

News from GATES...

Georgia Association of Training, Employment and Supports



Advocacy pays off in the House

Dawn A. Randolph, MPA

February 18, 2020

Key Events This Week

Session is back this week for four days - Feb 18-21



Tuesday, Feb 18th 7:00 am

House Appropriations committee presented their changes to the Amended FY 21 budget.

Wednesday, Feb 19th

House will vote on the amended budget and send it over to the Senate.

Budget Details

Last week both House and Senate Appropriations subcommittees met separately to dig into the details on both the amended FY 20 and the full FY 21 budgets. The House took testimony and advocates lined up to tell their stories and explain how cuts would negatively impact their lives. Cuts to developmental disability, mental health, substance use disorder services, and county boards of health were the focus of concern.

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Special Announcements



State Use Council Meeting

Thursday,
March 26, 2020
10:00 AM
Sloppy Floyd Building,
West Tower,

Legislators patiently sat for up to four hours in committee hearings about the cuts and asked questions. Appropriations staff followed up with presenters requesting more details and drilling down to what was truly needed for programs to maintain services. It reminded me of times in the early 2000's when people stood up for their needs. This time advocacy really paid off as the House subcommittee Chairs all came together to restore human services and healthcare cuts.

Chairman Katie Dempsey said it best Tuesday morning at 8 am when she took the microphone to say that while she was the final subcommittee reporting it was fitting because the others had come together to offer up funds to help restore the majority of cuts in the budget she oversees. Typically each subcommittee must stay within its financial purview, but this time others came to those most in need.

Funding for Intensive Family Supports provided through the Bobby Dodd Institute were restored in half to \$500,000 for the last quarter of FY 21.

Adult Addictive Diseases \$761,970 was restored to put 22 residential treatment beds in service.

For Adult Mental health, while there were no cuts to crisis or core services, \$2,553,087 was added to crisis bed infrastructure and \$2,847,268 was put into core services.

Marcus Autism Center had \$750,000 restored from the \$1,087,686 cut.

There were no changes in GVRA or supported employment cuts in mental health.

You can see the full house tracking document [here](#). If you have the time you can watch the House Appropriations Committee [vote on Feb 18th](#). Now it is on to what we call the "big budget" for FY 21 in the House while the Senate will start work on the amended FY 20 budget.

New Bills

(No activity on bills this week nor were new ones introduced)

Rep. Carl Gilliard (D-Garden City) proposed two bills last week to address the minimum wage in Georgia. The first bill, [HB 804](#), would prohibit employers from paying less than minimum wage to people with disabilities and [HB 805](#) would change the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$7.25/hour. There are several exceptions in HB 804 in terms of

Conference Room

Working Wonders Luncheon

Thursday, March 26, 2020

12:00 Noon

Sloppy Floyd Building, Empire Room

GATES Board Meeting

Friday, April 24, 2020

10:00 AM

Location, TBD

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employing people with disabilities; such as a person's disability offers many restrictions to employment or performance of the job. Both bills have been assigned to the House Industry and Labor Committee.

Rep. Rick Williams (R-Milledgeville) has introduced a bill to prevent healthcare providers from discriminating against recipients of organ transplant who have a physical or mental disability. The bill is [HB 842](#) and has been assigned to the House Insurance Committee. It is being called Gracie's Law and is being supported by the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities.

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Call for Information

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