

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

- [2010 LEGISLATIVE REVIEW](#)
- [Elly's Legislation](#)

**May 2010 Town Hall Meetings**

In order to keep you informed as to legislation that passed during this General Assembly, as well as other State issues that affect our communities, we have two Town Hall Meetings remaining on the schedule for the month of May. 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 remaining two meetings are scheduled as follows:

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

**Dancing Stars of Atlanta to benefit Alzheimer's Association**

**State Representative Elly Dobbs***GEORGIA LEGISLATIVE REPORT*

May 13, 2010

**Greetings!**

With the end of the General Assembly, I have compiled a list of significant bills and final legislative action that was taken by the House and the Senate. Although some of these bills were discussed in my past newsletters, this will provide you with the outcome of major legislation. I will send you an update on some of the bills once the Governor has taken action on them.

I will be having two more Town Hall meetings this month, one on May 20 and another on May 27. See more information to the left. I look forward to seeing you at one of these meetings.

Finally, please do not forget about the Alzheimer's event, taking place this Sunday. I will be dancing the Tango as one of the volunteer participants. I hope that you will consider attending the event or voting for me and my professional dance partner, Christjohn Batters. Please see more information in the left column about this worthy cause or click on this web site: <http://dancingstarsofatlanta.kintera.org/ellydobbs>.

Feel free to circulate this email to friends and neighbors. You can subscribe to our newsletter by emailing [newsletters@wordexpress.info](mailto: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](mailto: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****2010 LEGISLATIVE REVIEW***Final Wrap-Up of General Assembly Action***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. Signed by Governor.

[HB 948](#) is the new \$17.9 billion budget 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. Passed House and Senate.



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 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...**

#### **State revenues fall again in April**

After a slight increase in March broke a 15-month streak of declining state revenues, Gov.

#### **Transportation**

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. Passed House and Senate.

[SR 821](#) is a constitutional amendment that would allow the Department of Transportation to sign multi-year contracts for highway projects. Passed House and Senate, awaits final approval by voters in November.

#### **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 retirement income for Georgians 65 and older. Signed by Governor.

[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. Passed House and Senate.

[HB 1023](#) gives a small tax credit to businesses that hire unemployed workers and reduces the state capital gains tax if the state has \$1 billion in reserves. Passed House and Senate.

[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 "angel investors," and includes a tax credit on the purchase of energy-efficient appliances and water-saving fixtures. Passed House and Senate.

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

[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. Passed House and Senate.

[HB 1405](#) creates a special committee, which includes 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. Passed House and Senate.

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

#### **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. Passed House and Senate.

[SB 291](#) authorizes the carrying of firearms in some areas of airports. Passed House and Senate.

Perdue announced that collections fell by 4.2 percent in April. Overall revenues for the month were down \$58 million from April 2009. Through the first 10 months of the current fiscal year, state revenues are down \$1.4 billion, or 10.7 percent.

### **Regents increase college tuition**

The Board of Regents voted this week to increase tuition at the state's 35 public colleges and universities to generate an additional \$80 million for the 2010-11 academic year, responding to funding cuts to higher education in the state budget. The tuition increase will be \$1,000 per year (or \$500 per semester) at the research institutions of Georgia Tech, the University of Georgia, Georgia State and the Medical College of Georgia. Students at Georgia Southern, Valdosta State, Columbus State, Kennesaw State, North Georgia, West Georgia, Southern Polytechnic and Georgia College will pay \$600 more per year. Tuition will be increased \$400 per year at Albany State, Armstrong Atlantic, Augusta State, Clayton State, Fort Valley State, Georgia Southwestern and Savannah State. The tuition increase will be \$200 per year at Abraham Baldwin, Coastal Georgia, Dalton State, Gainesville State, Gordon, Macon State,

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

[HB 23](#) bans teenagers from talking on cell phones while driving. A violation of either law, if signed by the Governor, would result in a fine of up to \$150 and one point on the driver's license of the offender. Passed House and Senate.

