

Davenport Courier

Legislative Update

January 2016

Inside this issue:

Session Week One	2
Session Week Two	3
Session Week Three	4



Capitol Coverage

- Legislative update
- Capitol Day Events
- Senator Davenport in Action



A Message from Senator Davenport

The Gold Dome filled up once again on Monday, January 11, 2016, to begin the second session of the 153rd Georgia General Assembly. With Sine Die being set for March 24, this session promises to be a productive one as my colleagues and I work together to serve our communities and the great state of Georgia. I look forward to doing my best to represent district 44 as we enter another exciting year. In the meantime, please don't hesitate to contact my office at any time with your questions and concerns about any legislation."

-Senator Gail Davenport (D – Jonesboro)

Senator Davenport in Action...



I was honored to have Emily Gawel from M.D. Roberts Middle School in Jonesboro as my Senate page.

If you are interested in serving this year as a Senate Page, please contact my Capitol Office: 404.463.5260

*Must be 12 years of age to participate in the Page Program.



Week One

MONDAY, JAN. 11 DAY 1

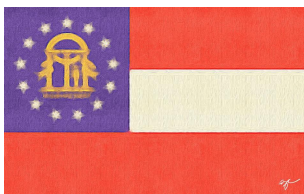
Lt. Gov. Cagle and Sec. of Senate Cook Welcome Senators

Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle welcomed all 56 senators back for the first day of the 153rd Georgia General Assembly. Sec. of Senate David Cook greeted Sen. JaNice Van Ness (R - Conyers) and Sen. Larry Walker (R - Perry) to their first legislative session. Both won special elections on December 1, 2015 and were sworn in on December 18, 2015.

TUESDAY, JAN. 12 DAY 2

Clayton State University Day at the Capitol

I sponsored Senate Resolution 685, making January 12, 2016, Clayton State University Day at the State Capitol and recognizing Clayton State University for its outstanding efforts to provide students access to an affordable, quality education. Home to over 7,000 students, Clayton State University was ranked number one for best value in Georgia higher education by James Magazine for the second consecutive year. – **SR 685**



WEDNESDAY, JAN. 13 DAY 3

State of the State Address

Gov. Nathan Deal outlined his recommendations for the FY 2016 amended budget and FY 2017 general budget at the annual State of the State Address given in front of a joint session in the House Chamber on January 13th. His sixth address largely focused on education issues. Gov. Deal outlined an executive action to create a Teacher Advisory Committee that will oversee the implementation of education policy, a plan to raise wages of both teachers and other state employees in Georgia by three percent. He also briefly over-viewed his criminal justice reforms.

National Guard Day

Sen. Mike Dugan (R - Carrollton) and others sponsored a resolution to establish January 25, 2016 as National Guard Day at the Capitol. Over 10,000 Georgia men and women currently serve in the Georgia National Guard. - **SR 688**

THURSDAY, JAN. 14 DAY 4

Rep. Lynn Westmoreland welcomed by the Senate*

The Senate welcomed U.S. Rep. Lynn Westmoreland (R - GA) as a special guest. Rep. Westmoreland addressed the Senate, encouraging both minority and majority senators to actively participate in the roles given to them by their

constituents. He also cautioned leaders to not allow passivity through sessions but to engage in the process with their hearts; keeping in the forefront of their minds the people they serve. Rep. Westmoreland will not seek re-election to the United States House of Representatives in 2016.

FRIDAY, JAN. 15 DAY 5

Senate Wins Trophy for Legislative Livestock Best in Show

Agriculture Commissioner Gary Black and Sen. John Wilkinson (R - Toccoa) presented the Senate with the trophy for "Best in Show" at the Legislative Livestock Showdown. The Georgia House and Senate annually meet at the Georgia National Fair in Perry to learn more about Georgia agriculture and the importance of programs such as 4-H and FFA. This year, the Senate team was represented by Sens. John Wilkinson (R - Toccoa), Greg Kirk (R - Americus), Burt Jones (R - Jackson), Tyler Harper (R - Ocilla), Harold Jones (D - Augusta) and Renee Unterman (R - Buford).

