

News from GATES...

Georgia Association of Training, Employment and Supports



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Senate Appropriations Makes Minor Changes

Special Announcements:

GATES Board of Directors Meeting:

Friday, April 30, 2021, ZOOM Call - 10:00 AM to noon

Senate Appropriations Makes Minor Changes



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March 23, 2021

Key Events This Week

Session is in three days - March 22, 23 & 25

Senate Appropriations Committee

- *Senate Budget recommendations below*

Two Full Committee Days

- *The House and Senate will use Wednesday and Friday this week to work on bills that have crossed over to get their priority legislation finished by next week.*

Senate Appropriations

Minor changes were made to the FY22 ([HB 81](#)) budget by the Senate. Now the House and Senate will appoint conferees, who are always the leadership of each chamber, to work out the differences and come to agreement. This will be done by the end of the week so they can vote on the budget next Monday. There were no major changes to the GVRA budget. The tracking document can be viewed [here](#).

Bills and Resolutions

[HR 372](#) - Study eliminating sub-minimum wage use and find ways to increase competitive integrated employment

Rep. El-Mahdi (D-Stockbridge) and several other Democrats introduced [HR 372](#) on March 10th. The resolution urges Georgia's Employment First Council "to develop recommendations on how best to transition current use of sub-minimum wage practices to competitive integrated employment options for people with developmental disabilities..." The bill directs the Council "to hold public hearings, study, and construct a strategic plan to present to the General Assembly before December 31, 2021". The goal is to eliminate sub-minimum wage use and find ways to "increase competitive integrated employment". Since this is only a House Resolution it does not need to crossover. Placed in the House Industry and Labor Committee.

[SB 47](#) - Expands eligibility, revises requirements and recalculates amounts of the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Act

Senator Steve Gooch (R-Dahlonega) and several members of the Republican Leadership of the Senate are sponsoring this bill to expand eligibility and requirements of Georgia's Special Needs Scholarship. Basically, it pays for children with a special need diagnosis to attend private schools. Senator Gooch stated that 3% of those with an IEP take advantage of the scholarship. The Scholarship has been in place for the last fourteen years. The bill expands those eligible by diagnosed conditions to include children with mental health and substance use disorders as well as those on the autism spectrum. It addresses military families who move frequently to allow them to take advantage of the scholarship sooner. It enumerates the types of services which the scholarship can fund in Section 3 of the bill. Most Democrats in the Senate opposed the bill arguing that private school vouchers take funds from public schools and the scholarship is still out of reach for moderate to low income families who cannot afford the extra private school fees or the ability to obtain a doctor's diagnosis or Section 504 designation. The bill passed the Senate 33-14 on 3/3/21 and has been referred to the House Education Committee. If you would like to see the Senate debate click on this [link](#) and you can fast forward to time 1:58. March 3rd was a long day in the Senate so if you want to watch this debate you will want to skip ahead. Assigned to the House Education Committee.

FY '22 Budget Details - House Recommendations

NOTE: Cuts are in **bright red** while any additions are in **green** and house & senate changes in **purple**. Overall, any increase in funds have come from the federal government due to COVID-19 and various changes to the FMAP formula (Federal Medical Assistance Percentage) or from the CARES Act. Cuts or reductions in funding was supplanted with federal funds. If you want to look at the [budget tracking document](#) with the Senate changes you can view it online.

Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation

Department Administration

Purpose: The purpose of this appropriation is to help people with disabilities to become fully productive members of society by achieving independence and meaningful employment.

Recommended Change:

Governor made no recommended changes.

House made no changes.

Senate made no changes.

VR Program

Purpose: The purpose of this appropriation is to assist people with disabilities so that they may go to work.

Governor made no recommended changes.

House made no changes.

Senate made an add for FODAC (*Friends of Disabled Adults and Children*) of **State Funds \$25,000** for equipment.

Dept. of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities - Service Impact

Adult Developmental Disabilities Services

Purpose: The purpose of this appropriation is to promote independence of adults with significant developmental disabilities through institutional care, community support and respite, job readiness, training, and a crisis and access line.

Governor Recommended Changes = House and Senate have agreed:

- Increase fund for 100 additional slots for the New Options Waiver (NOW) and the Comprehensive Supports Wavier Program (COMP) for individuals with intellectual disabilities **\$1,957,356**.
- Increase funds to reflect the adjustment in the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) from 67.03% to 66.8% **\$1,541,873**.
- Increase funds to reflect the loss of the enhanced Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency **\$10,925,195**.

House Recommended Additions = Senate agreed to all House additions

- Annualize funds for a behavioral health crisis center for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. State Funds **\$7,028,616**.
- Provide funds for a 5% rate increase for intellectual developmental disability providers with approval by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. State Funds **\$12,343,734**.
- Restore funds for non-wavier services in family support. State Funds **\$4,656,799**.

Senate Recommended Additions

- Increase funds for respite services with priority to rural communities. **State Funds \$1,500,000**
- Increase funds for Rockdale Cares for respite services. **State Funds \$100,000**

Total Change State Funds \$29,128,378 & State Funds increase because of COVID-19 FMAP 10,925,195

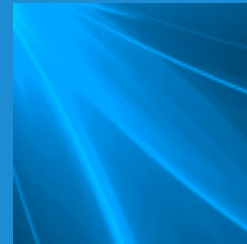
House Recommended Language changes without any additional funds:

Pending final approval by Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, reflect the department's intent to amend Appendix K to provide a time-limited rate increase for providers serving the intellectual and developmental disability population, including adult day centers and residential services. (H:Yes) (S:Yes)

Pending final approval by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, reflect the intent to continue to serve the estimated 188 individuals who are currently receiving community living supports services who may be impacted by the COMP waiver renewal with alternate service(s). By December 1, 2021, provide a report to the chairs of the House Appropriations Human Resources Subcommittee and the Senate Appropriations Human Development and Public Health Subcommittee on how this population will continue to receive services based on their assessed need following the extended transition period. (H:Yes) (S:Yes)

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



GATES

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