



Keeping Current @ the Capitol February 22, 2010

Legislators completed 20 of 40 legislative days last week and are adjourned for two weeks. They will reconvene on Monday, March 8th.

State revenues continue to decline and it is becoming more and more apparent that there will be insufficient revenue to fund even the Amended FY 2010 budget. The House and Senate have cut \$1.2 billion from the FY 2010 budget they passed a year ago, but with January revenues down and February numbers not looking much better, legislators are faced with making even deeper cuts.

BUDGET UPDATE

The Senate passed its version of the Amended FY 2010 budget last Thursday. Normally this would signal the beginning of conference committee talks to resolve the differences between the House and Senate versions of the budget. Further work on the Amended FY 2010 budget has been postponed until early March when February revenue numbers will be available.

Legislators will use the two week recess to begin to look at the FY 2011 budget. Joint House-Senate Appropriations Subcommittees will examine agency and department budgets this week. Legislators are faced with making more cuts and/or finding new revenue sources in order to balance the budget.

HMHB Legislative Agenda Update

Protect funding for the Babies Born Healthy Program

The Senate version of the Amended FY 2010 budget restored the 8 percent cut to Babies Born Healthy proposed by the House. Babies Born Healthy is the only government program that pays for prenatal care for low income pregnant women who do not qualify for Medicaid and in recent years the program has consistently run out of funds before the fiscal year ends. Women who are eligible but are not served due to lack of funds usually end up appearing at a hospital to deliver their baby having had no prenatal care.

The Amended FY 2010 budget has passed the House and Senate.

Further work on the Amended FY 2010 budget is on hold for a few weeks. Because the House and Senate have disagreed on the issue of cutting funds to Babies Born Healthy, the issue will have to be resolved when the House and Senate begin their negotiations on Amended FY 2010.

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

SB 309 (Sen. Judson Hill, 32nd) and **SB 407** (Sen. Hill) would allow insurance companies licensed and regulated in other states to sell health insurance policies in Georgia. These out-of-state companies would be exempted from state laws requiring benefits and consumer protections such as mammograms, pap smears and childhood immunizations. Both bills are being considered by Senate Insurance and SB 407 is the bill that is expected to move forward.

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