

News from GATES...

Georgia Association of Training, Employment and Supports



THE GATES PORTAL

Time is passing



Dawn A. Randolph, MPA
March 26, 2018

Key Events This Week

Week 12 of the session will be voting in Chambers Tuesday and Thursday.

Wednesday, March 28th Memorial for Governor Zell Miller

Thursday, March 29th - Sine Die, last day of the session

Goodbye to the creator of HOPE, Governor Zell Miller has passed away

On Friday, March 23, 2018 former Governor Zell Miller passed away at the age of 86. He will lie in state Tuesday afternoon in the rotunda of the State Capitol and then an executive Memorial will be held at the Capitol Wednesday. Former Presidents Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush will attend a church memorial Tuesday morning. The public is welcome to all memorial events.

Two voting days and it will be finished

All that is left is the budget and nearly 100 bills sitting on the calendar or awaiting a conference committee to work out differences between

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Special
Announcements



**GATES Board
of Directors
Meeting**

**Friday,
April 27th,
2018**

10:00 AM

Location: TBD

the House and Senate. Only two bills we have been following, SB 406 and HR 1296, are still uncertain.

Budget Process

On Wednesday, March 21st the Senate Appropriations Committee met to announce their recommendations. There were no real surprises and no more money for GVRA or other disability issues. The Senate then passed out the budget Friday with Senate Appropriations Chair Jack Hill (R-Reidsville) stating that there should be an easy conference to work out minor differences with the House. However, Senator Hill acknowledged there are no pay raises for teachers or state employees and he hoped to work that out in conference. Passing a budget is the only Constitutional duty the General Assembly must complete so they will finalize the budget by the last day on March 29th.

Legislation

[HB 794](#) and a companion resolution [HR 991](#) is sponsored by Rep. Sandra Scott (D-Rex) to create the "Georgia Lottery for Assistance of Homeless Military Veterans Act" to designate lottery game(s) for the purpose of providing funding for programs to address homelessness among the veteran population in Georgia. Both the bill and resolution have the same set of Democratic Representatives. **House Higher Education Committee. NO CHANGE - likely dead.**

Senator Michael 'Doc' Rhett (D-Marietta) is sponsoring [SB 360](#), a bi-partisan bill to direct the Department of Administrative Services to ensure that 10 percent of its contracts and purchases are from small business owned by veterans with disabilities. **House Economic Development and Tourism Committee. NO CHANGE.**

Governor Deal mentioned in his State of the State Address that he would be moving The State Workforce Development Board and its programs to the Technical College System of Georgia to create a symbiotic relationship with future employees and employers. Senator Brian Strickland (R-McDonough) introduced [SB 377](#) to codify the transfer into law. **Senate passed 51-0. House passed March 19th. Awaiting the Governor's signature.**

Georgia's Employment First Act. Rep. Terry Rogers (R-Clarkesville) is the main sponsor of [HB 831](#). The bill's primary focus is to create a 14 member Employment First Council. The list of those who will serve on the council is named in the bill and includes a representative from the association of community rehabilitation providers (GATES) and added a representative from SPADD (DD provider association) during a committee substitute. The Council will be attached to GVRA and has 5 responsibilities:

1. Developing a plan for employment first training;
2. Coordinating with other state, federal and private agencies on

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- educational and awareness activities;
- 3. Evaluating funding mechanisms;
- 4. Review and make recommendations for a biannual report to the Governor and General Assembly; and
- 5. Other functions as assigned by the Governor.

House passed the bill 174-1 on Feb 28th. Senate passed 51-1 on March 15th. The bill goes to the Governor for his signature.

Rep. Penny Houston (R-Nashville) has introduced [HB 844](#) to expand the Georgia Commission on Hearing Impaired and Deaf persons to add two members, change language from "hearing impaired" to "deaf and hard of hearing", create a multiagency task force to target children birth to third grade, and submit a report by September 1st of each year. ***The House passed Feb 28th by 171-1. Senate passed 49-0 on March 15th. Goes to the Governor for his signature.***

Rep. Carl Gilliard (D-Garden City) has sponsored [HB 891](#) to ensure a person who is blind is not discriminated against when being considered in child custody, guardianship, visitation, placement and adoption decisions. ***The bill was assigned to the House Judiciary Committee on February 12th. NO CHANGE - likely dead.***

Sen. Brian Strickland (R-McDonough) is sponsoring [SB 406](#) to require background checks of all employees working with the senior population. The requirement will be for nursing homes, home health, hospice, and adult day care. If you provide adult day care you may want to take a look at this bill. ***The Senate passed 52-1 on Feb 26th. House passed the substitute 163-4 on March 15th. Because there are changes the Senate must agree or go through a conference committee if the bill is to pass this session.***

Senator Lester Jackson (D-Savannah) has introduced [SB 408](#) to require a licensed clinician to be present during a law enforcement officer's interview with a person with autism. While it is doubtful this bill will have time to make it through the session it is something that you may want to consider if you work with people with autism. ***It has been assigned to the Senate Public Safety Committee. NO CHANGE - likely dead.***

[HR 1296](#) was introduced to study whether there is a need for a certification process and identification card for service animals. Rep. Kim Schofield (D-Atlanta) has heard that people are passing their pets as service animals creating confusion and difficult situation in hotels, restaurants and other public businesses. This committee would meet to determine solutions and legislation around training and certification process for service animals. ***The bill has been assigned to House Special Rules. Since it is only a House Resolution it can still be passed this session.***

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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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