

[<Back](#) [Print](#)**In this issue...**

- [The State Budget and Proposed Cuts to Higher Education](#)
- [Transportation Funding Proposal](#)
- [Legislation Pending in House Committees](#)
- [More Information from the State](#)
- [Elly's Legislation](#)

MARTA Community Forums

Monday, March 8,
6-8 p.m., at Senior
Connections, 5238
Peachtree Road,
Chamblee, GA
30341

Tuesday, March 9,
6-8 p.m., at North
Fulton Service
Center, 7741
Roswell Road,
Sandy Springs, GA
30350

Wednesday, March
10, 6-8 p.m., at
South Fulton
Service Center,
5600 Stonewall
Tell Road, College
Park, GA 30349

More information...**State Representative Elly Dobbs***GEORGIA LEGISLATIVE REPORT*

March 8, 2010

Greetings!

On Monday, March 8, legislators return to the Capitol for the 21st legislative day of the 2010 session of the Georgia General Assembly. On Monday, March 8, legislators return to the Capitol for the 21st legislative day of the 2010 session of the Georgia General Assembly. These past two weeks the House and Senate Appropriations Committee members have been holding hearings on the annual state budget for the 2011 fiscal year and the \$18.2 billion budget presented by the Governor.



In addition, the Joint Conference Committee for the House and the Senate was working on differences between the House and Senate versions of the FY 2010 amended budget. The Committee is still awaiting February revenue figures to finalize a recommendation. If numbers are worse than expected further cuts are possible for 2010 and for the 2011 budget without additional revenue sources. Cuts have been discussed for public education, including higher education and health and human services. Of the possible revenue sources discussed, including last years \$10 vehicle tag fee for the under funded trauma care system in Georgia, and a hospital provider fee, the most popular is a \$1 surcharge on a package of cigarettes. A recent poll showed a 73% approval rating by voters in Georgia for the cigarette tax. Please read more below.

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**The State Budget and Proposed Cuts to Higher Education**

House and Senate Appropriations Committee members just completed two weeks of hearings on the annual state budget for fiscal year 2011, for the purpose of considering more cuts to the \$18.2 billion spending plan proposed by Gov. Sonny Perdue.

The most controversial budget proposal is a recommendation to slash another \$300 million from Georgia's public colleges and universities. Having already cut \$380 million from the University System budget since 2008, further deep reductions would be painful for college students, faculty and staff and the state's economy.

Under the proposal, 4,000 faculty and staff members would be laid off and thousands of students would be affected by the closing of satellite campuses,



elimination of certain majors, shorter hours at libraries and student centers and lower caps on enrollment among the various schools. Statewide, a 35 percent student tuition increase is on the table, and elimination of the Georgia 4-H program has been suggested.

I am strongly opposed to these cuts, which would reverse the great progress our state has made the past 20 years in expanding opportunities for students all over the state to get a quality college education.

The taxpayers of Georgia have invested in developing a world-class university system to prepare our children for the global economy, and these are investments should be preserved.

Transportation Funding Proposal

Legislation proposed by Gov. Sonny Perdue, calling for a referendum on a 1 percent sales tax for transportation projects in each of 12 special districts across the state, is under consideration in the House Transportation Committee.

While there is support for the regional approach to increased funding for transportation, there is also concern about several provisions in [HB 1218](#). Some lawmakers object to its top-down policy, with the state dictating the makeup of the regions rather than counties voluntarily coming together to form their own regions and having more local control.

Also, the governor's bill would not call for the referendum until 2012, meaning Georgia's transportation needs would have to wait an additional two years for a long-overdue funding solution.

A Transportation subcommittee has already made several changes to the legislation, which would:

- ~ Increase the duration for the special sales tax from eight years to 10 years.
- ~ Identify the state Department of Transportation as the fiscal agent for transportation funding instead of the State Road and Tollway Authority.
- ~ Cancel the tax referendum in any region where local officials fail to agree on a list of projects, rather than ceding that authority to the state planning director.
- ~ Prevent MARTA from increasing salaries with additional operating funds it receives from a three- year suspension of a rule that restricts the agency's use of sales tax revenues for operation expenses.

The legislation's sponsor said the governor would likely veto any version of the bill that allows counties or regions to opt out of putting the sales tax referendum before the voters. The governor and legislative leaders have failed to agree on transportation funding legislation in the previous two sessions of the General Assembly.

