

24 February 2017

LWVAF, Report from the Capitol, Week 7

This week the General Assembly met for four days, Days 21 through 24. It will return on Monday next week for four more days and conclude on Friday for CrossOver Day. A bill must exit its chamber of origin by the end of business on CrossOver Day, else it will not be considered by the other chamber for passage this session. It will be held over for consideration next year.

Next week this report will be a day or so late so that most bills that pass on Friday can be included.

In anticipation of CrossOver Day, committees and subcommittees have been studying and considering much legislation. The floor calendars are just now beginning to reflect the deluge of legislation that is ready to be debated. In a week, there will be bushels of bills getting the spotlight on the chamber floors. One of the effects of having long sessions in the chamber is that afternoons are not available for committee work. There is still a chance for a bill to get out of committee, but most have already done so.

SR 286 was adopted by the Senate. This resolution may be read at www.legis.ga.gov. It honors and remembers the life of David B. Poythress, husband of our state president, who died on January 15, 2017. Our thoughts and prayers go out to her and her family.

BOLD Bill Number = final passage

TGFS = To Governor for Signature

In CHAMBERS

BUDGET

HB 44 Ralston – 7 **PASSED** House S.Appropriations
FY18. More after the Senate has had a crack at it.

CHILDREN

HB 86 Oliver – 82 **PASSED** House
Entities required to report child abuse to DFCS shall also include reporting acts of trafficking a person for sexual servitude.

HB 250 Ballinger – 23 **PASSED** House S.Special Judiciary
An employee of early care and learning who received a satisfactory fingerprint records check within the previous 24 months is exempt from an additional background check for providing care to children placed in a foster home.

HB 305 Beskin – 54 **PASSED** House
Stepparents and former stepparents are now eligible to be custodians of a child should the court decide it is in the best interest of the child. The child must have lived with the stepparent for a period of time, usually a year, and the adult must agree to be the custodian in all respects.

EDUCATION

SB 3 Tippins – 37 **PASSED** Senate H.Education
Creating Opportunities Needed Now to Expand Credentialed Training, CONNECT, is a grade 6-12 career education program which includes such work based learning such as internships, apprenticeships, cooperative education, service learning or employability skill development. Department of Education to develop the program with Technical College System of GA and may include industry credentialing. Updates to the 6-12 capital outlay programs to include career

education labs and facilities to support industry credentialing and may include funds for equipment grants. Adds industry credentialing to programs of schools eligible to receive students in the BRIDGE program, Building Resourceful Individuals to Develop GA's Economy. This and other industry credentialing programs are for schools which are low performing.

HB 246 Cantrell – 22 **PASSED** House
Repeals the sunset on the annual SHAPE fitness assessment program in schools.

ELECTIONS/ETHICS

HB 42 Lumsden – 12 **PASSED** House & Senate **TGFS**
Ballot mistakes may be reported by the local election superintendent to the Secretary of State for correction. If a federal office is on the ballot, local entities may align special elections and their runoff dates to fall on the same dates as federal elections and runoffs, to save money. *Currently, to correct ballot errors, a citizen must get a court order to get ballot language changed. A federal court has required GA to have runoffs for federal offices later than the state has runoffs for all other offices. Allowing local election superintendents the flexibility to hold local elections and runoffs on the same dates as for federal offices on the same ballot means fewer dates for precincts to be open and fewer cycles of advanced voting, thus saving some money. Elections for federal office often create a domino effect as local office holders vacate to run for higher office.*

HB 268 Fleming – 121 **PASSED** House
Election officials requiring certification must complete the process within six months following their appointment. Repeals provision for municipal registrars. Eliminates as an acceptable photo ID the Bureau of Indian Affairs card number, the tribal card number, or the tribal enrollment number. Polling places outside the boundaries of the precinct shall be determined 90 or more days before an election. Gives precinct workers authority to manage the number of people within a polling place to prevent confusion, congestion, and inconvenience to voters. A voter registration applicant will have 26 months, now 30 days, to correct or submit incomplete information. *A proposal of the Secretary of State.*

GOVERNMENT – GENERAL

SB 108 Walker – 20 **PASSED** Senate
Commissioner of Veterans Services is to maintain a Women's Veteran Office to improve awareness of eligibility for federal and state veteran's services, conduct assessments of the specific needs of women veterans, and review programs, research projects, and other initiatives addressing women veterans in GA. The office shall assist in recruiting and training women veterans to serve as mentors for veterans participating in veterans' courts.

SB 128 Wilkinson – 50 **PASSED** Senate
Adds the Department of Natural Resources to the government agencies to which Department of Drivers Services can release personal information. DNR will use the information to detect and prevent fraud in applications for licenses, permits, and regulations issued by the department.

SB 141 Thompson - 14 **PASSED** Senate
An engineering evaluation is required to get a permit for a carnival ride after 1-1-18.

GOVERNMENT – COURTS AND CRIMES

HB 9 Blackmon – 146 **PASSED** House S.Judiciary
Bans using any device to film under or through a person's clothing by anyone 16 and over without consent of the person observed. Exceptions are law enforcement if investigating or prosecuting a criminal offense or a retailer monitoring a customer changing room if signage conspicuously warns of such surveillance.

HB 303 Ballinger – 23 **PASSED** House
State Commission on Family Violence members have terms increased to 3 years, currently 2 years, with a two consecutive term limit which is not applicable to those serving by virtue of office.

