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May 2010 Town Hall Meetings

In order to keep you informed as to legislation that will have passed during this General Assembly, as well as other State issues that affect our communities, we have scheduled three Town Hall Meetings during the month of May. By then, we should have a final State budget and know its impact on our taxes and services. I would like to hear your comments and concerns and what you believe should be on our legislative agenda for the future. I hope that you will be able to attend one of these meetings. Together, we can build a better community and a better State. The meetings are scheduled as follows:

Tuesday, May 4,
Trinity Presbyterian Church, 3003 Howell Mill Rd., Atlanta 30327 6 to 7 p.m. (before the NPU C meeting)

Thursday, May 20,
City of Atlanta, Police Dept., Zone One Precinct Office, 2315 Donald Lee Hollowell Pkwy., Atlanta , 5:30

State Representative Elly Dobbs*GEORGIA LEGISLATIVE REPORT*

April 26, 2010

Greetings!

The General Assembly will reconvene on Tuesday, April 27, for the 39th legislative day of the 2010 session. Thursday, April 29, is scheduled as the 40th and final day.

During the Session I tried to take a few minutes each day to contact some of you to hear your thoughts and concerns about questions and State issues that may be important to you. Since I have not been able to contact all of you, I am having three Town Hall meetings during the month of May. During these meetings we will have the opportunity to discuss the State budget, how it affects our services and other legislation that will have passed during the General Assembly. I hope you will be able to attend one of these meetings. Please see the left column for more information.



This year, to support those affected by Alzheimer's, I am participating in Dancing Stars of Atlanta benefiting the Alzheimer's Association, Georgia Chapter to raise funds and awareness to fight this disease. If you are interested in helping this great cause, please see more information about this event in the left column.

Feel free to circulate this email to friends and neighbors. You can subscribe to our newsletter by emailing newsletters@wordexpress.info or visiting my web site at <http://www.ellydobbs.com>. I also welcome any submissions for news stories or community events and information that would be interesting to those in our District. Please forward them to my email address at elly.dobbs@house.ga.gov.

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**Legislation Approved by the House of Representatives**

Transportation Funding: After three years of trying to reach agreement on a solution to the state's transportation funding problems, the House of Representatives and the Senate gave final approval to [HB 277](#) on Wednesday.

Under the legislation, Georgia will be divided into 12 regions, each of which will hold a referendum in 2012 for a special 1 percent sales tax to be used for transportation improvements within that region.

Individual counties cannot opt out of the funding plan, but a "roundtable" of local elected officials can decide not to hold a tax referendum in their regions, whose boundaries mirror those of



to 6:30 p.m., (before the NPU G meeting)

Tuesday, May 25,
Atlanta Job Corps
office, 239 West Lake
N.W., Atlanta, 30314,
6 to 6:45 p.m.
(before the NPU J
meeting)

Homebuyer's Tax Credit ending soon

If you or someone you know wants to take advantage of the Homebuyer's Tax Credit, now's the time. The buyer must be under contract by April 30, 2010 and close no later than June 30, 2010.

More information...

Dancing Stars of Atlanta to benefit Alzheimer's Association

This year, to support those affected by Alzheimer's, I am participating in Dancing Stars of Atlanta benefiting the Alzheimer's Association, Georgia Chapter to raise funds and awareness to fight this disease. There are currently more than 200,000 Georgians with Alzheimer's disease, over 80,000 of whom reside right here in Metro Atlanta. I hope you will consider buying a ticket to the event or contributing to this cause. I know we can make a difference with your support! Help me to raise funds on my personal voting page. Each dollar I raise counts as a vote to win the People's Choice Award! It's easy to give online by

Georgia's regional commissions, including the 10-county Atlanta Regional Commission.

The bill also gives MARTA more flexibility to spend its sales tax revenues on new projects, a beginning step to helping the transit agency address a \$120 million budget shortfall.

This is not a perfect piece of legislation by any means. Putting these votes off until 2012 means it will be at least 2013 before any revenue comes in from the special sales tax to fund the transportation improvements needed in our area. Holding the referendums during the 2010 election cycle would have been preferable.

But after three years of failing to come up with any transportation funding solution, HB 277 is certainly better than nothing. It now goes to the governor for his signature.

Ethics Legislation: The House and Senate also sent new ethics legislation to the Governor's desk for his signature on Wednesday. [SB 17](#) doubles the fines for late reporting and other violations of campaign disclosure rules, demands more timely reporting of expenditures by lobbyists and makes sexual harassment by legislators a punishable offense. An amendment also brings the members of the State Transportation Board under ethics law provisions regarding personal financial disclosure and lobbyist spending. A downside to SB 17 is that it would require a citizen filing a complaint to pay the official's attorney fees if the Ethics Commission determines the complaint is frivolous. That could cost Georgia residents tens of thousands of dollars in legal fees and deter citizens from filing complaints.

Amended FY 2010 Budget: On Wednesday, the House gave final approval to the supplemental budget for the remainder of the current fiscal year, which ends June 30. [HB 947](#), the amended version of the fiscal year 2010 budget, reduces overall spending by \$1.5 billion from the budget's original form passed last year. The Senate signed off on the plan Tuesday, so the bill awaits the Governor's signature.

Other House Action

Last week, House members approved a number of other legislative measures, including the following:

[HB 16](#), which would prohibit the tracking of the location or movement of another person without that person's consent.

[HB 344](#), which would provide immunity from lawsuits to voluntary physician assistants in safety net clinics.

[HB 567](#), which under the Crime Victims' Bill of Rights would strengthen the rights of victims of acts of juvenile delinquency.

[HB 883](#), the Sanitary Activity for Food- Processing Enterprises (SAFE) Act, which gives the Commissioner of Agriculture authority regarding safety plans in the processing of food products.

[HB 908](#), which would give local school systems flexibility on class size mandates over the next three years.

[HB 1021](#), which would include Salvia divinorum A on the state's list of dangerous drugs.

[HB 1179](#), which would require hospitals to offer annual flu shots to their employees.

[HB 1435](#), which would create a House study committee and citizens advisory council on the hotel-motel tax.

following this link:
<http://dancingstarsofatlanta.kintera.org/ellydobbs>. Thank you; together, we can help end Alzheimer's.

Join Crime Stoppers Atlanta

Help solve crime in our community - join Crime Stoppers Atlanta today! Serving all of Metro Atlanta, call 404-586-0180. If you witness a crime, call 404-557-TIPS (8477).

More information...

[SB 1](#), which would require the application of "zero-based" budgeting to the state budget process.

[SB 6](#), which would increase the penalties for violations related to driving with a restricted license.

[SB 340](#), which would require public and private schools to adopt a reporting system for high school juniors, sophomores and freshmen for the purpose of determining their HOPE Scholarship eligibility.

[SB 346](#), which changes how property owners appeal the assessed value of their parcels. It extends the period for appealing property valuation from 30 days to 45 days.

[SB 409](#), which would require that any tax break or exemption granted to a business that uses "raw forest products," such as a biomass energy plant, must also be granted to the owner of the property where that product is harvested.

[SB 427](#), which would establish the Georgia Foundation for Public Education, the purpose of which is to solicit and accept contributions of money, services and property to support educational excellence in Georgia.

[SR 822](#), which would urge the Department of Transportation to seek a waiver from the Federal Highway Administration in order to allow retail developments in rest areas along interstate highways.

Elly's Legislation

[Click here](#) to review 2009-10 legislation sponsored or co-sponsored by Rep. Elly Dobbs.

Quick Links

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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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