the Senate 52-0. This includes the \$500,000 in new state funds for training, employment and supports for the vocational rehabilitation program for a total of \$2,500,000! You can see the funds [here](#) on page 133 line 200.6. Like any bill the Governor has 40 days to sign the budget. As you may recall, Georgia's Governor has line item veto. He has used that in the past to strike out budget items that he deems unnecessary. **We now need you to call the Governor's office to support the GVRA budget new money. Please call 404-656-1776 and let them know you support**

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Special
Announcements



**GATES Board
of Directors
Meeting**

Apr. 21, 2017

Time: 9:30 AM

Location: Nobis
Works - Marietta,
GA

the \$500,000 in state funds on line 200.6 for vocational rehabilitation training, employment and supports to put people to work in your community.

Legislation

Here is the final round up on bills for this 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. **House did not approve.**

SR 467 by Senator Renee Unterman (R-Buford) creates a Senate Study Committee on Service Animals for Physically or Mental Impaired Persons as a companion to HR 510 to allow the Senate and House to meet on this issue since they did not put forward a joint resolution. This resolution moved quickly and was reported out of Senate Rules on March 22nd. **Senate did not approve.**

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. **House agreed to the Senate Substitute and should be transmitted to the Governor soon for a signature.**

HB 475 by Rep. Buddy Harden (R-Cordele) addresses the placement, permission and appearance of collection receptacle on property not owned or leased by the owner of the collection receptacle. This bill passed the House 162-3. **Did not get a Senate vote. It will need to be considered next year.**

GATES Annual Meeting

June 9, 2017

Location: Goodwill of North Georgia - Decatur, GA

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*Charles Hall,
chall@asqinfo.net*

[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 and House by substitute on March 24th 138-5. **While the Senate did agree to the House substitute the last day the House turned around and disagreed so this must be put on hold until next year.**

[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. **The resolution did not get a vote.**

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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



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