

# Under the Gold Dome



**District 149 Legislative Update – Session Week 1 — 2017**



Monday, January 9th was exciting, as legislators from across the state made their way to the Capitol to mark the beginning of 154<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session of the Georgia General Assembly. It was great to see my legislative colleagues and friends, as we discussed plans to move our state forward. The first order of business took place Monday morning as my colleagues and I were sworn into office. Soon after we immediately began preparation for the 40 legislative days ahead. Issues such as healthcare access, education, medical cannabis, casino gaming and public safety initiatives will be up for debate.

## **State of the State**

On Wednesday, January 11<sup>th</sup>, Gov. Deal delivered his annual State of the State address covering our accomplishments from last year while highlighting hopes for the next. The Governors agenda includes a 20 percent pay raise for state-level law enforcement officers and newly developed officer training courses; an expansion of veteran assistance programs and healthcare access; expansion of Medicaid and PeachCare for Georgia youth; strengthening of Georgia's drug monitoring program; two percent pay increases for teachers. The largest proposal in Gov. Deal's agenda includes plans for the development of the Georgia Cyber Innovation and Training Center, a \$50 million state-owned facility designed to promote innovation in cybersecurity technology. In conjunction with the Department of Defense and the National Security Agency this center will be teaching and preparing students to combat cyber-attacks. The addition of the Cyber Innovation and Training Center will ensure that Georgia is leading the national effort in preventing and fighting cyber-attacks, a major concern in today's world. I look forward to carefully looking at each initiative before taking a final vote on the House floor.

## **Budget Hearings**

The only thing the General Assembly is required to do by law is pass a balanced budget. Budget hearings begin Tuesday, January 17<sup>th</sup>. As a member of the Appropriations Committee, I will be vying for funding in our area of the state. The budget is a living document that will change many times before final passage in the last days of session. I will keep you updated on budget happenings as they occur this session. You can also view the House in action with live and archived committee meeting coverage. I encourage all citizens to become active in the process and review legislation that is put forth by visiting the General Assembly's website- [www.house.ga.gov](http://www.house.ga.gov).

## **Committee Assignments**

At the end of a very busy first week, we also received our committee assignments for the 2017-2018 legislative terms. I am humbled that my House colleagues have once again chosen me to serve as Chairman of the State Planning and Community Affairs Committee. In addition, I am thrilled that I will be able to serve on many more committees that I specifically requested. Knowing the importance of the budget process, economic development and Georgia's healthcare issues, I will also serve on the following committees: Appropriations, Economic Development & Tourism, Health and Human Services, Industry & Labor, MARTOC and as Secretary of the Games, Fish & Parks Committee.

As always, I will continue to keep you updated on the important happenings of your Government at work. In close, I want to thank all of you for giving me the opportunity to serve as your Representative. I will continue to do my best to keep our state and district moving in the right direction. If you ever have any concerns or ideas for legislation, my door is open. After all, that is what I am here for, to serve you, represent you and protect you. God bless each and every one of you and may God continue to bless the great state of Georgia!

Jimmy Pruetts

Georgia House of Representatives, District 149