



HMHB Legislative Update January 19, 2010

The 2010 Session of the Georgia General Assembly began on Jan. 11. This is the second year of the 2009-2010 session.

The first day was an historic event as two Speakers presided over the day's activities. Mark Burkhalter (R- John's Creek) stepped into the role of Speaker when Glenn Richardson resigned effective January 1st and it was Speaker Burkhalter who convened the 2010 Session. Within a few hours, David Ralston (R- Blue Ridge) had been elected House Speaker and was handed the gavel. Jan Jones (R- Milton) was elected Speaker Pro-Tem and is the first woman to serve at this level of leadership in the Georgia Legislature. Rep. Jerry Keen (R-St. Simon's Island) remains as House Majority Leader and Rep. Ed Lindsey (R-Atlanta) was elected Majority Whip. Rep. Dubose Porter (D-Dublin) remains as House Minority Leader.

Governor Sonny Perdue gave his last State of the State address on Wed., Jan. 13 but broke with precedent and did not present his budget recommendations for Amended FY 2010 and FY 2011 at that time. The Gov's budgets were released on Friday, Jan. 15, but legislators were not in session that day as they recessed at the end of Thursday, Jan. 14 and will not reconvene until Monday, Jan. 25. The House and Senate Appropriations Committees will hold joint budget hearings Tuesday, Jan. 19 through Thursday, Jan. 21.

BUDGET NEWS

Budget documents for Amended FY 2010 and FY 2011 were released Friday, Jan 15. Many of the new budget reductions are made in the Amended FY 2010 and sustained in the FY 2011 budget. As bad as the budget cuts are, they would be much worse if not for the federal stimulus dollars which make up about 9% of appropriated funds in the current fiscal year's budget. It is difficult to make a quick calculation of how deep the proposed budget cuts in the Amended FY 2010 budget actually are, as a portion of the cuts were made earlier in the fiscal year when Gov. Perdue required state agencies to make cuts ranging from 3% to 10%.

We will learn more in budget hearings scheduled for this week. In the meantime, here are some items:

Department of Community Health

- Reduce already low Medicaid/PeachCare fees for doctors, dentists and other providers except hospitals and home and community-based services by 2% in FY 2011.
- Cut county health department grant-in-aid by \$6 M (about 9%) in FY 2010.

- Defer \$225,000 in funding for the Medicaid family planning waiver to reflect delayed implementation.
- Reduce administrative funding for Regional Tertiary Care Centers by \$196,680 in FY 2010 and FY 2011
- Reduce funding for school nurses by \$1.164 million in FY 2010 and by an additional \$436,500 in FY 2011.

Department of Education

- Reduce funding for school nurses by \$1.164 million in FY 2010 and by an additional \$436,500 in FY 2011.

All state employees will be required to take an additional 3 days of furlough in FY 2010 for a total of 6 furlough days.

OTHER NEWS

Speaker Ralston announced the following Committee changes late last week:

Committee Chairs

- Rules - Bill Hembree(R- Winston)(replacing Earl Ehrhart)
- Insurance - John Meadows(R-Calhoun) (replacing Tom Knox)
- Human Relations - Clay Cox(R-Lilburn) (replacing Len Walker)

Appropriations

- Rep. Penny Houston(R-Nashville) will replace Mark Butler as Vice- Chair of the Subcommittee on Human Services.

Prepared for HMHB by Mary Frances Williams.