Legislation Pending in House Committees

Water Management: The House Natural Resources & Environment Committee has approved water management legislation that calls for some limited conservation measures for the construction industry and power utilities. The proposal would require builders to include low-flow plumbing devices in all new structures and would require large industrial and commercial buildings to deploy more efficient chillers and water cooling towers as part of their heating and air conditioning systems. [HB 1094](#) also would allow outdoor watering only between the hours of 4 p.m. and 10 a.m., with exemptions for farmers, food gardens, private well owners, nurseries, golf courses and athletic fields. This has the potential to save millions of gallons of water during a time of day when as much as half could be lost to evaporation. The bill now awaits a vote on the House floor.

Tobacco Tax Support: While dealing with the state's historic budget crisis, lawmakers are considering a variety of revenue enhancements. [HB 39](#), which

proposes a \$1 per pack increase in the excise tax on cigarettes, has been stuck in committee since the beginning of the 2009 legislative session. But a recent poll indicated that 73 percent of Georgians support a tobacco tax increase, which would, according to its sponsors, raise about \$350 million a year in revenue and save \$1.8 billion in tobacco-related health care costs by discouraging smoking.

GEFA Loan Sell-Off: The Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority (GEFA) is apparently moving forward on Gov. Perdue's proposal to sell off a loan portfolio package to investors, even though the General Assembly has yet to even vote on the plan. GEFA officials released a request for proposal to financial underwriters who would be interested in packaging the state loans as a security to be sold to investors. The governor's version of the fiscal year 2011 budget includes \$288 million from the loan portfolio sale, but if the loans are sold to Wall Street investors, there will be almost no funds available to make future water and sewer loans. Georgia's city and county governments depend on the GEFA fund as a source for financing infrastructure improvements.

More Information from the State

Georgia TeenWork: The Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS) is helping youth aged 14-18 learn new work skills while earning income this summer. The federally funded effort will help youth build strong work habits while jump-starting Georgia's economy.

TeenWork jobs are available June 1 to July 31, 2010. The jobs pay \$8.50 an hour for up to 35 hours a week. Jobs are available in many different businesses, industries and governments. This isn't just a great opportunity for Georgia Teens; it is also great for Georgia businesses.

TeenWork allows business owners to strengthen their business at no cost. TeenWork provides a 100 percent subsidy for businesses employing qualified youth for up to 35 hours a week from June 1 to July 31, 2010. Employers will not have to seek reimbursement.

Employees will be paid using funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. [Click here for more information](#) or call 1-888-884-4712.

Stimulus Jobs Program: The Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS) is using federal stimulus dollars to help put 5,000 Georgians back to work. Adults who have dependent children and an annual income at or below 300 percent of the federal level for a family of four (approximately \$66,000), are currently receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and parents participating in the Child Support Fatherhood Program whose children are TANF eligible are among the Georgians who qualify for this program.

DHS is currently seeking employers across the state to employ Georgians. Employers will receive an 80 percent wage subsidy for hiring workers under the program using funds from the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Employers will be eligible for the Work Opportunity Tax Credit as well as the Welfare-to-Work Tax Credit. DHS will prescreen prospective employees, conduct background checks (if required), and provide job coaching to prospective employees to ensure the success of the program.

Employers cannot replace existing employees to take advantage of the subsidy. Federal subsidies for the program are available through September 30, 2010. Positions must pay wages similar to wages paid to current employees performing similar tasks. The maximum subsidy for a six-month period per employee is \$26,000. For more information, send requests to TANF-Employers@dhr.state.ga.us.

Elly's Legislation

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

<p>Quick Links</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rep. Elly Dobbs • State Government • Georgia General Assembly • City of Atlanta • Atlanta Public Schools • Fulton County Government • Fulton County Schools • Democratic Party of Georgia • Register to Vote • Georgia Crisis & Access Line 800-715-4225 	<p>Dobbs.</p> <p>Representative Elly Dobbs</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Newsletter email: newsletters@wordexpress.info phone: 404.656.7859 web: http://www.ellydobbs.com</p>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

[Forward email](#)

 **SafeUnsubscribe®**

This email was sent to linton.johnson@wordexpress.info by newsletters@wordexpress.info.
[Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

Email Marketing by



Rep. Elly Dobbs | 512 Coverdell Office Building | Atlanta | GA | 30334