Senate welcomes Nigerian delegation

Sen. Gloria Butler (D - Stone Mountain) introduced a delegation from the African country of Nigeria. Chief Johnbull O. Ejovi, the leader of the delegation, addressed the Senate and thanked them for their hospitality. Sen. Butler visited Nigeria and learned about the



Week Two

country's progressing technological and social advances last November.

MONDAY, JAN. 18

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

The General Assembly took a long holiday weekend in observance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day on Monday, January 18th. Hundreds attended the MLK Annual Commemorative Services held at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta including Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle, U.S. Sen. Johnny Isakson (R - GA) and U.S. Rep. Sanford D. Bishop, Jr. (GA - 02).

TUESDAY, JAN. 19

Budget Hearings

In response to Gov. Nathan Deal's recommendations for the Fiscal Year 2017 general budget, the Senate began budget hearings to focus on economic trends and forecasts to adequately fund essential state services. Senators received briefings from various head of state agencies including Dr. Kenneth Heaghney, State Fiscal Economist, Richard Woods, Superintendent of the Georgia Department of Education, and Clyde Reese, Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Community Health, among others.

WEDNESDAY, JAN 20 DAY 6

Together Georgia Day at the Capital

Sen. Fran Millar (R - Atlanta) sponsored Senate Resolution 708 establishing January 20, 2016 as "Together Georgia Day" at the Capitol. Sen. Millar commended Together Georgia and its partners for their diligent work in providing care to Georgia's children and families. Along with Sen. Millar, Together Georgia President John Blend spoke to senators about the importance of protecting Georgia's youth. - **SR 708**

THURSDAY JAN 21 DAY 7

Joint Appropriation Subcommittee Meetings

The House and Senate Appropriation Subcommittees concluded joint hearings today that began on Wednesday, January 20. Over the two-day period, state agencies presented their additional funding requests to legislators, who will use this information to finalize the FY 2016 amended budget and the FY 2017 general budget.

FRIDAY JAN 22 DAY 8

Atlanta Metropolitan State College Day

The Senate passed a resolution recognizing January 22 as Atlanta Metropolitan State College Day at the Capitol. Sen. Vincent Fort (D - Atlanta) commended the college on their growth and success. Atlanta Metropolitan State College currently enrolls more than 3,000 students, most of which are Georgia residents. Atlanta Metropolitan State College President Gary A. McGaha



Mark your Calendar:

- February 8th**
Early Voting; Presidential Primary
- March 1st**
Presidential Primary
- April 26th**
Registration Deadline
- May 2nd**
Early Voting; State & Local Primary
- May 24th**
State & Local Primary Election
- November 8th**
General Election; Presidential Year



Week Three

MONDAY, JAN. 25 DAY 9

U.S. Sen. Johnny Isakson Welcomed Back by the Senate

The Senate welcomed U.S. Sen. Johnny Isakson (R – GA) as a special guest. Sen. Isakson addressed the Senate and commended all legislators for their hard work in improving Georgia's transportation infrastructure. Isakson said the expansion of Savannah port would make the city a vital point of trade in the American economy. He also praised members of the Georgia National Guard and the U.S. military for their hard work and service to the nation.

