



Senate District 15 – Session Update – 2019

Senate Action

This week brought the passage of the 2019 Amended Fiscal Year Budget, House Bill 30, also known as the “baby budget.” After weeks of Appropriation meetings, our Senate budget subcommittees submitted recommendations, which prioritizes school safety, education, healthcare and assistance for those in need of emergency relief following the devastation of Hurricane Michael. The Amended Fiscal Year 2019 (AFY 19) Budget totals \$26.9 billion with the largest portion allocated to education at 53.7 percent.

Dyslexia Bill

Last Tuesday, we passed Senate Bill 48 which provides a comprehensive outline for improving dyslexia education in Georgia’s schools. SB 48 would, among other things, require the Georgia Department of Education to develop policies that address dyslexia screening for all students in kindergarten, referrals for students in grades first through third (showing signs of dyslexia) and require the Professional Standards Commission to include information regarding dyslexia in teacher preparation programs. Dyslexia effects nearly one in five individuals and greatly effects a student’s educational experience. I am glad to see this measure pass in Georgia and I am eager to see the benefit for our students who will be granted a better opportunity to succeed under this bill.

Georgia Rural Jobs Act

Last Wednesday the Senate Economic Development and Tourism Committee gave approval to the “Rural Georgia Jobs and Growth Act,” a bill intended to create jobs in rural areas with the state legalization of pari-mutuel horse racing. The “Act” is broken into two separate measures. The first, Senate Resolution 84, would place a question on an upcoming ballot asking our voters whether betting on horse racing should be legal within our state. The Second, Senate Bill 45, would create a Georgia Horse Racing Commission that would be tasked with approving up to three licenses and regulating the facilities.

It has been estimated that horse racing could generate \$1.2 billion worth of small businesses, taxes and new revenues for education initiatives for Georgia with 91% of the projected economic value affecting rural communities in Georgia. I am co-sponsor of this bipartisan legislation and will keep you updated on any movement. The bill now heads to the Senate Rules Committee, where it must be approved prior to consideration before the full Senate.

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We also passed the following bills last week. These measures have been sent to the House for further consideration.

SB 67: would allow for regular funding for school buildings damaged by a natural disaster or fire meeting certain criteria.

SB 99: would allow you to register to be an organ donor at the same time you're applying for a hunting or fishing license through Georgia DNR.

SB 32: would make individuals who commit property damage immune from liability IF they are saving an endangered animal from a locked vehicle.

SB 72: would allow you to hunt on a wildlife management area without a license, addresses requirements of hunting feral hogs within 50 yards someone's property and allows DNR to set bag limits & seasons for deer, raccoons, opossum and bears.

SB 1: also known as CJ's Law, would increase the penalty for a hit and run that results in a serious injury to a felony.

As always, I will continue to update you on all the latest gold dome happenings. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me anytime. Thank you for allowing me the honor of serving YOU within our Georgia General Assembly.