

News from GATES...

Georgia Association of Training, Employment and Supports



THE GATES PORTAL

Five Voting Days Left in Nine Calendar Days

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Key Events This Week

House and Senate are in to vote Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday this week. The final day of the session or sine die is scheduled for Tuesday, April 2nd.



Flow of the Session

As my 24th year as a registered lobbyist working on disability related issues comes to a close, I always find the last week similar to finals each semester in college. You worked for a few months to comprehend a subject matter and yet most of us still crammed for those exams. The difference here is that the House and Senate each worked their subjects but now they each will posture to win their issues and cram in as much as they want to pass.

The Budget

The Senate Appropriations Committee presented their final budget recommendations last Thursday, March 21st at 8am and then the Senate voted out the budget 55-0 Monday morning, March 25th. There were no funding change differences in the GVRA budget with the House so the GVRA budget is technically finalized by the legislature. The Senate did add language *the Georgia Council on Development Disabilities requested to fund an increase for Academic*

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Special Announcements



THE PORTAL is a

transition Teachers in Inclusive Post-Secondary Education (IPSE) programs. This amounts to \$106,500 in state funds to draw down \$393,500 in federal funds for a total of \$500,000 to expand IPSE. This increase has been desired by the House and will likely be agreed to in the Conference Committee.

Immediately upon the Senate passing the budget it was transmitted to the House. In line with the rules the House disagreed to the total changes, the Senate insisted and this allows the Chambers to immediately set-up the budget conference committee. That committee will be working over the next few days to ensure the budget is approved by April 2nd with all changes from the Governor's budget made by the legislature the same. The Conference Committee is comprised of three Senators (Jack Hill, Mike Dugan & Butch Miller) and three House Members (Terry England, Jon Burns, Jan Jones). Again, there are no changes in GVRA that impact CRPs.

Senate budget documents can be viewed [here](#).

Legislation

Last week House members introduced 42 pieces of legislation to reach 661 bills assigned to committee with the Senate processing 18 bills to reach 260. Bills introduced this session will be held over to the 2020 Legislative Session for consideration. There was one resolution of interest introduced last week (note below marked by **New**). 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 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.*

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[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 Senate Judiciary Committee favorably reported out the bill by substitute on March 21st.***

[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. **No Action in the past week but can still pass this session.***

[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. ***The House Education Committee decided to move on it March 21st and voted it out of committee. Since this is an urging resolution by the House it was placed on the rules calendar for a vote March 25th.***

New [HR 530](#) Rep. Karla Drenner filed a resolution last week to urge Uber and Lyft to incorporate wheelchair accessible services into their ridesharing. The bill has been assigned to the House Transportation Committee. A resolution of this nature cannot require a company to change their business practices but raises awareness to several statistics and urges them to support ridesharing services for people with disabilities who need wheelchair support. ***It is uncertain if this resolution will be considered this 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. The House Energy, Utilities & Telecommunications Committee voted a due pass on the bill and is eligible for a House floor vote this week.***

[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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