



**Happy New Year!** This is the first issue of Moving Forward for the 2014 Legislative Session. In this issue, we review the leadership changes in the House and Senate, some budget items of interest to the disability community, and give an overview of legislative terminology and effective advocacy. The first day of the 2014 Legislative Session will be Monday, January 13. We anxiously await the release of the Governor's budget, expected January 15.

This is the first year since the recession hit that state agencies were not asked to reduce their budgets. However, even if there are no further agency budget cuts this year, there have been several years of budget reductions making it challenging to effectively use those resources to meet the current need.

We congratulate Ms. D'Arcy Robb, the Public Policy Director for the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities, on the birth of her baby girl in December. She is currently on maternity leave but will be back. We also welcome Ms. Dawn Alford as the new Planning and Policy Development Specialist for the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities. Please extend a warm welcome to her.

**Get involved:** (1) If you are not already a member of the GCDD advocacy network, we invite you to join and receive information as we work together to create a better place for Georgians with disabilities. Go to [www.gcdd.org](http://www.gcdd.org) and click on "Join our Advocacy Network" and follow the instructions. (2) Register for Disability Day at: <http://bit.ly/1eT5C5s>

## House and Senate News:

**House Leadership — Speaker of the House:** David Ralston, 7th;

**Speaker Pro Tempore:** Jan Jones, 47<sup>th</sup>. **Majority Leader:** Larry O'Neal, 146th; **Minority Leader:** Stacey Abrams, 89<sup>th</sup>.

**Senate Leadership**—Presiding: **Lt. Gov.** Casey Cagle; **President**

**Pro Tempore:** David Shafer, 48th. **Majority Leader:** Ronnie Chance, 16th; **Minority Leader:** Steve Henson, 41st.

**Contact information for the Governor**—The Honorable Nathan Deal, Mailing address: 206 Washington Street, Suite 203, State Capitol, Atlanta, GA 30334; 404-656-1776, <http://gov.georgia.gov>

To identify your legislators, go to [www.gcdd.org](http://www.gcdd.org), click on **Join our Advocacy Network**, and follow the instructions. Capitol Impact will use your address to identify your legislators.

## Budget Information:

The 2014 Session tackles the 2014 supplemental budget, referred to here as FY 2014A, (ending June 30, 2014) and the 2015 FY budget (beginning July 1, 2014).

### Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities; FY 2014A and FY 2015

The Department is in the fourth year of the Settlement Agreement with the Department of Justice, which was signed on October 19, 2010. The agreement lays out five years of deliverables to better serve people with mental illness and developmental disabilities currently living in state institutions or at risk of institutionalization. The governor's budget instructions to state agencies for FY 2015 do not call for any cuts. UNLOCK the waiting list is requesting funding to help support Georgians with disabilities to live and work in Georgia's communities. We await the Governor's State of the State address and budget release to hear what he will propose to the legislature for funding.

### DBHDD's budget proposal to the DBHDD board on August 9, 2013:

Additional 250 DD Waivers (150 hospital transition + 100 wait list)  
**\$5,746,241**

### DBHDD's budget proposal continued

Annualize 250 FY14 Waivers (150 for hospital + 100 wait list)  
**\$7,548,046**

500 New Family Supports to support 1,850 families in keeping children at home and avoiding more costly services

**\$1,872,000**

### Budget Package for Unlock the Waiting Lists! (Anticipated Ask)

#### Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities, FY 2015

Housing vouchers to support 100 people with developmental disabilities who wish to live in their own home or apartment

**\$480,000**

Supported employment funds to assist 250 young people with developmental disabilities find and keep employment in the community

**\$1,960,000**

*Unlock supports the Department of Justice settlement agreement and greatly appreciates your support for the DOJ funds.*

#### Department of Community Health, FY 2015

Funding for 100 ICWP waivers to eliminate the current waiting list

**\$1,620,202**

#### Department of Human Services, FY 2015

- Funding to support aging Georgians by: **\$10,000,000**
- reducing waiting lists for home and community based services
- increasing funds for abuse investigations & protection
- strengthening long-term care ombudsman protection
- improving access to legal advice
- protecting abuse victims by offering temporary placements all across Georgia

#### Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, FY 2015

Increase funding for Vocational Rehabilitation services that prepare persons with disabilities for competitive employment so that Georgia may pull down its full 4:1 federal dollar match

**\$26,000,000**

#### Department of Community Affairs, FY 2015

Increase retrofit dollars for home modifications & necessary code updates to inaccessible properties

