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From: Rep. Elly Dobbs [newsletters@wordexpress.ccsend.com] on behalf of Rep. Elly Dobbs [newsletters@wordexpress.info]
Sent: Tuesday, April 07, 2009 6:53 PM
To: anne@vayasol.com
Subject: House District 53 Legislative Update

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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

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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

State Representative Elly Dobbs

GEORGIA LEGISLATIVE REPORT

April 6, 2009

Greetings!

The last day of the session started at 10:00 am and ended at midnight. It was a long day but when I look at what was passed by both houses, I am disappointed that more was not accomplished during the 2009 General Assembly. We did not pass a state wide transportation funding bill or legislation providing dedicated funding for trauma care. However, I was pleased to see some bad bills not make it to the Governor's desk. This newsletter summarized what legislation passed during the last week. I will send a comprehensive newsletter summarizing the entire session soon.

As always, please 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

TRANSPORTATION

For the second year in a row, Georgia legislators left the State Capitol at the end of the 2009 session of the General Assembly on Friday without agreeing on sufficiently funding a transportation system that has failed to keep up with the state's growing population.

Although the House of Representatives and Senate had staked out their respective positions on a one-cent sales tax plan early in the session, a compromise could not be reached. Meanwhile, the governor and legislative leaders were proposing separate legislation dealing with control over transportation revenues and road-building priorities.

[SB 200](#) was passed in the House on Wednesday by the slimmest of margins, with the speaker casting the deciding vote after he allowed an extraordinary amount of time for members to switch their votes in favor of the governance bill. The Senate gave final passage to SB 200 on a party-line vote Friday.

The legislation creates a new position of Director of Planning at the



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E-mail

Department of Transportation, who is appointed by the governor. They are charged with developing a long term plan for the DOT which is submitted to the governor and General Assembly for approval. But DOT board members and rank-and-file House and Senate members, who have a say in what projects are funded now, would have their voices limited under the bill. Top House and Senate leaders and the governor would have greater authority over the DOT appropriations process. The DOT commissioner would still be appointed by the board but would only be responsible for running the department and implementing the long range plan. Members of the General Assembly currently band together to elect DOT board members from the state's 13 congressional districts.

On the transportation funding proposals, the House version was a constitutional amendment calling for a statewide one-cent sale tax that, if approved by the voters, would have raised \$25 billion over 10 years for transportation projects. Senators insisted on a plan allowing contiguous counties to band together and vote to pass a one-cent sales tax for transportation projects in that region. House and Senate conferees could not agree, and any solution for funding transportation in Georgia is dead for another year.

This failure might also have a negative impact on MARTA, which was counting on legislation to allow the agency to use more sales tax revenue for operating expenses as opposed to capital expenditures. That proposal also fell victim to the breakdown in transportation negotiations, which would result in significant cuts in services, according to MARTA officials.

FY 2010 BUDGET

The House and Senate passed an \$18.6 billion annual state budget for fiscal year 2010 on the final day of the session. [HB 119](#) uses \$1.3 billion in federal stimulus money to balance and includes \$1 billion in spending cuts. The budget restores cuts to Medicaid and provider fees that were proposed by the Governor and would have devastated hospitals and medical treatment for the poor.

Regrettably, the 2010 budget fails to fund the Homeowner Tax Relief Grants that go to local governments and are passed on to homeowners. This will mean a \$200-\$300 property tax increase for the average homeowner later this year.

BUSINESS TAX CUTS

The House passed and sent to the governor a package of tax cuts for businesses. [HB 438](#) provides certain Georgia employers a \$5,000 tax credit for creating new jobs. An amendment was added in the Senate mandating that those applying for the credit must go through an electronic verification system to ensure that the employee is not an illegal immigrant. [HB 481](#) provides a \$2,400 tax credit for corporations that hire those who have been unemployed for at least four weeks. The legislation was amended to cut the capital gains taxes by 25 percent on investment earnings in 2010 and 50 percent in following years.

HOME BUYER TAX CREDIT

Another tax measure adopted in the House was [HB 261](#), provides a \$1,800 tax credit to first time home buyers and will be spread out over three years. Originally the bill called for a \$3,600 tax credit.

DHR REORGANIZATION

In an effort to help improve services delivered by the Department of Human Resources, the House passed [HB 228](#) that reorganizes one of the largest agencies in state government. Under the bill the current responsibilities of the Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Addictive Diseases under DHR would be replaced by a new Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities that would be overseen by a council appointed by the Governor. Additionally, the legislation moves the public health division into the new Department of Community Health. DCH would also be overseen by a new public health advisory council.

Other legislation approved during the final week of the session includes:

ETHICS/TAX INFORMATION

[HB 168](#), an ethics bill that would require the Department of Revenue to

release the names of legislators who have not paid state income taxes.

PRIVACY DISCLOSURE

[SB 26](#), which would limit the disclosure of private information of firefighters and emergency medical technicians, protecting these public servants from identity theft.

FAIR MARKET VALUE

[SB 55](#), which would require tax assessors to consider bank-owned sales and distressed sales of comparable properties when determining the fair market value of real estate.

MADE IN GEORGIA

[SB 117](#), which would enhance the "Made in Georgia" program by creating a web site to promote sale of products manufactured in the state.

JUVENILE RELEASES

[SB 246](#), which would require Juvenile Court officers to give 24 hours notice to the victim when a juvenile accused of a violent crime is release from detention.

DEAD FOR THIS YEAR

Among the bills that failed to win final approval were [SB 67](#), which would have required driver's license examinations to be conducted in English only; [SB 42](#), which would have stripped the Georgia Public Defender Standards Council of its authority; [SB 164](#), which would have allowed billboard owners to clear-cut trees in front of signs located on public rights-of-way; and [HB 243](#), which would have cut the additional pay for educators who earn national board certification.

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.fultoncountyga.gov/>

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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-l-Atlanta-GA-m-0?partner=ajcjobs>

SimplyHired - Atlanta listings: <http://www.simplyhired.com/a/jobs/list/l-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.

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Representative Elly Dobbs

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