



Senate District 15 – Session Update – 2018

Senate Action

Creating the State Health Benefit Plan Advisory Council

Senate Bill 31 would create the State Health Benefit Plan (SHBP) Advisory Council. This Council would be responsible for advising and making recommendations to the Department of Community Health Commissioner on changes to the SHBP. The bill also requires at least two members of the Board of Community Health to be participants in the SHBP.

Updating Georgia's Cybersecurity Laws

Hacking into another person's computer system would be a crime if Senate Bill 315 is passed into law. The bill creates a new cybersecurity crime, punishing offenders with a misdemeanor which could result in up to a year of jail time, a \$5,000 fine or both.

Sunday Alcohol Sales

Senate Bill 17, more commonly known as the "Brunch Bill," would allow privately owned restaurants and wineries the option to serve alcohol beginning at 11 a.m. on Sundays. As it stands, privately owned restaurants must adhere to current Georgia code which does not allow for the sale of alcoholic beverages prior to 12:30 p.m. on Sundays. However, government-owned buildings, such as the Georgia World Congress Center, do not face these restrictions and are free to pour. This bill is intended to level the playing field between government owned facilities and privately-owned enterprises. Through this bill, local governments are required to hold a vote in their respective jurisdictions, allowing citizens to determine the time for Sunday sales in their community.

Revalidating Automobile Registration Decals

Senate Bill 342 would eliminate the requirement for a Law Enforcement Officer to impound a vehicle that doesn't have a current tag registration decal. Further, the bill allows the owner of the vehicle to keep their vehicle until the assigned court date.

The Georgia Measuring Success Act

As an additional check and balance where our tax code is concerned, we passed Senate Bill 378. This bill mandates that any legislation containing new tax incentives, or the modification of standing tax incentives, to undergo a financial analysis by the bill's author and the state auditor.

Requiring Life Insurance Policy Locator Websites

Senate Bill 248 would assist survivors of deceased loved ones by requiring life insurance companies to review the life insurance policy locator website. This bill is intended to ensure insurance companies find policies held by deceased beneficiaries, in turn allowing their loved ones to claim the policy of which they may have not been aware.

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Back the Blue Measures

We continue to pass legislation in support of our Law Enforcement Agencies and peace officers. Last week we took action on five bills furthering our efforts to “Back the Blue.”

Expanding Jurisdiction for Technical College System Officers

The first came in the form of Senate Bill 348 which would allow Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) law enforcement to exercise the same powers granted to University System of Georgia law enforcement. Under the bill, which expands campus officer jurisdiction of up to 500 ft. from campus, TCSG officers can also enter into agreements with local law enforcement agencies.

Decreasing Wage Disparities for Local Law Enforcement

The second measure passed was Senate Bill 366. This bill would require local governments to submit annual wage compensation information for law enforcement agency employees to the Department of Community Affairs (DCA). The department would be responsible for conducting an analysis of the data which they would return to local agencies as a pay scale guidance. SB 366 also creates a grant program to help designated Tier 1 counties lessen wage disparities among law enforcement officers across county lines. Tier 1 counties are those who do not have the revenue or resources to pay their peace officers as much as neighboring counties.

Supporting Local Law Enforcement Agencies

Senate Bill 367 expands the list of qualified individuals who can receive a state indemnification payment. We recognized the unique hazards inherent in certain public occupations which led us to establish the Georgia State Indemnification Program. The program provides a financial benefit for designated public officers who are disabled or killed in the line of duty. SB 367 outlines that the indemnification would be a onetime payment made for a law enforcement officer killed in the line of duty.

Providing Technical Support for Local Law Enforcement

Senate Bill 368 will allow the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council to provide technical support to local law enforcement agencies by providing equipment, grant funding, operations, training and other local agency needs.

Pre-Trial Fees Helping Peace Officers’ Annuity and Benefit Fund

Senate Bill 369 will require \$5 of every pre-trial diversion fee be paid into the Peace Officers’ Annuity and Benefit Fund. Further, the legislation would require pre-trial fees be collected by the clerk of courts.

2018 Amended Budget

As required by the state constitution, we have passed the first of two budget bills. House Bill 683, known as the “baby budget,” is the supplemental appropriations bill for our state regarding the Amended Fiscal Year 2018 budget. The amended budget will square up any discrepancies between what we predicted last session, and revenue received. The amended budget totals \$25.3 billion. The three largest items in this year’s amended budget include \$86.8 million to account for K-12 enrollment growth, \$82.8 million for Medicaid between state and federal funds and \$25.1 million to expand runway lengths at 11 regional airports.