

News from GATES...

Georgia Association of Training, Employment and Supports



Crossover Week Commotion with 10 Voting Days to Go

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Key Events This Week

The Senate Appropriations Subcommittee of Human Development and Public Health will meet to hear from agency officials on the FY 2020 budget at 4pm in room 341 of the State Capitol on Monday, March 11th. You may be able to watch the proceedings live [here](#).

House and Senate are in Monday, Wednesday & Thursday, this week. Because this weekend will be St. Patrick's Day they will be out all day Friday.

Flow of the Session

The lead up to Crossover day on Thursday, March 7th was filled with drama over issues of social concern. Monday and Tuesday seemed slow until Wednesday committee meetings unleashed several last minute bills which held the press and new legislators enthralled. Crossover day was extremely long and contentious. The House had three calendars with 64 bills and the Senate had one calendar with 34 bills. While the Senate was able to get through all their bills the House ended its day at 11 pm on a bill to restrict abortion. Most bills passed but a bill regarding Certificate of Need which governs the laws for



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Special Announcements



starting new hospitals in Georgia failed in the House. Some bills on the House side also failed due to adjournment before midnight.

Reminder that the session is scheduled to end on April 2nd - Sine Die.

The Budget

There was no action on the state budget last week due to the urgent nature to get bills out of each chamber. The Senate budget subcommittees are all scheduled to meet early this week to hear from agency officials. The Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency and Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Budgets will present on Monday at 4pm. Senate budget documents can be viewed [here](#).

Legislation

Last week legislators from both Chambers continued to introduce new bills but significantly slower than the past few weeks. House members introduced only 37 pieces of legislation to reach 591 bills assigned to committee with the Senate followed the same path by only processing 10 bills to reach 239. The slow down of bills is not a surprise since it was Crossover week and highly unlikely any of the bills introduced this week would make it over to the other side. Here is an update on bills we are currently tracking. There was one new bill of interest introduced last week, HB 569. The bills which had action last week have their status update in bold.

[HB 1](#) Rep. Petria is proposing to change the name of the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Act to the Senator Eric Johnson Scholarship Act. Senator Johnson is a former Senator from Savannah. **The bill passed the House Education Committee on March 1st but did not make it to the House Floor for a vote by Crossover Day and will be held over to 2020.**

[HB 5](#) Rep. Park Cannon and other Democratic members are sponsoring the Georgia Prospective Employer Act. The bill would prohibit employers from using salary history during the hiring process. This could be helpful to employment opportunities for people with disabilities and veterans. **The bill has been assigned to the House Industry and Labor Committee. Will be held over to 2020 Session.**

[HB 40](#) Rep. Sandra Scott has sponsored a bill to require schools to screen for dyslexia. **The bill has been assigned to the House Education Committee. Will be held over to 2020 Session.**

[HB 69](#) Rep. Scot Turner wants to amend the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Program to allow students of active duty military parents to access the program if they lived in Georgia the previous year or qualify for the scholarship the previous year through an IEP. **The bill was**

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*favorable voted out of the House Education Committee on 2/15/2019. **Did not make it to the House Floor for a vote by Crossover Day and will be held over to the 2020 Session.***

[HB 70](#) Rep. Chuck Efstration is proposing changes to the guardian and ward statute for youth and adults. This may effect those that work with guardians in dealing with court orders. *The House passed by substitute on 2/25/19 by a vote of 170-0. The bill has been assigned to the Senate Judiciary Committee.*

[HB 79](#) Rep. Carl Gillard is sponsoring this bill to change definitions and provisions pertaining to blind persons in child custody issues. **The bill passed the House on 3/5/19 by 167-0. It has been assigned to the Senate Judiciary Committee.**

[HB 102](#) Rep. Chuck Martin is sponsoring a bill to tweak the property tax code for buildings owned by charitable organizations. Truly there are three word changes in this bill but it may impact a non-profit's tax liability in a positive manner. I recommend you have your CPA review the implications for your organization and the positive or negative impact. *The bill has been assigned to the House Ways and Means Committee. **Will be held over to 2020 Session.***

[HB 114](#) Rep. Heath Clark has introduced this bill to remove the sunset date of sales and use tax by qualified job training organizations. I am not sure if this applies to any CRPs but wanted to make everyone interested or impacted aware of this bill. *The bill is before the House Ways & Means Committee. **Will be held over to 2020 Session.***

[HB 123](#) Rep. Bill Werkheiser has proposed moving the State Workforce Development Board from The Technical College System to the Department of Labor. Some may recall that Governor Nathan Deal during his eight years in office removed all of the administrative agencies from DOL and put them into other agencies throughout state Government. This may signal a move to put more programs back under DOL. **This bill received a favorable due pass from the House Industry and Labor Committee on 2/13/2019 but did not make it to the House Floor for a vote by Crossover Day. Will be held over to 2020 Session.**

[HB 126](#) Rep. Randy Nix proposed establishing a GeorgiaBest program within the Georgia Department of Labor. The GeorgiaBest program would be an "employability skills program" with a defined curriculum. When I see a bill like this I typically believe there is someone out there promoting their curriculum. If any CRPs are familiar with this program please let me know so I can share with others. *The House Committee on Industry and Labor favorable passed the bill on 2/13/2019. **Will be held over to 2020 Session.***

[HB 569](#) Rep. Spencer Frye and leading Democratic Representatives have sponsored a bill to establish the State Revenue Investment and Employment Act of 2019 'STRIVE Act' to establish a commission to analyze state policies and revenue investments directed at furthering the economic development of the state and full employment. The bill was introduced on Tuesday, March 5th and had no chance of making it to the floor for a vote this session. ***It has been assigned to the House Industry and Labor Committee and could be a good place to talk about vocational rehabilitation and 110 dollars if it can get a hearing in 2020. Will be held over to 2020 Session.***

[HR 52](#) Rep. John Corbett has sponsored a resolution to bring attention to dyslexia and the impact it has on their educational experience. This type of resolution is really urging educational systems to take this diagnosis more seriously and see the potential of those with dyslexia. ***Assigned to the House Education Committee. Will be held over to 2020 Session.***

[SB 100](#) Sen. P.K. Martin wants to bring the state relay service and audible reading program managed by the Georgia Public Service Commission into the 21st Century. I received a lot of input about this program when I ran for the GA Public Service Commission. By adding wireless devices and applications to the law and striking telephone relay the PSC will be able to upgrade to new technology, a long overdue update. ***The Senate passed the bill on Monday, March 4th by a vote of 55-0. It has been assigned to the House Energy, Utilities & Telecommunications Committee.***

[SR 193](#) & [SR 194](#) Sen. Greg Kirk has introduced two resolutions to create a study committee to transfer the Division of Developmental Disabilities from the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities to the Department of Community Health (DCH). The Study Committee would have this year to make their recommendations and then a bill could be introduced in the 2020 Legislative Session to move the Division effective July 2020. There are two bills because SR 193 is a Senate Study Committee and SR 194 is a Joint Study Committee. The rationale for this bill is because the majority of funding for DD services come from Medicaid, which DCH manages and contracts with BHDD to administer. There has been a thought for many years that DD would be better administered through DCH because of the Medicaid dollars.

The Joint Committee (SR 194) did not pass the full Senate but the Senate Rules Committee can still consider the Senate Study Committee.

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