

## News from GATES...

Georgia Association of Training, Employment and Supports



THE  
**GATES PORTAL**

### Legislature Schedules Busy Week



**Dawn A. Randolph, MPA**  
March 5, 2018

#### Key Events This Week

*Week 9 of the session will be voting in Chambers Monday, Wednesday and Friday.*

*March 5 at 2pm in room 341 Capitol Senate Budget*

*March 5 we are 3/4 way through the session set to sine die on March 29th.*

#### Crossover Day was busy

Last week all bills that each Chamber wanted to move in their original format created two frenzied voting days, culminating in the House going past midnight on February 28th. Over 100 bills were debated and voted on in each Chamber those two days. The Georgia Employment First Act (HB 831) made it out of the House by a vote of 174-1.

#### Budget Process

As the House and Senate worked out the changes in revenue through the income tax cut (HB 918) legislation both appropriations bills had to be put on hold. This week the Senate will now take public comment on FY 19 budget but we may not know what the House recommends before the hearing.

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Special  
Announcements



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**State Use  
Council  
Meeting  
Thursday,  
March 22nd  
2018**

10:00 AM

Location: Sloppy  
Floyd Building,  
West Tower,  
Conference Room

## Income Tax Legislation

The House and Senate worked together to pass a major income tax cut with [HB 918](#) to take into account the impact of the federal tax cuts on the state taxpayer. It is estimated Georgia would have collected around \$5.2 billion more in revenue over the next 5 years if they did nothing. HB 918 was introduced and passed out of the House in 48 hours the previous week. The bill lowers income tax from 6% to 5.75% in 2019 and 5.5% in 2020. Included in the House bill was the elimination of the jet fuel sales tax, a bonus of \$40 million to Delta and other airlines. Then Delta rescinded a travel discount from NRA members for their annual meeting. This put the Republican contenders for Governor in a tailspin with Lt. Gov Casey Cagle leading the charge to drop the sales tax bonus. The House agreed to the Senate pulling that out of the bill. Governor Deal signed HB 918 Friday, March 2nd, to set the income tax cut for individuals into motion and allow budget writers to move forward on the appropriations bills.

## Politics

This is qualifying week at the State Capitol for all state level positions from Governor to House of Representatives. There are more than a dozen Republicans who have decided not to run for their seat either because they are seeking higher office or leaving all together, five of them are from Gwinnett County. Qualifying closes at noon on Friday, March 9th. It is highly anticipated that there will be lots of competition for incumbents and open seats. This election season will be a great opportunity to share your story and impact. Getting to know elected officials before they are elected is the best opportunity to educate them on your services.

## 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. ***The bill is in the House Higher Education Committee. NO CHANGE.***

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. ***The bill is in the 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. New Senator Brian Strickland (R-McDonough) has introduced [SB 377](#) to codify the transfer into law. ***Senate passed the bill Feb 23rd by a vote of 51-0. Assigned to the House Industry and Labor Committee on February 28th.***

1816-B,  
200 Piedmont Ave.  
Atlanta, GA

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## Working Wonders Recognition Luncheon

Mar. 23, 2018

Noon

Sloppy Floyd  
Building, West  
Tower, Empire  
Room 200  
Piedmont Ave.  
Capitol Square  
Atlanta, GA

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## GATES Board of Directors Meeting

Friday,  
April 27th,  
2018

10:00 AM

Location: TBD

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**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 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. Assigned to the Senate Economic Development and Tourism.**

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 the bill Feb 28th by 171-1. The bill has been assigned the Senate Health and Human Services Committee.**

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.**

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 the bill 52-1 on Feb 26th. The bill is assigned to the House Human Relations & Aging Committee.**

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.

that you would like to receive THE PORTAL, please send their email address to:

Charles Hall,  
[chall@asginfo.net](mailto:chall@asginfo.net)

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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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## 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](mailto:chall@asginfo.net)



## GATES

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