



HEADLINES

with *Senator Ed Harbison*



Senate District 15 – June Update – 2019

As Georgia is considered a part-time legislature, many are under the impression that our work is complete once session concludes. This could not be further from the truth. In fact, I would venture to say that more work is completed outside of the legislative session, than during our 40-days on Capitol Hill. Politics is not for the faint of heart. Every single day we are faced with brand new issues which arise from our ever-changing world. This means that Georgia code is always a work in progress. Change can be tricky, especially where legislation is concerned. There are often situations where we need to act quickly, but responsibly, through open discussion and due process in order to evaluate the best course of action. That is why it is necessary for our General Assembly to coordinate Study Committees outside of the legislative session.

Committee work is the bedrock of our legislative process. Much like we are appointed to standing committees every two-year election cycle, many of us are also appointed to serve on study committees. These meetings, which take place from April to December, give us the opportunity to learn about specific issues in detail so that we know how to vote in a way that best represents the values of our district. In 2019 we have a total of 28 total groups between House and Senate study committees, as well as, joint committees and working groups.

Study committees are put in place to further discuss, research and hear expert opinion on the subject area that may be directly impacted by a piece of legislation. Further, these committees help us eliminate unintended consequences of legislation we pass during session. Depending on the subject matter, committees are formed separately in the House and Senate. At times, joint study committees are put in place and member representatives from each respective chamber will participate in the discussion. These committees tackle complex issues and are often the determining factor of what, if any, future legislation will be brought forward for consideration. 2019 committees are discussing several pressing issues from rural issues and healthcare to freight and logistic planning. For a full listing of study committees, you can visit the Georgia General Assembly website.

We see the positive impact of study committee work year in and year out. In example, over the last few session's most legislation brought forth to address issues plaguing rural Georgia has been a direct result of the Rural Development Council. This council has been so successful that it continues to be in existence. This study committee will continue to look at ways of improving our rural economy by focusing on education, infrastructure needs, access to health care and economic growth incentives. Fortunately, all Georgia citizens have access to our committee work through live streaming. Visit the General Assembly site and click on Senate or House Study committees for more information on meeting times, locations and live streaming availability. You will also find video archives of past meetings.

In other news, Georgia recently received the coveted AAA credit rating for a 22nd consecutive year. This is quite an accomplishment and a true testament to the importance of balancing our budget. Be on the look-out for future updates as we will be covering issues of importance which impact all Georgia citizens. As always, if you need anything at all, please feel free to reach out to me. It is an honor to work on your behalf and I look forward to continuing our efforts to ensure the wellbeing of our district and state.