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Fulton County Announces Early and Advanced Voting Locations

Fulton County voters can cast their ballots for the July 20, 2010 Primary Election at several sites between now and July 16.

Voters in Georgia do not have to provide a reason to vote prior to Election Day either by mail or in person. Early voting is available Monday, June 7 - Friday, July 16, 2010 from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the following locations:

-Fulton County Government Center, 141 Pryor Street, Suite 4064, Atlanta, GA 30303
 -Sandy Springs Regional Library, 395 Mount Vernon Hwy. NE, Atlanta, GA 30328
 -South Service Center, 5600 Stonewall Tell Road, Room 108, College Park, GA 30349

Three additional voting locations will be available beginning Tuesday, July 6, 2010 through Friday, July 16, 2010 from 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.:

-Roswell Regional

State Representative Elly Dobbs*GEORGIA LEGISLATIVE REPORT*

June 14, 2010

Dear Linton,

Gov. Perdue completed his work last week on signing or vetoing legislation approved by the Georgia General Assembly during the 2010 session. A comprehensive review of the final action taken on legislation addressed during this year's session is included below.

Early voting for the July 20 primary election began Monday, June 7. You may also request an absentee ballot if you are unable to vote on July 20, election day. See more information and voting locations in the left column.

I will be sending my electronic newsletter less frequently during the summer and fall, but will resume the weekly newsletters during the 2011 General Assembly. I hope that you have enjoyed receiving these updates and I would appreciate any suggestions that you may have to improve them.

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**MAJOR BILLS SIGNED INTO LAW BY THE GOVERNOR****State Budget**

[HB 947](#) is the amended budget for the remainder of fiscal year 2010. The \$17.1 billion plan is reduced from the original \$18.6 billion budget approved last year for FY 2010, which ends June 30. The amended budget reduces state QBE funding to local school systems by another \$300 million.

[HB 948](#) provides the new \$17.9 billion budget for FY 2011 and reflects an overall revenue reduction of more than \$3 billion from two years ago. Public school funding through the QBE formula is slashed by another \$527 million. Nearly \$800,000 in funding for the Georgia Council for the Arts, which had been eliminated in the previous House budget, was restored by the Senate and remained in the final report. The new fiscal year begins July 1, 2010.

Transportation

Library, 115 Norcross Street, Roswell, GA 30076
 -Ocee Library Branch, 5990 Abbots Bridge Road, Johns Creek, GA 30005
 -Adamsville Natatorium, 3201 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, Atlanta, GA 30311

Absentee by Mail: Voters can request an absentee ballot as early as 180 days before an election or primary. Absentee ballots are mailed out to voters 45 days before the election. The application for an absentee ballot is available on the Fulton County Department of Registration and Elections website and the Georgia Secretary of State's website. Voters can also obtain an application in person at the Fulton County Department of Registration and Elections office at the Fulton County Government Center (141 Pryor St. S.W., Atlanta, GA 30303 Suite 4075).

All absentee ballots must be received in the Registration & Elections Office by 7:00 p.m. on Election Day. For additional information, please call the Department of Registration & Elections at 404-730-7072.

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).

Under [HB 277](#), 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 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.

Taxes and Fees

[HB 1055](#) increases registration, licensing and user fees on more than 80 services provided by the state, bringing in approximately \$96 million. The increased costs to citizens affect a broad range of fees, including civil court filings, business registrations and specialty car tags. The bill also includes a 1.45 percent tax increase on hospitals and their patients, which will generate approximately \$169 million and two minor tax cuts, one of which phases out the state's 0.25-mill property tax over five years, and the other of which eliminates the state income tax on retirement income for Georgians 65 and older.

[HB 903](#) extends Atlanta's hotel-motel tax to generate funding for a new domed stadium or renovation of the Georgia Dome to keep the Atlanta Falcons in downtown Atlanta.

[HB 1069](#) makes several changes to tax laws: it eliminates the refundable portion of the low-income tax credit, re-authorizes Atlanta to charge a penny sales tax for water and sewer projects, creates a tax break for investors who provide capital funding for a business start-up, also known as "angel investors," and includes a tax credit on the purchase of energy-efficient appliances and water-saving fixtures.

[SB 206](#) will require an annual review of the effectiveness of tax breaks granted by the state.

[SB 346](#) requires that all property owners be sent a valuation of their property each year; they will also have a longer period to appeal the valuations.

[HB 1405](#) creates a special committee, which includes Governor Perdue, economists, and business leaders, to develop recommended changes in the state's tax system. These changes will be presented to the General Assembly next January.

[HB 1093](#) requires local governments to collect data from businesses applying for a license with the information going to the Department of Revenue to help the state track and collect unpaid sales taxes.

Public Safety

[SB 308](#) expands the number of public areas where persons with firearms licenses can carry guns. Guns will be allowed in parks and historic sites, parking lots of universities, courthouses and jails, as well as in bars with the owner's consent. It would eliminate the ban on guns within 1,000 feet of schools and colleges.

[SB 360](#) bans motorists in Georgia from texting while driving.

[HB 23](#) bans teenagers from talking on cell phones while driving. A violation of SB 360 or HB 23 will result in a fine of up to \$150 and one point on the driver's license of the offender.

[SB 458](#) removes the exemption in Georgia's seat belt law for drivers and passengers in pickup trucks.