Senate Celebrates National Guard Day

Sen. Mike Dugan (R - Carrollton) and others sponsored Senate Resolution 688 recognizing January 25, 2016, as National Guard Day. Adjutant General Joe Jarrard spoke to the Senate about the importance of military readiness and training, while Sen. Dugan lead Army recruit David Lyle, a 2014 high school graduate, in the Army's Oath of Enlistment. Members of the National Guard's Youth Challenge Academy, an at-risk youth program, also served as pages for the Senate. – **SR 688**

TUESDAY, JAN. 26 DAY 10

Human Trafficking Awareness Day

Sen. Renee Unterman (R - Buford) introduced Senate Resolution 794, marking January 26, 2016, as Human Trafficking Awareness Day at the Capitol. Sen. Unterman expressed appreciation for last year's passage of Senate Bill 8, also known as Rachel's Law, and spoke to the many ways the Senate can help eliminate human trafficking in Georgia. – **SR 794**

Senate Honors the Life of Dr. Ozias Pearson

Sen. Valencia Seay (D - Riverdale) introduced Senate Resolution 681, honoring the life and work of Dr. Ozias Pearson. Dr. Pearson was born on November 14, 1932, in Youngstown, Ohio, and worked throughout his life as a leader in the field of both collegiate and public education across the nation. He also served as Executive Director for Human Resources and Instructional Services for the Clayton County School District until his retirement in 1998. – **SR 681**

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 27 DAY 11

State of the Judiciary Address

The Senate adjourned early to attend a joint session in the House chamber and welcomed the Supreme Court of Georgia's Chief Justice Hugh P. Thompson to give the State of the Judiciary address. Main themes included modernizing Georgia's justice system and encouraging arbitration in place of lengthy and expensive court cases. He also advised Georgia courts to review more questions regarding constitutional law, rather than civil or criminal.

Collection of Property Insurance Payouts

Senate Bill 137, sponsored by Sen. Marty Harbin (R - Tyrone), expands current Georgia law to allow corporations to collect full property insurance payouts when a single family or dual family residential unit is completely destroyed by fire. The bill passed unanimously. – **SB 137**

Civil Air Patrol Day

Members of the Georgia Civil Air Patrol were honored by the Senate for their allegiance and character with Senate Resolution 804, sponsored by Sen/ Fran Millar (R – Atlanta). Sen. Millar also invited Lt. Col. Elise Wittword of the Georgia Air Patrol to serve as Chaplain of the Day. – **SR 804**

THURSDAY, JAN. 28 DAY 12

Awarding Service Weapons and Badges to Retiring Officers

Senate Bill 263, sponsored by Sen. Bruce Thompson (R – White), gives cities and counties the authority to award retiring P.O.S.T. certified law enforcement officers with their service weapon and badge upon their retirement or leaving duty due to disability. The bill passed 50 to 1. – **SB 263**

Sugarland's Kristian Bush Visits the Senate

Sen. Jeff Mullis (R - Chickamauga) welcomed Grammy award winning artist Kristian Bush to the Senate chamber. He is a member of the country music duo Sugarland, and released his first solo album Southern Gravity in April 2015. Bush earned a degree in creative writing from Emory University in Atlanta and was inducted into the Georgia Music Hall of Fame in 2012. Sen. Mullis described Bush as one of many to join the "Year of Georgia Music" in 2016.

Georgia's 2016 Teacher of the Year

Dr. Ernie Lee was honored at the Capital for his hard work and dedicated service with Senate Resolution 831 sponsored by Sen. Lester Jackson (D – Savannah). Dr. Lee teaches Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate History and U.S. Government at Windsor Forrest High School in Savannah. Dr. Lee was a corporate lawyer for over 20 years before becoming an educator. As Georgia Teacher of the year, Dr. Lee will lead workshops on issues such as building positive relationships with students, as well as sit on the board of the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education. – **SR 831**

Adjournment Date Set

The Senate, in conjunction with the House of Representatives, set the final adjournment date of the second session of the 153rd Georgia General Assembly for Thursday, March 24, 2016. Crossover day is scheduled for Monday, February 29. The Senate will also break for several committee-only days. – **SR 1114**



GAIL DAVENPORT SENATOR OF THE 44TH

Capitol Office

432 State Capitol
Atlanta, GA 30334
404.463.5260

District Contact

P.O. Box 1074
Jonesboro, GA 30237
678.215.9971

Gail.Davenport@senate.ga.gov