GOVERNMENT – COUNTIES AND CITIES

HB 257 Tankersley – 160 **PASSED** House S.State & Local Government

Requires local government entities to register with the Department of Community Affairs to receive state funds, nor shall it incur debt or credit obligations before registering.

GOVERNMENT - EMPLOYMENT

HB 243 Werkheiser – 157 **PASSED** House

Any additional pay due to schedule changes is not included in the required minimum wage. It is considered a benefit.

GOVERNMENT – ENVIRONMENT

HB 205 Meadows – 5 **PASSED** House

Regulates hydrolic fracking in GA to protect our underground fresh water supply. Increases drilling permit fee to \$500, now \$25. Raises bond maximum to \$100,000. Levies a severance tax on oil and gas extracted with 1/3 going to the county where the well is located and 2/3 to the state.

HEALTH

SB 47 Hufstetler – 52 **PASSED** Senate

Exempts from licensure a physician licensed in another state but traveling into GA with a sports team for training or competition. The physician cannot practice in the state and is limited to serving the team members and staff.

SB 71 Stone – 23 **PASSED** Senate

Health savings accounts and medical savings accounts are exempt from bankruptcy proceedings.

SB 88 Mullis – 53 **PASSED** Senate

Regulates narcotic treatment programs and licenses programs in 49 regions of the state.

SB 102 Miller – 49 **PASSED** Senate

Defines emergency cardiac care centers which are hospital based and similar in organization as stroke and trauma centers. Cardiac Care Centers throughout the state can ensure the rapid triage, assessment, treatment, and transport of patients experiencing out-of-hospital cardiac arrest or heart attack or its complications. There are to be 3 levels of cardiac care centers, with Level I being the most comprehensive. Each level shall seek agreements with hospitals at other levels to facilitate transfer of patients for needed services. The Office of Cardiac Care is established within the Department of Public Health to designate which hospitals are to become emergency cardiac care centers and to collect data with the goal of improving survival rates and adjust any processes as necessary.

SB 106 Kirk – 13 **PASSED** Senate H.Health & Human Services

Anesthesia administered in pain clinics by a certified registered nurse anesthetist within the scope of practice is authorized.

SB 125 Jeffares – 28 **PASSED** Senate H.Judiciary Non Civil

A physician may delegate to a physician assistant the authority to prescribe hydrocodone compound products not in excess of a 5 day supply. Must complete 3 hours of continuing education every two years on hydrocodone medications.

HB 206 Kelley – 16 **PASSED** Senate S.Health & Human Services

Small errors of omission, clerical, computer, or unintentional errors in billing, coding, or required documentation, shall not constitute fraud or a basis to recoup full payment for medical assistance. Proof of intent to commit fraud required to impose criminal penalties.

HB 210 Lott – 122 **PASSED** Senate S.Health & Human Services

Blood banks shall not be included in the term ‘clinical laboratory’ unless the blood or its parts are intended for the manufacturing of biological products and are regulated by the federal drug administration.

HB 262 Lumsden – 12 **PASSED** House

Exempts standalone dental plans from the requirement to provide a printed directory.

HIGHER EDUCATION

HB 37 Ehrhart – 36 **PASSED** House

Private post secondary institutions shall not adopt sanctuary policies. Withholding state funds for the institution and its students can be the penalty. *The minority report indicates there is no process defined for the institution to challenge the ruling, nor does it indicate who or what makes the ruling of sanctuary policies. Withholding of grants, especially Tuition Equalization Grants, will hurt students who had nothing to do with adopting the policy.*

HB 222 Blackmon – 146 **PASSED** House

Members of the GA National Guard or a reservist are eligible for HOPE.

REVENUE/TAXATION

HB 93 Corbett – 174 **PASSED** House S.Finance

A sales tax refund will earn no interest if purchaser had a certificate or exemption letter and did not use it for the purchases.

HB 134 Epps – 144 **PASSED** House S.Finance

A sales tax for transportation purposes for public transit, rails, and buses may be for 20 years. If the sales tax includes roads, bridges, airports, or seaports, it can only be for 5 years.

HB 162 Price – 48 **PASSED** House S.Finance

An income tax refund may be forwarded to the state agency or court to which the taxpayer is a debtor.

HB 238 Hatchett – 150 **PASSED** House

Property subject to conservation use which has solar generation and sale will not breach the covenant, but the acreage used therefor shall be removed from the covenant and be subject to property tax at market value.

HB 247 LaRiccia – 169 **PASSED** House S.Finance

A sales tax exemption for materials used to repair and maintain mixer trucks used to mix or transport concrete. *This exemption is being granted under that which manufacturers have, since the truck makes the cement.*

HB 290 Watson – 172 **PASSED** House

The property tax exemption for farm equipment is extended to that which is leased-purchased in addition to that which is owned.

TRANSPORTATION/DRIVING

HB 150 Powell – 32 **PASSED** House

State Road and Tollway Authority may cause a vehicle registration to be placed on hold if tolls and fees are not paid. May access any state income tax refund to satisfy the indebtedness.

LOCAL

HB 385 Bazemore – 63 **PASSED** House S.SLGO

The City of South Fulton mayor is a part of the quorum of four members and may vote only in case of a tie.

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