[HB 571](#) allows low-risk inmates to petition the courts to be removed from the sex offender registry after completing their sentences, including those who are

More information...

disabled, confined to hospice care or who were convicted in "Romeo and Juliet" cases of consensual teen sex. A judge could approve or deny the petition.

[HB 1322](#) restricts media access to crime scene photos.

[HB 1021](#) prohibits the use of the plant *Salvia divinorum* A (sage), which has similar hallucinogenic effects to LSD when it is smoked.

[HB 1309](#) makes K2, also known as synthetic marijuana, illegal.

Education

[HB 908](#) allows local school systems to increase class sizes over the next three years.

[SB 427](#) establishes 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.

[SB 250](#) requires the state Department of Education to develop an anti-bullying policy that can serve as a model for local school systems. The policies will include age-appropriate consequences for bullying in grades K-12.

[SB 299](#) gives school systems more flexibility in handling violations of "zero tolerance" discipline policies.

[SB 319](#) expands the definition of a textbook to encompass computer devices such as electronic books.

[SB 84](#) will revamp school board regulations and authorize the Governor to remove poorly performing school board members.

[HB 977](#) provides that no state funds can be used to give a pay raise to a local superintendent or other school administrator in a year when teachers and non-teaching employees are furloughed.

Health Care

[HB 1268](#) extends the time period (an additional 15 months) for continuation of COBRA health insurance coverage. This is part of a federal act where 35 percent of the premium cost will be paid by the federal government.

[SB 316](#) enables persons who are under age 65 but are eligible for Medicare because of disability or end-stage renal disease to obtain Medicare supplemental insurance coverage for dialysis.

[HB 994](#) authorizes the Department of Community Health (DCH) to establish and revise the regulatory fees it charges various healthcare entities. DCH picked up several healthcare regulatory functions from the old Department of Human Resources when DHR was reorganized two years ago.

Environment

[SB 370](#) implements a number of water conservation measures, including requirements for low-flow plumbing devices in newly constructed homes and buildings, an outdoor watering restriction and other measures.

[HB 406](#) allows the development of new reservoirs in south Fulton County and around the state.

[HB 244](#) includes the governor's proposal to sell a portion of the Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority (GEFA) loans on Wall Street in order to raise some \$290 million to help balance the budget. These loans are valued at \$676 million. GEFA loans are made by the state to local governments at low interest rates to finance infrastructure projects across the state.

[HB 1199](#) allows the Department of Natural Resources to raise operating funds through private donations.

[SB 474](#), known as the "road kill bill," allows motorists who kill a bear or deer with their vehicle to keep the carcass.

[SB 380](#) authorizes the development of an emergency water supply plan for Metro Atlanta and allows GEFA to make loans for the expansion of reservoirs.

Other Issues

[HB 168](#) continues the state's Universal Access Fund, a subsidy for rural telephone companies, and will create another subsidy fund that provides more money for small telephone companies. The bill also allows small telephone companies, if they choose, to be re-regulated by the Public Service Commission.

[HB 540](#) makes administrative changes to the state's election laws and authorizes a Governor to bypass the Attorney General in seeking voting rights pre-clearance of election law changes by the U.S. Justice Department.

[HB 926](#) removes limitations on state-chartered banks so that they can renew loans with their largest borrowers more easily.

[HB 1233](#) requires utilities to provide the money for hiring experts to testify before the PSC on rate cases.

[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.

[SB 296](#) changes the name of the state Office of Treasury and Fiscal Services to the Office of the State Treasurer.

[SB 371](#) authorizes the Georgia Bureau of Investigation to investigate mortgage fraud. The bill would also grant the GBI subpoena power to investigate fraudulent real estate transactions.

[SB 523](#) puts Georgia's sports and music halls of fame, now located in Macon, up for sale.

MAJOR BILLS VETOED BY THE GOVERNOR

[HB 1023](#) would have given a small tax credit to businesses that hire unemployed workers and would have reduced the state capital gains tax if the state has \$1 billion in reserves.

[SB 1](#) would have implemented "zero-based" budgeting to the state budget process, requiring each state department to analyze and report the purposes of its programs, efficiency measures, alternative funding levels and priority lists one time over the next four years.

[SB 291](#) would have authorized the carrying of firearms in some areas of airports.

[SB 519](#) would have made it illegal to drive below the speed limit in the left lane of multi-lane highways in front of another vehicle, except when preparing to make a left turn. Vetoed by the Governor, who cited other provisions in the bill that he said would have required a driver's license to operate a golf cart.

[SB 374](#) would have created an Economic Development Council to provide oversight of the state Department of Economic Development.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

Require Voter Approval in November 2010 General Election

[SR 821](#) is a constitutional amendment that would allow the Department of Transportation to sign multi-year contracts for highway projects.

[SR 277](#) gives Georgia voters a chance to approve a reliable funding mechanism that would help enhance the state's trauma care network. The proposed constitutional amendment would implement a \$10 fee on auto license tags to bring in \$80 million each year for a trauma care trust fund.

[HR 178](#) is a constitutional amendment that allows Georgia voters to decide whether the Constitution of Georgia will be amended so as to make Georgia more economically competitive by authorizing legislation to uphold reasonable employee agreements.

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

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