

Under the Gold Dome



District 149 Legislative Update– January 2015– Session



Session Update- Week 1

Monday, January 12th was a hectic day in Atlanta, as legislators from across the state made their way to the Capitol to mark the beginning of 153rd Legislative Session of the Georgia General Assembly. It was great to see my legislative colleagues and friends, as we discussed plans to move our state forward. Since Monday marked the first day of the 2015-2016 term, all members of the Georgia House of Representatives were sworn into office. Governor Nathan Deal also held his inauguration in the House Chamber that day.

On Wednesday, January 14th Gov. Deal delivered his annual State of the State address which covered successes of the past year and hopes for the new one. Gov. Deal noted that Georgia has seen the creation of 319,000 jobs over the last 4 years. With many major companies moving into our state every day, the number of jobs will only increase!

While Governor Deal addressed our progress, he also highlighted that there is still work to be done. Education, transportation, and medical cannabis oil will all be important topics of conversation this year. With education as a top priority, Gov. Deal suggested a constitutional amendment that would create Opportunity School Districts. This model would authorize the state to step in to help rejuvenate failing public schools. Gov. Deal also announced that the General Assembly will continue to invest in education. In fact, this year's budget, coupled with his proposal for next year's budget, means over one billion additional dollars for K-12 education. The additional funding will go to projects such as increasing internet broadband in classrooms and decreasing furlough days while enhancing teachers' salaries.

Transportation funding has also been an ongoing debate. Now that Georgia is the 8th most populated state in the nation, adequate transportation, and maintaining our roadways and bridges, is necessary for our citizens and Georgia's economic development. Unfortunately, the rise of fuel efficiency vehicles has drastically cut the state's revenue from the excise tax, a per gallon flat fee on gasoline that is used to fund transportation projects. We will be working with Gov. Deal this session to create a plan to fill in the gaps in the state's transportation budget. As a Representative from one of the only regions that passed the 2012 TSPLOST referendum, I will be watching this very closely. Furthermore, I will fight tooth and nail to ensure that we are given full credit for implementing the TSPLOST. We should not be required to pay more than the rest of the state! I am meeting with leadership next week to get a full understanding of what the new transportation bill will require.

The only thing, the General Assembly is required to do by law, is pass a balanced budget. Budget hearings begin Tuesday, January 20th. As a member of the Appropriations Committee, I will be vying for funding in our area of the state. I will keep you updated on budget happenings as they occur this session. You can also view the House in action with live and archived committee meeting coverage. I encourage all citizens to become active in the process and review legislation that is put forth by visiting the General Assembly's website- www.house.ga.gov.

At the end of a very busy first week, we also received our committee assignments for the 2015-2016 legislative terms. I am humbled and flattered that my House colleagues have chosen me to serve as Chairman of the State Planning and Community Affairs Committee. In addition, I am thrilled that I will be able to serve on many more committees that I specifically requested. Knowing the importance of the budget process, economic development and Georgia's healthcare issues, I will also serve on the Appropriations, Economic Development & Tourism, Health and Human Services and as Secretary of Games, Fish & Parks Committee.

As I mentioned before, it is so important for all of you to become involved in the legislative process. Whether you read what is going on in the paper, follow the legislation directly or come for a visit to the Capitol- Get Involved! In fact, I look forward to seeing all of our farmers for Farm Bureau Day on Thursday, February 19th! With agriculture as Georgia's top industry, there is no doubt that we need to continue to protect our farming community.

In close, I want to thank all of you for giving me the opportunity to serve as your Representative. I will continue to do my best to keep our state and district moving in the right direction. If you ever have any concerns or ideas for legislation, my door is open. After all, that is what I am here for, to serve you, represent you and when needed- to protect you. God bless each and every one of you and may God continue to bless the great state of Georgia!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kim Frust", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.