



## Senate District 15 – Session Update – 2018

Monday, January 22, we returned to Capitol Hill to resume the 2018 legislative calendar. We have already made it through one fourth of this year's legislative session as Thursday brought the completion of legislative day ten. We passed two senate bills and worked with the House to pass an adjournment resolution, which maps out our remaining thirty days on Capitol Hill. As we continue to move forward, there is no shortage of committee meeting work, issue debate and Capitol day events.

### **Senate Action**

Last week, we passed two bills which came in the form of Senate Bill 194 and Senate Bill 327. Senate Bill 194, which passed unanimously, deals with garnishment reform efforts. This legislation makes clear what percentage of earnings should be subject to garnishment, along with updating a few other procedures.

We also passed SB 327 which would update the Georgia Death Investigation Act. Under current law, if an individual passes away when they are not under the care of a physician, a medical examiner is required to issue an inquiry. SB 327 would waive that requirement in situations where foul play is not suspected. This waiver will free up our medical examiners and coroners to investigate deaths that pertain to crimes. Both bills now move to the House, where they will await action through the committee process.

### **Sponsored Legislation**

This year, I have introduced two pieces of legislation. The first, Senate Bill 144, aims to add much needed funding to Veterans Programs through our state's lottery system. The bill would require the Georgia Lottery Corporation to offer one or more games to benefit veterans. Proceeds from the games would be put into the general fund where a special account would be established for our veterans' programs.

The second bill I have introduced is Senate Bill 343, dealing with Public Safety. Under current Georgia law, peace officers automatically receive a renewal of their drug recognition expert certifications. However, new drugs are introduced on a regular basis and it is vital to our public safety sector that enforcement officers be kept up to date on the effects of such drugs. Therefore, this bill would prohibit the automatic issuance and renewal of drug recognition expert certifications by the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council.

### **Capitol Happenings**

Last week we celebrated National Guard Day on Capitol Hill. Several men and women of the Georgia National Guard joined us in the chamber where they were presented with Senate Resolution 609, which I was proud to sponsor with my colleagues. The Georgia Department of Defense provides military-ready forces to the president and disaster response forces to the governor. The department employs over 10,891 Army National Guard Soldiers, 2,746 Air National Guard Airmen, 583 State Defense Force members and

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over 600 state employees. Since 9/11, over 18,000 Georgia National Guard members have been deployed. It was an honor to recognize those who bravely serve in protecting the freedoms we hold dear.

Last week we also welcomed local leaders from my home Columbus, in recognition of Columbus Day at the Capitol. Columbus Day gives our local delegation an opportunity to invite community citizens and local businesses under the Gold Dome, to educate our colleagues of the value our region adds to the state.

We also worked with our counterparts in the House and adopted the final adjournment resolution, which determines our calendar for the remainder of the 2018 legislative session. Legislative Day 40, also known as Sine Die, is the final day of session and is set for Thursday, March 29.

Until then, we look forward to an aggressive schedule which includes the passage meaningful legislation for the betterment of our great state! As always, I will continue to update you weekly during session. If you have questions or concerns, please reach out to me anytime. Thank you for allowing me to serve as your voice under the Gold Dome!