

# Under the Gold Dome



District 149 Legislative Update - May 2015



It has been over one month since the 2015 legislative session of the General Assembly came to a close. Although we adjourned for the year, there is still a lot of work that needs to be handled prior to January of 2016. Out of session our schedules remain hectic with study committee meetings, constituent issues, round table discussions, legislative panels and district events. The best part of being out of session is having the chance to catch up with all of you at these events! My last column concentrated on the details of a couple of major issues, but there were a lot of bills that I did not get to cover. While there were many bills passed this year, below is a quick reference list highlighting bills of interest.

## **Bills Signed by Governor Deal**

**House Bill 1- Haliagh's Hope;** Medical Cannabis Oil treatments for certain conditions was signed into law by Governor Deal on April 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Ava's Law;** Mandates Autism insurance coverage for children under a certain age was signed into law on April 29<sup>th</sup>.

**House Bill 91- More Diplomas for Georgians;** Retroactive measure that allows high school students who failed the Georgia graduation test prior to 2011 receive their diplomas. This bill was signed into law by Governor Deal on March 30<sup>th</sup>, effective immediately.

**House Bill 170- Transportation Funding Act of 2015;** Signed by Governor Deal on May 4<sup>th</sup>.

**House Bill 397- Soil and Water Conservation Commission;** This bill makes the State Soil and Water Conservation Commission, once a stand-a-lone agency, part of the Department of Agriculture. The legislation was signed into law by Governor Deal on April 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Opportunity School District Education Reform;** The constitutional amendment that will allow the state to take over failing schools that do not meet certain standards for three consecutive years. This bill was signed by Governor Deal on April 21<sup>st</sup>. The education reform is now in the hands of Georgia voters who will cast a ballot either in favor of or against the measure during the 2016 General Election.

**Senate Bill 2- College / Tech School Coursework to Count Towards High School Diploma;** Allows local boards of education to award a high school diploma to students taking classes at postsecondary institutions. The bill allows for college / tech classes to count towards high school course credit that meet certain criteria. This was signed into law by Governor Deal on April 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Senate Bill 132- Quality Basic Education Act;** Allows all high school students in public or private schools, to apply to a postsecondary school in order to take more classes. If accepted, the student can get credit for the class at the high school and post secondary institution. This bill was signed into law on April 30<sup>th</sup> by Governor Deal.

**House Bill 17- Hidden Predator Act;** Extends the statute of limitations for civil actions for childhood sexual abuse. Signed by Governor Deal on May 5<sup>th</sup>; effective immediately.

**House Bill 57- Solar Financing;** Allows third party financing for small businesses and home owners to obtain solar panels for use on property.

**House Bill 110- Firework Sales;** Legalizes and sets parameters for the distribution, transportation and retail sale of consumer fireworks. Signed by Governor Deal on May 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Senate Bill 101- Buffer for Coastal Marshlands;** Provides soil erosion protection on coastal marshlands by establishing a 25-foot buffer where oland disturbing activity is not allowed. This was signed into effect by Governor Deal on May 6<sup>th</sup>.

**2016 Fiscal Year Budget;** Signed by Governor Deal on May 11<sup>th</sup>.

If you are interested in learning more about the bills listed above, or any other legislation passed during the 2015 session please visit [www.legis.ga.gov](http://www.legis.ga.gov) and click on the legislation tab.

I will continue to update you monthly on the major issues affecting Georgia citizens. I would also like to thank those of you that took the time to attend my Town Hall Meetings last week in Eastman and McRae-Helena. It was great catching up with you! As always, thank you for allowing me to serve you. It is an honor to work for you and this great state! If you ever need anything at all, please don't hesitate to contact me at anytime. God bless you and may God continue to bless Georgia!