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From: Rep. Elly Dobbs [newsletters@wordexpress.ccsend.com] on behalf of Rep. Elly Dobbs [newsletters@wordexpress.info]
Sent: Friday, March 20, 2009 2:42 PM
To: anne@vayasol.com
Subject: House District 53 Legislative Update

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VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Plant the community gardens for the Atlanta Community Food Bank

Saturday, April 4
9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Join Democrats Work volunteers to help plant community gardens in low-income areas of Atlanta. Working with the Atlanta Community Food Bank, we will help make sure neighborhoods have fresh, nutritious food to eat. We will know the location of the garden two weeks prior to our work day, so stay tuned!

Democrats Work

State Representative Elly Dobbs

GEORGIA LEGISLATIVE REPORT

March 18, 2009

Greetings!

This past week was a busy one for the General Assembly. Thursday, March 12th was the 30th day or "cross over day" and the House was in session from 9:00 a.m. until after 10:30 pm, with both houses taking up over 65 measures. Bills must have passed at least one chamber by this day in order to move forward to become law this session unless they are attached to another piece of legislation that has already passed the House or Senate. Below is a summary of some of the bills which have passed either the House or the Senate.



Do not forget to [contact me](#) with your views on any issue that needs to be addressed or whenever I can be of service to you.

Elly Dobbs

CAPITOL UPDATE

TRAUMA CARE

Bills funding trauma care are taking different approaches in the House and the Senate.

[SR 277](#) calls for a constitutional amendment to impose a \$10 vehicle tag fee to help fund the Georgia Trauma Care Trust Fund. This bill passed the Senate on March 10 and is now in the House Ways and Means Committee.

[HB 480](#) calls for comprehensive revision of Georgia's tax laws governing tag and title fees for motor vehicles. A portion of these proceeds are to be allocated in support of the statewide trauma care network. This bill passed the House on Crossover Day and is now in the Senate Finance Committee.

CERTIFIED TEACHERS:

A narrow majority of members of the House of Representatives took another step backward when it comes to education in Georgia on March 12 by eliminating the year-long, rigorous program of National Board Certification for public school teachers and the 10 percent salary increase incentive that goes along with it.



Job Announcements

Georgians for a Healthy Future

Please send (via mail, e-mail or fax) a cover letter, resume, three references, and a salary history to: Terri Theisen, Theisen Consulting LLC, 7140 Northgreen Drive NE, Atlanta, GA 30328, fax 770-396-2385

E-mail

2010 Census Jobs Available

For more information, contact the local Census office or call the agency's toll-free jobs line at (866) 861-2010.

Link to website

Director of Communication

Georgia Budget and Policy Institute

Please send resume, writing sample (i.e. clips of published op-eds, press releases, or other published works), cover letter, names and contact information of three references, and salary requirements to Georgia Budget and Policy Institute, Communications Director Search, 100 Edgewood Ave, Suite 950, Atlanta, Georgia 30303.

E-mail

Professional Early Education Substitute Teacher Program

United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta

March 23-27, 2009
8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Link to website

[HB 243](#), pushed by the Perdue administration, is would force Georgia to become the only state in the U.S. not to offer National Board Certification for our educators. Approximately 2,500 teachers throughout Georgia have gone through this rigorous program because they know it will improve their skills in the classroom and benefit our students.

This legislation threatens to further weaken our public schools and sends the wrong message to educators and those who plan to become teachers. This governor and his supporters in the legislature have already cut nearly \$2 billion in local school funding during his time in office.

HB 243 received only one vote more than the needed majority. It now moves to the Senate, where hopefully it will be defeated.

LEGISLATION IN PROGRESS

March 12 was the 30th day of the 2009 legislative session, also known as "cross-over" day because it was the deadline for legislation to pass the House and still be considered by the Senate this year, and vice versa. Some of the measures receiving House approval this week were:

TEEN DRIVERS/CELL PHONES:

[HB 23](#), which would ban teenage drivers from sending text messages or making calls on their cell phones while driving.

SUPER SPEEDERS:

[HB 160](#), which would put an additional \$200 fine on "super speeders," motorists who are convicted of driving more than 85 mph on a four-lane highway or more than 75 on a two-lane road. The revenues from the extra fees would go toward trauma care funding.

DHR REORGANIZATION:

[HB 228](#), which would reorganize the massive state Department of Human Resources by moving Public Health and Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Addictive Diseases to a new Department of Public and Behavioral Health Services. The Department of Community Health would continue as a regulatory and payer agency for Medicaid, PeachCare and the State Health Benefit Plan. The remaining Department of Human Services would oversee the Department of Family and Children Services and Aging.

HOME BUYER TAX CREDIT:

[HB 261](#), which would provide up to \$3,600 in income tax credits for buying homes over a six-month span. This measure is aimed at reducing the inventory of unsold homes in the state.

RECYCLING AT CAPITOL:

[HB 310](#), which I co-sponsored and would expand the state-wide recycling program for state agencies.

FOOD SAFETY:

[HB 381](#), which addresses the salmonella outbreak resulting from problems at the Peanut Corp. of America plant in Early County. The bill would authorize the Department of Agriculture to deputize county health inspectors to conduct inspections and report any contamination immediately.

EMBRYO 'ADOPTION':

[HB 388](#), which would create a legal mechanism for the "adoption" of embryos. I voted against this bill because of the chilling effect it would have on life-saving stem cell research in Georgia.