**\$300,000**

## Take Action—Advocacy Questions and Answers

**How can I take action on legislation?** (1) Go to [www.gcdd.org](http://www.gcdd.org) and click on **Join our Advocacy Network**. (2) Form a relationship with your representatives and senators by calling, emailing, faxing, and scheduling meetings to tell them about how their decisions on the budget and laws affect the quality of life for you and your family. (3) Visit GCDD's website for additional resources like fact sheets to utilize in your advocacy efforts: <http://www.gcdd.org/public-policy.html>. (4) Visit [www.unlockthewaitinglists.com](http://www.unlockthewaitinglists.com) for even more great advocacy resources.

**How can I contact my state representative or senator?** Every member has an email address. However, the most effective way to communicate is by letter or phone. Legislators prefer to hear from their own constituents and may not pay attention to mass emails or form letters from people outside their districts. Information about legislators is also available at [www.legis.state.ga.us](http://www.legis.state.ga.us).

**How did my legislators vote?** Voting Records are online by bill number, not by legislator. This may take up to five days following the actual vote. Go to [www.legis.state.ga.us](http://www.legis.state.ga.us) then click on House or Senate, then click on House votes or Senate votes for a complete roll call on how each person voted on a certain bill. Printed copies may be obtained from the Clerk of the House (404) 656-5015 or the Secretary of the Senate (404) 656-5040. A complete record of votes on every bill is available for a fee.

**When is the General Assembly in session?** The General Assembly will convene on January 13, 2014. Annual sessions run for 40 Legislative days. Sessions normally end in late March, depending upon the number of recess days but we anticipate a shorter session this year due to it being election year. Therefore, the session could end as early as by mid-March.

## Legislation Prefiled:

### HOUSE:

**HB 0700:** Public facilities; State Capitol and CLOB; To provide for increased accessibility by the blind and visually impaired to the state capitol and legislative office facilities;  
**Sponsor:** Waites, Keisha 60<sup>th</sup>; **Status:** House Prefiled.

**HB 0707:** The Georgia Health Care Freedom and ACA Noncompliance Act; enact; to prohibit powers, assets, employees, agents, or contractors of the state or any political subdivision, municipality, or other local government authority from engaging in an activity that aids any agency in the enforcement of provisions of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010;  
**Sponsor:** Spencer, Jason 180<sup>th</sup>; **Status:** Prefiled.

**HR 1039:** State Capitol and CLOB; accessibility by the blind and visually impaired; A RESOLUTION declaring a commitment to accessibility by the blind and visually impaired to the state capitol and legislative offices;  
**Sponsor:** Waites, Keisha 60<sup>th</sup>; **Status:** Prefiled.

### SENATE:

No disability related bills prefiled.

## Glossary:

**Appropriation** —a specific amount of money that is intended for use by a specific state program  
**DCH**—Department of Community Health  
**DD**—Developmental Disabilities  
**DHS**—Department of Human Services  
**DBHDD**—Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities  
**DOE**—Department of Education  
**DOL**—Department of Labor  
**FY**—Fiscal Year  
**GVRA** – Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency  
**FY**—Fiscal Year  
**HB**—House Bill  
**HR**—House Resolution  
**SB**—Senate Bill  
**SR**—Senate Resolution

### SAVE THE DATE!

16<sup>th</sup> Annual Disability Day at the Capitol  
Celebrate community, advocacy, and friendship!

Rally on the Capitol Steps!

Thursday, February 20, 2014

9 AM – 2 PM

*We All Have A Story... What's Yours?*

[www.gcdd.org](http://www.gcdd.org)

[www.unlockthewaitinglists.com](http://www.unlockthewaitinglists.com)

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Please stay tuned to the latest news by signing up for Capitol Impact and Moving Forward. Go to [www.gcdd.org](http://www.gcdd.org) and click on **Join Our Advocacy Network!**

## Dates to Remember:

**Medicaid Expansion Rally: January 13**

**Health Care Unscrambled: January 16**

**Martin Luther King Remembrance: January 20**

**Blindness Coalition Legislative Day at the Capitol: January 22**

**Be There 4 Seniors Rally at the Capitol: January 30**

**February is Self-Advocates Month at the Capitol**

**Alzheimer's Awareness Day at the Capitol: February 13**

**Mental Health Day at the Capitol: February 19**

**Disability Day at the Capitol: February 20**



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