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

[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 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. Passed House and Senate.

[HB 1322](#) restricts media access to crime scene photos. Passed House and Senate.

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

### **Education**

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

[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. Passed House and Senate.

[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. Passed House and Senate.

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

[SB 521](#) was Gov. Perdue's proposal to evaluate and pay teachers based on standardized test scores. Passed Senate but failed in House.

[SB 361](#) would have authorized school vouchers for foster kids, children of military service personnel and the severely disabled with special learning plans. Failed to get out of committee.

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

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

[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. Passed House and Senate.

### **Health Care**

[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. Passed House and Senate and awaits final approval by voters in November.

[SB 418](#) creates a database to monitor the sale of prescription and over-the-counter drugs such as Ritalin, Xanax, most pain medications, sleep aids and any

Georgia Gwinnett and Middle Georgia College. Tuition will be increased by \$100 per year at two-year colleges that include Atlanta Metro, Bainbridge, Darton, East Georgia, Georgia Highlands, Georgia Perimeter, South Georgia and Waycross.

product containing pseudoephedrine. Passed House and Senate.

[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. Passed House and Senate.

[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. Passed House and Senate.

[HB 1184](#) and [SB 407](#) would have allowed out-of-state insurers to sell healthcare policies in Georgia. HB 1184 passed the House, and SB 407 passed the Senate, but both bills failed to pass the other house.

[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. Passed House and Senate.

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

[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. Passed House and Senate.

[SB 486](#) was an attempt to require administrative law judges to defer to state environmental officials in the granting of pollution permits. Failed to pass.

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

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

[HB 1301](#) and [SB 462](#) would have regulated inter-basin water transfers of 100,000 gallons or more. Both bills failed to get out of committee.

[SB 321](#) would have allowed private corporations to build and operate reservoirs for drinking water purposes. Passed Senate but failed in the House.

[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. Passed House and Senate.

### **Other Issues**

[HB 39](#) proposed a \$1-per-pack cigarette tax increase. Failed to get out of committee.

[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. Passed House and Senate.

[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. Passed

House and Senate.

[HB 869](#) would have allowed the Legislative Services Committee to order furlough days for legislators because of budget constraints. Failed to get out of committee.

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

[HR 1177](#) was a constitutional amendment that would open the door to the legalization of horse racing and pari-mutuel wagering in Georgia. Failed to get out of committee.

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

[HR 21](#) was a proposed constitutional amendment to carve out a portion of north Fulton County as a new "Milton County." Failed to reach the House floor for a vote.

[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. Passed House and Senate.

[SB 57](#) would have cracked down on lending practices that contribute to mortgage fraud. The bill passed the Senate but failed in House.

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

[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. Passed House and Senate.

[SB 374](#) creates an Economic Development Council to provide oversight of the state Department of Economic Development. Passed House and Senate.

[SB 406](#) would have allowed online voter registration. Passed Senate but failed in House.

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

[SB 529](#) was a push by Georgia Right to Life for legislation making it a felony for doctors to perform an abortion if the patient disclosed she was having the procedure because of objections to the race or gender of the fetus, or because she was coerced. Passed Senate but failed in House.

[SR 1013](#) was the Governor's proposal for the Commissioners of Agriculture, Insurance and Labor as well as the Superintendent of Schools to be appointed, rather than elected, in the future. Failed to get out of committee.

---

## Elly's Legislation

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

### Quick Links

- [Rep. Elly Dobbs](#)
- [State Government](#)
- [Georgia General Assembly](#)

### 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](mailto:elly.dobbs@house.ga.gov). For more information, visit her web site at [www.ellydobbs.com](http://www.ellydobbs.com).  
Newsletter email: [newsletters@wordexpress.info](mailto:newsletters@wordexpress.info)

- [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](#)

phone: 404.656.7859  
web: <http://www.ellydobbs.com>

[Forward email](#)

✉ **SafeUnsubscribe®**

This email was sent to linton.johnson@wordexpress.info by [newsletters@wordexpress.info](mailto: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