



Keeping Current @ the Capitol February 8, 2010

Legislators have completed 13 of 40 legislative days and will be in session Monday through Thursday of this week. With almost one-third of the session gone, few bills have passed either chamber. The legislative calendar has been set through Tuesday, March 8th. After this week, legislators will meet Tuesday through Thursday for the next two weeks. Tuesday, March 3rd will be the 24th legislative day.

The issue of greatest concern for most continues to be the state budget. House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees have been meeting and legislators are clearly concerned about the deep cuts that have been proposed. The House is moving quickly on the Amended FY 2010 budget and may schedule a vote on the House floor by the end of the week.

Although revenues continue to decline, a major piece of legislation that would cut taxes has been introduced. **HB 1023** (Rep. Tom Graves, 12th) is almost identical to legislation vetoed by Gov. Perdue last year because of the estimated \$1.2 billion impact on the state budget. Some legislators have introduced bills that would in contrast to HB 1023, raise revenue. **HB 928** and **HR 1109** (Rep. Chuck Sims, 169th) and **SR 939** (Sen. Greg Goggans, 7th) would remove the sales tax exemption from lottery tickets. Other ideas for increasing revenue include temporarily reducing the value of tax credits by 15 per cent (Rep. Virgil Fludd, 66th) and improving tax collections through electronic data management (Rep. Larry O'Neal, 146th).

HMHB Legislative Agenda Update

Oppose legislation that threatens health insurance benefits such as mammograms, pap smears, and childhood immunizations

SB 309 (Hill, 32nd) would allow out-of-state insurance companies to sell policies in Georgia that do not include mandated coverage the law requires of in-state insurers. It is in the Senate Insurance and Labor Committee.

Other Legislation of Interest to HMHB

HB 955 (Rep. Pedro Marin, 96th) would allow income eligible children and pregnant women who are **legal** immigrants to qualify for Medicaid or PeachCare without the current 5 year wait. Assigned to House Health and Human Services.

SB 329 (Sen. Judson Hill, 32nd) and **SB 330** (Sen. Preston Smith, 52nd) would allow dependent children to remain on their parents' insurance through age 25 whether or not they are students. Both are assigned to Senate Insurance and Labor.

SB 304 (Sen. Renee Unterman, 45th) would set the minimum age of prostitution at 16 (the legal age of consent in Georgia). The purpose of the legislation is to treat young girls who are commercially sexually exploited by being prostituted as victims of child abuse rather than criminals. This would allow diversion for treatment or therapy. Last week representatives from the Georgia Christian Alliance, the Georgia Christian Coalition, Ralph Reed's Faith and Freedom Coalition, and the Georgia Baptist Convention held a press conference in opposition to SB 304. Sen. Unterman has worked hard in recent years to address the problem of commercial sexual exploitation of children in Georgia. Assigned to Senate Judiciary.