

Brought to you by the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities



**Welcome to a special Disability Day Edition of Moving Forward.** More than 2,500 advocates, family members, and allies gathered at the Capitol steps on a beautiful, warm day to hear speakers Governor Nathan Deal, Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi, CEO & President of RespectAbilityUSA, and Greg Schmiege, the Executive Director of the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA). This issue highlights Governor Deal's remarks and his Proclamation of Disability Awareness Day.

**In other news at the Gold Dome:** SB 397, a bill for autism insurance coverage, sponsored by Senator Tim Golden, was dropped in the Senate Hopper on February 19, passed by the Senate on February 25, and read in the House on February 26. This bill puts a cap on coverage at \$35,000 per year and limits coverage to children age 6 and under. Also, HB 700, sponsored by Rep. Keisha Waites, which seeks to increase accessibility for those with visual disabilities at the Capitol and CLOB, passed out of the House committee on February 24.

The House and Senate resolved any differences in the FY2014 Amended Budget and it was signed by the Governor on February 26. The FY 2015 budget is still being worked on in the Senate subcommittees.

**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) **Join our weekly legislative update calls on Monday morning at 9:15 AM.** Dial 1-888-355-1249 and enter passcode 232357 at the prompt. (3) Go to [www.unlockthewaitinglists.com](http://www.unlockthewaitinglists.com) to get the latest Unlock updates

## Governor's Remarks

*The following is a transcript of Governor Nathan Deal's Disability Day speech from February 20, 2014. Printed with permission.*

### Deal Emphasizes Jobs, Higher Access for Post-Secondary Education for People with Disabilities

It's a privilege to once again take part in Disability Day with all of you, and I want to extend a warm thank you to the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities for sponsoring this event.

My main goal has been to create job opportunities for Georgians, and there's a reason for that. A job serves as the launching point for independence, financial stability and, in many instances, a sense of purpose. My desire for people to have access to these benefits of employment certainly extends to those in our state with disabilities.

But it's not just jobs we're focused on. We long to give Georgians, with or without disabilities, the chance to live in real homes in real communities and to have access to quality learning that leads to meaningful careers.

This is why we have included in our budget new waivers and support services for an additional 500 families through the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities. We have also added 125 new elderly and disabled waiver slots through the Department of Community Health. These waivers provide crucial services and support to those individuals in Georgia who are leaving institutional living to enjoy the benefits of community living.

Yet, true self-sufficiency does start with a job. While the unemployment rate has dropped significantly since I took office, we know that it is still too high for people with disabilities. The majority of high school students with disabilities graduate without work, and end up sitting at home during what should be the most active and productive part of their lives.

To help those with disabilities get the skills needed to find employment, we took an important step last year. We provided funds for post secondary inclusive education to expand the existing program at Kennesaw State University while also funding a new one in South Georgia's East Georgia State College starting in the fall.

Access to higher learning offers Georgians with disabilities the opportunity to pursue competitive employment, which all individuals in our state should be afforded. As such, we must continue to make sure our education, training and support systems have the policies and resources needed to prepare individuals with disabilities to enter the workforce and become contributing members of society.

To address the barriers to employment confronting people with disabilities, we have a work group in the DBHDD looking into these issues and working on how we can move forward with an Employment First Initiative in Georgia. It is in this way that I hope to see more individuals able to pursue their own path to a job, a career or another form of participation in community life.

This year marks the 15th Anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court *Olmstead* Decision. Already, we have made great strides in moving more individuals from institutional care to community-based care, and we're not done yet. It is for this reason and for the benefit of Georgians that I am committed to finding ways to make an independent life a more attainable life.



## HOUSE BILLS

Bill#; Sponsor; Title; Status Date; Status Description.

