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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.

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[More information...](#)**State Representative Elly Dobbs***GEORGIA LEGISLATIVE REPORT*

March 29, 2010

Greetings!

This past Friday was Crossover Day for the General Assembly. Any bill which did not pass either the Senate or the House will likely not become law. The House met from 9:00 am until just past Midnight. Many bills passed during this fifteen hour period and many bills which were on the calendar were not addressed. The House did not pass legislation on either Transportation or Ethics, but both these issues are expected to be addressed through Senate Bills in the remaining 10 days of the General Assembly. Tuesday, March 30, will be the 31st legislative day of the 2010 session.



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**

Hospital Bed Tax: In the past week, several Georgia hospital organizations announced their decision to support Gov. Perdue's proposal for a tax increase to offset the state's Medicaid deficit. For two years, the health care community and most legislators have opposed the governor's "bed tax" proposal. The hospital leaders who changed their positions apparently decided the tax increase was the lesser of two evils when compared to the governor's other recommendation of a 10.25 percent decrease in Medicaid reimbursements and reinstatement of the sales tax on nonprofit hospitals. On March 26, the House approved [HB 307](#), which would implement a 1.45 percent fee (reduced from the governor's original 1.6 percent proposal), and the bill now goes to the Senate for its consideration. This bill was passed to fill part of the large hole in the State's budget for 2010.



Tax Reform Council: The House voted 111-55 to approve legislation that would create a "tax reform council" made up largely of Republican officials, including the current governor, and business interest representatives to review and recommend changes to the state's tax code. There would be no representatives on the council for consumers or other Georgians without "connections," even though its decisions would impact them the most. Under [HB 1405](#), the recommendations for tax law changes would go straight to the House and Senate floors for a vote, without legislative committees having a chance to review or

amend them. Both legislative bodies would have to vote the recommendations either up or down.

Other Legislation: With only 10 days remaining in the 2010 session, House members dealt with a lengthy legislative agenda last week. Other measures that were approved and sent to the Senate for its consideration included:

[HB 853](#), which would require that all tanning bed facilities register with the state. It would also require parental consent for the use of tanning beds by minors as well as require consumer warnings.

[HB 938](#), which would make texting while driving illegal for drivers of all ages.

[HB 1019](#), which would allow citizens who live in areas affected by natural disasters to have their state documents, such as marriage and hunting licenses, replaced at no charge within 60 days of the disaster in which they were lost.

[HB 1020](#) and [HR 1203](#), which would allow school systems to use education special purpose local option sales tax (E-SPLOST) revenue for maintenance and operation expenses or to reduce property taxes. Currently, E-SPLOST money can only be used for construction projects. As a constitutional amendment, HR 1203 still needs two-thirds approval by the Senate and must be approved by the voters in November.

[HB 1023](#), which would give a small tax credit to businesses that hire unemployed workers. The legislation would also reduce the state capital gains tax if the state has \$1 billion in reserves.

[HB 1055](#), which would raise more than 80 fees charged by various agencies, bringing in an estimated \$96 million in increased revenues. These increases would affect a variety of services and permits ranging from court filings to business licenses to specialty car tags to fireworks displays.

[HB 1059](#), which would allow yard trimmings to be sorted for recycling at licensed landfills.

[HB 1069](#), which would provide an income tax credit of up to \$2,500 for the purchase of water- or energy-efficient equipment for new construction and retrofitting projects.

[HB 1184](#), which would allow Georgians to purchase health insurance across state lines.

[HB 1196](#), which would prohibit local governments from enacting building codes that require the installation of fire sprinklers in single- family residences or residential buildings with no more than two dwelling units.

[HB 1199](#), which would allow the Department of Natural Resources to undertake several privatization efforts, including the sale of state parks' naming rights to corporate sponsors.

[HB 1233](#), which would authorize the Public Service Commission to charge utilities for fees paid to expert witnesses in rate cases.

[HB 1242](#), which would subject state Transportation Board members to the same ethics disclosure rules as legislators.

[HB 1393](#), which would authorize Clayton County to increase its sales tax cap and allow voters in that county to decide on a 1 percent sales tax to join MARTA.

Some Unsuccessful Legislation in the House and Senate

Milton County Proposal: The sponsor of controversial legislation that would have paved the way for a portion of north Fulton County to be carved out as a new "Milton County" told the Atlanta Journal-Constitution late Friday that the proposal, [HR 21](#), is dead for this year.

The proposed constitutional amendment failed to get enough support for passage, so it was not brought to the floor of the House of Representatives, according to Speaker Pro Tem Jan Jones, who authored the measure. Friday was the 30th day of the session and the deadline for legislation to be approved by the House in time to be considered by the Senate this session. Rep. Jones said she intends to reintroduce the proposal next year.

I strongly oppose the creation of another county because of the negative impact it would have on Fulton County's tax base, causing a huge tax increase on Fulton property owners. During these tight budget times, the state of Georgia does not need to spend tax dollars on the creation of a 160th county.

Cigarette Tax: [HB 39](#) would increase the state's tobacco tax by \$1 a pack. Estimates say it would have generated more than \$350 million a year in new revenue.

Horse Racing: [HR 1177](#) would have given Georgians a chance to vote on amending the state Constitution to permit house racing and pari-mutuel betting in the State of Georgia.

Child Prostitution: [SB 304](#) provides that girls under the age of 16 cannot be charged as prostitutes, because they were likely exploited and should be considered as victims. Sponsors of the bill state that it is designed to protect young girls and would steer them toward diversionary and rehabilitation programs.

Merger Rejected: After a lengthy debate, House members voted to soundly reject a proposal by Gov. Perdue that would have merged the state Department of Corrections and the Board of Pardons & Paroles. [HB 1030](#) was defeated by a vote of 100 in opposition to 59 in favor.

Elly's Legislation

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

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Representative Elly Dobbs

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