



Public Policy for the People

Brought to you by the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities

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- **The Governor releases his budget recommendations - see the highlights inside this issue!**
- **New ramp at the CLOB improves accessibility for people with disabilities!**

INSIDER HIGHLIGHTS

We hope you had a wonderful MLK weekend and a great start to your week. Last Friday the Governor released his budget recommendations, and this week the General Assembly is adjourned while they conduct joint budget hearings. For the highlights of the budgets and more about the schedule for the hearings, keep reading.

In other news: Those who visit the Capitol will notice that there have been several improvements in accessibility. One of the biggest changes is a new ramp for people with disabilities to access the Paul D. Coverdell Legislative Office Building (CLOB). The ramp is located in front of the building, off of Capitol Square, adjacent to the main entrance (see pictures below).



For more information about accessibility around the Capitol, please visit the State of Georgia ADA Coordinator's Office website at:

<http://ada.Georgia.gov/accessibility-capitol-hill>

BUDGET 101

This section of the newsletter highlights the activities and information regarding the Amended FY2015 and FY2016 Budgets.

Check out the Unlock website for the most current information.

<http://www.unlockthewaitinglists.com/>

This issue will focus on the Governor's budget recommendations. The entire budget can be found at:

[Governor's FY2015 Amended Budget](#)

[Governor's FY2016 Budget](#)

Please click on the link below to for an attachment that highlights some of the details of the FY2015 Amended and FY2016 Budgets for people with disabilities. Specifically, it contains information relating to the following agency budgets: the Department of Community Health (Medicaid Aged Blind and Disabled) and the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (Adult Developmental Disabilities Services).

<http://www.ciclt.net/ul/gcdd/Budget101-0112152.pdf>

For the latest schedule of the budget hearings, please visit the following website:

<http://www.house.ga.gov/budget/en-US/budgethearings.aspx>

Who's Who:

The 2015 legislative session is the first year of a two-year legislative cycle. Below we introduce you to the leadership of the legislative committees that have oversight over many of the issues of interest for people with disabilities. You can visit <http://www.legis.ga.gov> for these and other elected officials.

House:

Rep. Sharon Cooper, District 43

As Chairman of the Health and Human Services committee for the House of Representatives, Rep. Cooper leads the group that is responsible for legislation that affects the conditions of safety regulations and social services for the citizens of Georgia.

Rep. Tommy Benton, District 31

Rep. Benton is the Chairman of the Human Relations and Aging committee and a member of the Appropriations committee. The Human Relations and Aging committee is responsible for legislation that concerns the care and needs of Georgia's aging population.

Rep. Terry England, District 116

As Chairman of the Appropriations committee, Rep. England leads the group of House legislators whose main focus is the writing of the state's amended and general fiscal year budgets for Georgia's state agencies and departments. They also hear legislation that has considerable impact on state revenues or expenditures.

Rep. Butch Parrish, District 158

Rep. Parrish is Chairman of the Appropriations subcommittee on Health. This subcommittee deals with budgetary matters related to the Department of Community Health.

Senate:

Sen. Jack Hill, District 4

Sen. Hill, as Chairman of the Senate Appropriations committee, leads a group of legislators that have broad jurisdiction over legislation involving the expenditure of state and federal funds. They are responsible for developing and balancing the budget, and have fourteen standing subcommittees.

Sen. Renee S. Unterman, District 4

Sen. Unterman is Chairman of the Senate Health and Human Services committee, she is Vice Chairman of the Appropriations committee, and a member of the Insurance and Labor committee. The Health and Human Services committee has jurisdiction over legislation relating to health care and social services.

Sen. Dean Burke, District 11

Sen. Burke is a member of the Health and Human Services committee as well as the Appropriations committee. The Health and Human Services committee has general jurisdiction over legislation concerning health care and social services.

For a complete list of House committees go to: <http://www.house.ga.gov/Committees/en-US/CommitteeList.aspx>

For a complete list of Senate committees go to: <http://www.senate.ga.gov/committees/en-US/SenateCommitteesList.aspx>

ADVOCACY CORNER

*****QUESTION OF THE WEEK*****

Q: Where can I go to view a live broadcast of the action in the Georgia General Assembly?

A: Live video feeds can be viewed here: <http://www.legis.ga.gov/Streaming/en-US/Both.aspx>

*****ADVOCACY TIP*****

Practice what you will say to your elected officials before your meetings. Keep in mind that these are busy men and women, and may not have much time to spend with you. If you can, have a one pager ready that you can hand to them summarizing the key points of what you want to discuss. Your one pager should also clearly state your "ask" - or how you want them to help (e.g. support or oppose a bill, appropriate funding for an important issue).

ADVOCACY OF THE WEEK

We need YOU to get involved TODAY. Here are two things that you can do this week:

1. If you haven't already, check your calendar and register for at least one of the Advocacy Days you want to attend as well as Disability Day at the Capitol. Remember, your voice counts! To register, click the following link: http://www.ciclt.net/sn/events/e_signup.aspx?ClientCode=gcdd&E_ID=500061&RegType=ATT
2. Mark your calendar to join us for the weekly GCDD Public Policy Calls every Monday at 9:30 a.m. during the session. Dial 1-888-355-1249 and enter 232357 at the prompt.

DATES TO REMEMBER

The entire month of February is Self-Advocates Month at the Capitol

Alzheimer's Awareness Day at the Capitol: February 2

Be There 4 Seniors Rally at the Capitol: February 5

Disability Day at the Capitol: March 5

GCDD Advocacy Days at the Capitol

We Need Waivers Day - Wednesday, January 21, 9-12 noon

ICWP Raise the Rate Day - Thursday, January 29, 9-12 noon

Kids Need Real Homes, Not Nursing Homes Day - Wednesday, February 4, 9-12 noon

Employment First Day - Wednesday, February 11, 9-12 noon

Youth Day - Thursday, February 19, 9-12 noon

Weekly GCDD legislative call: Every Monday at 9:30 a.m. Dial 1-888-355-1249 and enter passcode 232357 at the prompt.

2015 Legislative Bills

This section will present a list of the bills that GCDD is tracking in a summary form. Detailed information will be available by clicking on the actual bill number. Both the House and Senate bills will be listed by Bill Number, Sponsor, Title Summary, and the most current activity.

2015 House Bills

[**HB 0001**](#) Peake, Allen Haleigh's Hope Act; enact
11/17/2014 - House Pre-filed

2015 Senate Bills

[**SB 0007**](#) Curt Thompson Controlled Substances Therapeutic Relief Act; repeal provisions;
provide for medical use of marijuana; definitions (PF)
11/24/2014 - Senate Pre-filed

For the latest public policy updates, go to www.gcdd.org and click on Join Our Advocacy Network. Be sure to subscribe to the Unlock and Public Policy Alerts.

Thank you from the GCDD Public Policy Team

Dawn Alford: Acting Public Policy Director

D'Arcy Robb: Public Policy Consultant - Employment First

Dave Zilles: Public Policy Consultant - Unlock the Waiting Lists -Parent Advocate



THE STATE'S LEADER IN ADVANCING PUBLIC POLICY
ON BEHALF OF PERSONS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES.