**Note that the bills in bold had recent action or status changes.**

HB 0018; Waites, Keisha 60<sup>th</sup>; Blind Persons' Braille Literacy Rights and Education Act; enact; 2/26/2013; House - House Second Readers

HB 0067; Kidd, E. Culver "Rusty" 145<sup>th</sup>; Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund; penalty assessments for additional violations; authorize; 1/28/2013; House - House Second Readers

HB 0166; Bruce, Roger 61<sup>st</sup>; Parent Protection Act; enact; 2/1/2013; House - House Second Readers

HB 0290; Dempsey, Katie 13<sup>th</sup>; Family Care Act - to allow employees to use sick leave for the care of immediate family members; 2/3/2014; House Committee Favorably Reported By Substitute

HB 0309; Harbin, Ben 122<sup>nd</sup>; Ava's Law; enact; 2/13/2013; House - House Second Readers

## HOUSE BILLS (continued)

Note that the bills in bold had recent action or status changes.

HB 0398; Maxwell, Howard 17<sup>th</sup>; Consumer transactions; licensed personal care homes and community living arrangements to use certain terms; authorize; 3/28/2013; House - House Withdrawn, Recommitted

HB 0546; Beverly, James 143<sup>rd</sup>; Public Health, Department of; pilot program to assess need for and effectiveness of using protocol technicians in areas which do not have assess to a hospital; establish; 3/11/2013; House - House Second Readers

HB 0606; Knight, David 130<sup>th</sup>; Private home care providers; revise definition to exclude contractual arrangements with independent contractors; 3/20/2013; House - House Second Readers

HB 0608; Houston, Penny 170<sup>th</sup>; Community Health, Department of; criminal background check requirements for applicants for employment by certain licensed facilities; expand; 03/21/2013; House - House Second Readers

HB 0695; Carson, John 46<sup>th</sup>; Public assistance; provide reimbursement for Medicaid providers; provisions; 1/14/2014; House Second Readers

**HB 0700; Waites, Keisha; Public facilities; State Capitol and CLOB; persons with disabilities; provide increased accessibility; 2/24/2014; House Committee Favorably Reported By Substitute**

**HB 0707; Spencer, Jason 180<sup>th</sup>; The Georgia Health Care Freedom and ACA Noncompliance Act; enact; 2/25/2014; House - House Committee Favorably Reported By Substitute**

**HB 0743; Ralston, David; Supplemental appropriations; State Fiscal Year July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2014; 2/26/2014; Act 347**

HB 0744; Ralston, David; General appropriations; State Fiscal Year July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2015; 2/18/2014; Senate Read and Referred

HB 0745; Ralston, David; Supplemental appropriations; State Fiscal Year July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2014; 1/17/2014; House Second Readers

HB 0746; Ralston, David; Supplemental appropriations; State Fiscal Year July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2014; 1/17/2014; House Second Readers

HB 0747; Ralston, David; General appropriations; State Fiscal Year July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2015; 1/17/2014; House Second Readers

HB 0748; Ralston, David; General appropriations; State Fiscal Year July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2015; 1/17/2014; House Second Readers

HB 0754; Waites, Keisha; Blind Persons' Braille Literacy Rights and Education Act; enact; 1/17/2014; House Second Readers

HB 0760; Welch, Andrew; General Assembly; committees have ability to subpoena department and division heads to testify and produce documents for examination; provide; 1/21/2014; House Second Readers

HB 0766; Lumsden, Eddie; Work Based Learning Act; enact; 2/10/2014; Senate Read and Referred

**HB 0772; Morris, Greg; Public assistance; drug testing for applicants for food stamps; require; 2/25/2014; House - House Committee Favorably Reported By Substitute**

HB 0853; Stover, David; Mental health facilities; certificate of need; revise exemption; 1/31/2014; House Second Readers

HB 0868; Fludd, Virgil; Community Health, Board of; contract with at least two vendors to provide health insurance benefits for retiring and retired state employees; require; 1/31/2014; House Second Readers

HB 0870; Tanner, Kevin; Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund; imposition of additional fine for reckless driving; provide; 2/3/2014; House Second Readers

HB 0885; Peake, Allen; Medical cannabis; continuing research into benefits to treat certain conditions; provisions; 2/3/2014; House Second Readers

HB 0894; Peake, Allen; Continuing care providers and facilities; provide for continuing care at home; provisions; 2/5/2014; House Second Readers

**HB 0899; Cooper, Sharon; Unlicensed personal care homes; criminal penalties for owning or operating; provide; 2/18/2014; House Committee Favorably Reported By Substitute**

