

News from GATES...

Georgia Association of Training, Employment and Supports



THE GATES PORTAL

EVERYTHING FEELS NEW

Dawn A. Randolph, MPA

January 21, 2019

Key Events This Week

Budget Break this Week. Here is the full [schedule](#) and you can watch the Joint Budget Hearings [online](#).

Key committee times:

Tues, Jan 22 10am - 4:40pm

2:30pm Dept of Community Health

3:00pm Dept of Human Resources & DFACS

Wed, Jan 23 8am 0 12:30pm

10:30am Dept of BHDD

11:00am Governor Brian Kemp

We have entered a new era in Georgia beginning with the Election of Governor Brian Kemp. This is my 24th legislative session and my 30th year working on policy issues in Georgia, except the 9 months when I thought I would be a fundraiser for the American Heart Association. Politics in Georgia is about the long game and this year we enter a new four-year span of statewide elected offices.

We now enter a phase of the unknown. We watched the very close statewide races and saw the intensely partisan commercials. Some of us had a pretty close-up seat to the show. Now enters the phase of



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Special Announcements



State Use Council Meeting
Thursday, January 24th, 2019

10:00 AM

Location: Twin Towers

governing. There will be a grace period this first session for a brand new Governor. What we know for sure is that the players are very new, the Governor's top aides are completely new to policy and governing. We know that while the General Assembly is still in control by the Republican Party they have lost ground to Democrats in the northern suburbs of Atlanta and a few seats in smaller cities. Leadership on the Senate is completely new and on the House side there are changes. These changes will impact governing and policy. Below is a summary of our first week and I would venture to say we will see more changes to come.

Ceremony

The first week of a new term really is about ceremony. The first day, January 14th, all legislators were sworn in and then went over to the GA Tech McCamish Pavilion for the swearing in of the Governor, Lt. Gov and eight statewide constitutional officers. The first day was family day. Legislators and Statewide Elected Officials brought their families to the Capitol and enjoyed the hard fought election victory as their success became real. Legislators received committee and office assignments by the end of the week and there was great anticipation for who would move in and out of leadership positions.

Leadership

The House had few changes in committee chairs. Except for the few who did not return because they retired or died, there is not much to report. The key committees we follow and work in the House had no leadership changes and few new legislators added. New House members rarely get the plum assignments of appropriations, health or education. You can see the full House Committee list [here](#).

The Senate on the other hand is experiencing immense leadership change. First we have the brand new Lt. Governor Geoff Duncan who has only served in the State House since 2012, he has never been a Senator. Lt. Gov Duncan went to GA Tech and played minor league baseball for the first decade of his career. He then became an entrepreneur in marketing and other areas. He had a very quiet service in the State House so there is much we need to learn about the new Lt. Gov. In addition, most of the Senate Leadership has changed. While Senator Butch Miller (R-Gainesville) looks to be the Speaker Pro Temp for many years to come the others are gone. We have a new line up and that include two key committees we focus our attention on; Senate Health and Human Services is now chaired by Senator Ben Watson (R-Savannah) and the Budget committees have yet to be assigned. What we know for sure is Senator Renee Unterman (R-Buford) will not be chairing either committee although she is still a member of the committees. You can find the full Senate Committee Structure [here](#) and we will have the Senate Budget Committees later this week.

The Budget

Usually there is a press release or written State of the State Address. I believe the Governor's staff is still getting organized and updating all their information on the new website. If you want to watch the entire State of the State you will find it at the GPB Broadcast archived [here](#).

GATES Board of Directors Meeting

**Friday,
February 1st,
2019**

9:00 AM - 2:30 PM

Location: Creative
Enterprises,
Lawrenceville, GA

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*Charles Hall,
chall@asginfo.net*

As I analyzed the Amended FY 2019 and Full FY 2020 Budget this weekend I see that GVRA received no new funding for programs. There are minor adds for TeamWorks billings and raises for employees. There are 125 more slots for the NOW and COMP waiver programs in developmental disabilities. The rest of the budget increases in health and human services deal with annual increases to entitlement programs such as Medicaid and to enrollment increases in education.

Governor Kemp in his first State of the State emphasized three investments he would like the legislature to appropriate, two of them he promised on the campaign trail:

1. Teacher raises, he proposes \$3,000 permanent raise moving to the \$5,000 he promised on the campaign trail;
2. In terms of health care \$1 million toward the development of a Medicaid Waiver proposal to allow Georgia more flexibility in managing Medicaid - while he did not promise this directly throughout the campaign he did hint at it in the final weeks; and
3. Raises for state employee by 2%. This is a new initiative.

Flow of the Session

This may be a long session. The first few weeks are set but there are a lot of days off due to the Super Bowl. The adjournment resolution is set to Day 11 that will occur on February 8th. New legislators will learn the ropes and seasoned politicians will be considering what moves to make because this last election was proof that demographic shifts have made Georgia a competitive state again. Policy and politics will tangle a lot along the way.

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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