CAR TAX CHANGE:

[HB 480](#), which would eliminate the yearly ad valorem tax on automobiles that is due on the owner's birthday. It also does away with the sales tax when purchasing an auto from a dealership. Replacing the tax is a new 7 percent title fee for buyers, up to a maximum of \$2,000, when they title their new vehicle. At issue was the fact that "casual sales" or person to person sales don't have a sales tax but the new title fee will apply to those transactions. The hope is the new fee will provide extra money for local governments and \$100 million to \$150 million for a new state trauma care system. Those opposed said average folks who buy vehicles from individuals and not dealers would be hurt by having to pay the new title fee. Meanwhile, someone purchasing a \$150,000 Mercedes from the dealership would get a huge break because they only have

to pay \$2,000.

JOB TAX CREDIT & JOB CREATION:

[HB 481](#), which would provide a tax credit for businesses that hire unemployed workers and temporarily suspend the fees charged to new businesses for filing incorporation papers and similar business documents. With 400,000 Georgians unemployed the house passed legislation which gives a \$2,400 tax credit to businesses for each unemployed person hired and kept on the payroll for two years. Furthermore, it provides a credit against unemployment taxes for hiring jobless Georgians, does away with start-up fees for new businesses and gives businesses back \$160 million to \$180 million they have sent the state in sales tax deposits.

INVENTORY TAX:

[HB 482](#), which would eliminate the state inventory tax charged to businesses.

HOPE FOR MILITARY KIDS:

[HB 484](#), which would exempt the one-year residency requirement for HOPE Scholarship eligibility for the children of active duty military personnel.

CHILD ABUSE

[SB 69](#) expanding definition of child abuse to include sexual exploitation, and broadening the mandates for reporting this abuse, cleared the Senate by a 48-0 vote on February 26 and is in the House Non-Civil Judiciary Committee.

WATER METERS

[HB 158](#) requiring new multi-family residential buildings to install meters on each unit, in order to more accurately measure water usage and set correct charges, passed the House on Crossover Day and now moves to the Senate where it has been assigned to the Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee.

COASTAL PROTECTION

[SB 228](#) which attempts to protect buffers along Georgia's coastal marshes, was passed by the Senate on Crossover Day and now moves to the House. An amendment to prevent destruction of existing buffers was passed in the Senate. A stronger amendment is hoped for in the House, in order to prevent the avoidance of buffers when new construction projects are begun.

SCHOOL FITNESS

[HB 229](#) which calls for annual fitness exams for students in K-12, and for schools to comply with minimum physical education guidelines, passed the House well in advance of Crossover Day and is now in the Senate Education and Youth Committee.

EDUCATION REFORM

[HB 400](#) An education reform proposal from the Speaker of the House, which would help youth in danger of failure in school to have the opportunity to prepare for a career in a variety of occupations through small learning communities, substituting some academic requirements with employer or industry certification in approved cases. Titled BRIDGE (Building Resourceful Individuals to Build Georgia's Economy), this bill was passed by the House and is now in the Senate Education and Youth Committee.

MORE LEGISLATIVE NEWS

SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET:

Both the House and Senate approved final versions of the supplemental budget for fiscal year 2009, which ends June 30. The \$18.9 billion proposal reflects approximately \$2 billion in spending cuts due to a severe downturn in revenues over the past year. Additional cuts would have been necessary if not for the federal stimulus funding making its way to Georgia. The new budget restores the \$428 million in homeowner tax relief grants that had been cut by Gov. Perdue, saving the average Georgian \$200 to \$300 in property taxes. Also, \$145 million in federal stimulus money was included to offset the governor's cuts to local school funding. [HB 118](#) was signed into law March 13 by the governor. Meanwhile, work continues in the legislature on the annual budget for fiscal year 2010.

Don't forget: Apply for homestead exemption by April 1

Here are links to the Homestead Exemption fact sheet and the form necessary

to apply. (The back and front of the form are separate documents)

The deadline is April 1st!

[Homestead Form Front](#)

[Homestead Form Back](#)

[Homestead/Tax Relief Information](#)

FREE TAX ASSISTANCE

Free Tax Assistance Available at Libraries: Fulton County residents who are preparing their taxes can find assistance at branches of the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System. Federal and state forms are available at all 34 library locations, and volunteers are available at 12 libraries to assist.

Tax Aide Sites, Dates, Times <http://www.fultoncountyga.gov/images/stories/Library/Tax%20Aide%20Sites%202009.pdf>

List of Library Locations for Tax Forms http://www.afplweb.com/cms/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=10&Itemid=11

Atlanta-Fulton County Public Library website http://www.fulton_countyga.gov/

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JOB HUNTING RESOURCES

Georgia Department of Labor: <http://www.dol.state.ga.us/>

Careers.ga.gov: <https://www.careers.ga.gov/careersLocations.asp>

AJC Jobs - Atlanta listings: <http://hotjobs.yahoo.com/job-search-I-Atlanta-GA-m-0?partner=ajcjobs>

SimplyHired - Atlanta listings: <http://www.simplyhired.com/a/jobs/list/I-Atlanta%2C+GA>

CNN - Job Hunting articles and resources:
<http://money.cnn.com/news/specials/jobs/index.html>

INTERNSHIPS

Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper For more information on how to apply, [click here](#).

The Democratic Party of Georgia is currently accepting Intern applications for the spring semester. For more information visit the party [website](#).

The White House Project Women Helping Women Win Internship Program - To apply please send your resume and cover letter to [Stacey Chavis](#). The subject line should be Capitol Internship: Your Name.

Quick Links

- [Rep. Elly Dobbs](#)
- [State Government](#)
- [Georgia General Assembly](#)
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Representative Elly Dobbs

Representative Elly Dobbs represents the 53rd District (Fulton County) in the Georgia House of Representatives. Contact her at 512 Coverdell Office Building, Atlanta, Ga. 30334; by phone at 404-656-7859; or by e-mail at elly.dobbs@house.ga.gov. For more information, visit her web site at www.ellydobbs.com.

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phone: 404.656.7859
web: <http://www.ellydobbs.com>

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