**HB 0910; Kelley, Trey; Community Health, Department of; authorize medical-legal partnerships; provisions; 2/25/2014; Senate - Senate Read and Referred**

**HB 0913; Kelley, Trey; Community Health, Board of; persons having certain conflicts of interest from serving on board; prohibit; 2/24/2014; House - House Committee Favorably Reported By Substitute**

**HB 0914; Wilkerson, David; Social services; school personnel required to report child abuse shall be notified by child protective agency upon receipt of report and completion of investigation; provide; 2/25/2014; House - House Committee Favorably Reported By Substitute**

HB 0942; Gordon, J. Craig; Online Voter Registration Act of 2014; enact; 2/10/2014; House Second Readers

**HB 0973; Lindsey, Edward; Medicaid; changes to civil penalties for false or fraudulent claims; provisions; 2/25/2014; Senate - Senate Read and Referred**

**HB 0990; Jones, Jan; Social services; expansion of Medicaid eligibility through increase in income threshold without prior legislative approval; prohibit; 2/24/2014; House - House Committee Favorably Reported By Substitute**

**HB 1084; Weldon, Tom; Community Health, Department of; infraction of condition under medicare or Medicaid not constitute negligence per se; provide; 2/26/2014; House Second Readers**

HR 1039; Waites, Keisha 60<sup>th</sup>; State Capitol and CLOB; accessibility by the blind and visually impaired; 11/25/2013; House - House Prefiled

HR 1087; Welch, Andrew; General Assembly; dedication of revenues derived from fees or other assessments to public purpose for which such fees were imposed; provide - CA; 1/23/2014; House Second Readers

## SENATE BILLS

SB 0141; Beach, Brandon 21<sup>st</sup>; 'Patient Injury Act'; create an alternative medical malpractice litigation; 2/11/2013; Senate - Senate Read and Referred

SB 0163; Ligon, Jr., William 3<sup>rd</sup>; Community Health Dept.; required to study and identify options for Medicaid reform; 3/28/2013; House - House Withdrawn, Recommitted

SB 0186; Ligon, Jr., William 3<sup>rd</sup>; Mental Health; provide for authorization of ambulance personnel to transport certain mentally ill patients; 2/21/2013; Senate - Senate Read and Referred

SB 0191; Albers, John 56<sup>th</sup>; "Ava's Law"; provide definitions; certain insurance coverage for autism spectrum disorders; 2/22/2013; Senate - Senate Read and Referred

SB 0202; Unterman, Renee 45<sup>th</sup>; Litigation code changes; 2/25/2013; Senate - Senate Read and Referred

SB 0207; Albers, John 56<sup>th</sup>; Probation of first offenders; person disqualified from employment when discharged as felony offender; add private home care providers to list; 2/5/2014; House Committee Favorably Reported By Substitute

SB 0220; Hill, Judson 32<sup>nd</sup>; Public Assistance; provide for a pilot program; smart cards for Medicaid program recipients; 2/27/2013; Senate - Senate Read and Referred

**SB 0291; Unterman, Renee; Georgia Adult and Aging Services Agency; create; 2/18/2014; House Committee Favorably Reported**

**SB 0292; Unterman, Renee; Alzheimer's Disease Registry; establish within the Department of Public Health; 2/18/2014; House Committee Favorably Reported**

SB 0298; Murphy, Jack; License Plates; submission of a doctor's prescription; application for a special parking decal for persons with disabilities in lieu of an affidavit; notary public not available; 2/3/2014; House Second Readers

SB 0329; Wilkinson, John; "Work Based Learning Act"; 2/17/2014; House Second Readers

**SB 0349; Bethel, Charlie; Behavioral Health and Developmental, Dept. of; changes to the powers and duties; 02/20/2014; House Second Readers**

**SB 0397; Golden, Tim; Autism; provide for certain insurance coverage of autism spectrum disorders; definitions; limitations; premium cap; 2/26/2014; House - House First Readers**

**SB 0409; Jackson, Lester; "Blind Persons' Braille Literacy Rights and Education Act"; enact; blind or visually impaired child; determine need for Braille instruction; 2/26/2014; Senate - Senate Read Second Time**

SR 0746; Unterman, Renee; State Plan for Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias; express support; 2/19/2014; House Second Readers



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