

FAMILY & POLICY



AN ADVOCACY PROGRAM OF

FEBRUARY 12, 2010

FY 2010 amended budget. The House passed its [version](#) of the 2010 amended budget, and the Senate is expected to act by the end of the week of February 15th so that a conference committee can begin working to resolve differences between the two versions. **Education.** The House restored the proposed \$17 M cut in equalization grants and reduced cuts to 4% in programs such as Communities in Schools, Information Technology, and Regional Education Service Agencies. **Community Health.** The House cut prenatal care funds in Babies Born Healthy by 8%. It increased cuts to Ga. Partnership for Caring (\$75,000 instead of \$6,000), St. Joseph Mercy Care (\$45,811 instead of \$14,660), the Rural Health Association (\$15,000 instead of \$2,400), Chatham Co. Board of Health (\$55,901 instead of \$17,888), and the Southeastern Firefighters Burn Foundation (\$62,500 instead of \$20,000). It reduced funding for Low-Income Medicaid by \$11.9 M, but added \$250,000 for start up of a new Federally Qualified Health Center and \$5.9 M to allow private hospitals to participate in the Disproportionate Share Hospital program. **Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities.** The House restored \$274,000 for the Marcus Autism Center by delaying funding for a Sexual Offender Review Board database. **Human Services.** The House restored \$225,000 for Alzheimer's respite services, \$177,859 for the Center for the Visually Impaired, \$15,000 for the Haralson Co. Senior Center, and \$20,000 for Senior Connections in DeKalb. It cut \$200,000 for the EMBRACE foster care program and cut \$2.9 M from department administration.

FY 2011 budget. Legislators will probably begin hearings on the "big budget" during the coming week. They face choices about whether to accept Gov. Perdue's recommendations about measures such as the unpopular hospital tax, make further deep cuts, or adopt new revenues such as a tobacco tax. In addition, revenues

declined again last month, heightening concerns about the need for more service cuts or additional revenues.

Reaction to proposed federal health reform. [SB 317](#), (Hill, 32nd) [SR 794](#) (Hill, 32nd), [SR 795](#), (Harp, 29th) and [SR 829](#) (Hill, 32nd) have passed their Senate committees and could receive Rules Committee approval for votes on the Senate floor. SB 318 would enact a state law prohibiting anyone from being required to purchase health insurance or participate in a health plan. SR 794 and 795 would amend the Georgia Constitution similarly. SR 829 urges the State Attorney General to prepare a challenge to federal health reform.

Office of Child Advocate. Gov. Perdue has appointed Melissa Carter as Georgia Child Advocate to replace Tom Rawlings who is now heading a justice mission in Guatemala. Carter has served as Deputy Director of the Office since August 2007.

Education. [HB 927](#) (Jacobs, 80th) passed House Judiciary Non-Civil. The bill, considered by advocates to be an improvement over current law, defines bullying and mandates that local systems develop anti-bullying policies by August 2011. It also directs the Department of Education to develop a model bullying policy by January 2011. [SB 132](#) (Fort, 39th) passed Senate Education & Youth by substitute. It increases the age a student can drop out from 16 to 17. A parent may sign a waiver if the student is enrolled in community college or technical school.

Child welfare. The House Children and Youth Committee will meet Tuesday, February 16th at 2:00 p.m., Room 403 CAP on [HB 1085](#) (Dempsey, 13th). The bill would bring the Department of Human Services into compliance with provisions of the federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008. See the 2/5 Bulletin.

Highlights

- The House passed its version of the FY 2010 amended budget.
- The General Assembly will be in session Tuesday-Thursday the week of 2/15 for the 18th – 20th legislative days.

You can help!

Locate your State Representative and Senator: www.votesmart.org (Check your driver's license for 9-digit zip code.)

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