

FAMILY & POLICY



AN ADVOCACY PROGRAM OF

MARCH 19, 2010

Work continues behind the scenes on the FY 2011 budget. Governor Perdue's new plan reflecting a lower revenue estimate (3/12 Bulletin) has generated much concern and a battle among hospitals. Some prefer the original provider tax to the elimination of the nonprofits' sales tax exemption, while some oppose both. Recall that eliminating the sales tax exemption raises far less revenue. It may be that the provider tax will resurface, but it is not yet evident how the issue will be resolved. Also not clear is how those agencies required to do so will take the additional 3% cut Governor Perdue has ordered to address the continuing revenue decline. The Department of Human Services offered a list which advocates have found to be vague. It identifies certain program areas and states that cuts will be made through "layoffs, furloughs, and attrition" without giving many details. Advocates are trying to get further information to assess the impact.

Rally for revenues to stop budget cuts. Numerous organizations plan a rally for Tuesday, March 23rd at 2:00 p.m. on the Washington Street side of the State Capitol. They say cutting spending is only one part of the solution to the current budget crisis and that officials have gone far beyond eliminating inefficiency and "nice to do" programs. They are calling for raising revenues in sensible ways to ensure that services for children, the elderly and struggling families are preserved and that Georgia does not go backward in irretrievable ways.

Adoption. [SB 471](#) (Harp 29th) on home studies (3/12 Bulletin) is in Senate Judiciary Monday. [HB 1159](#) on adoption records and release of non-identifying medical information will be heard Monday in House Judiciary.

Exploited children. [SB 304](#) (Unterman, 45th) is in Senate Judiciary Monday. It offers a path through the juvenile

court system for commercially sexually exploited children who need restorative services.

Medicaid/PeachCare CMOs. [SB 443](#) (Smith, 52nd) would give the General Assembly a way of overseeing the CMOs that serve Medicaid and PeachCare patients. Legislators have heard complaints from consumers and

providers. It is on the calendar for a Senate floor vote Monday, March 22nd.

Resistance to proposed federal health reform. As the U.S. House prepared this week for an historic vote on health reform, some Ga. legislators are trying to prevent federal reform from going into effect here. Several

resolutions would place constitutional amendments on the ballot in November. These measures require a 2/3 vote of both houses. [SR 794](#) (Hill, 32nd) failed in the Senate this week along party lines, but will be reconsidered. [HR 1086](#) (Hill, 21st) will be on the House floor Monday. Similar bills attempting to prohibit reform by statute require only a majority vote. [SB 317](#) (Hill, 32nd) passed the Senate. [SB 399](#) (Hill, 32nd) prohibiting state agencies from implementing any part of health reform unless authorized by the legislature was favorably reported by Senate Government Oversight. Many legal scholars say nullification efforts are unlikely to survive court tests, but could lead to legal bills and delays.

Health insurance. [HB 1268](#) (Knox, 24th) extends the 65% federal COBRA premium subsidy for people laid off by small firms. [HB 1184](#) (Cole, 125th) is the Governor's bill to allow sales of insurance policies regulated by other states that may not include services and protections required by Georgia law. Both bills are in House Insurance Monday. [SB 330](#) (Smith, 52nd) allowing non-student dependents to stay on parents' insurance through age 25, limiting rescissions, and prohibiting annual or lifetime limits passed out of Senate Insurance.

Highlights

- The General Assembly will meet for the 28th day Monday, March 22nd, and then meet Tuesday and Thursday.
- Bills must clear their chamber of origin by midnight Thursday if they are to pass this term unless they are attached to another eligible measure.

You can help!

Locate your State Representative and Senator: www.votesmart.org (Check your driver's license for 9-digit zip code.)
See previous issues of the Family & Policy Bulletin at www.familiesfirst.org

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