



**Legislative Update**  
**January 8, 2010**

## Circus Coming to Town

January 11, 2010, marks the opening of the 2010 General Assembly and from the outset it promises to be the closest thing to the real circus that many Capitol observers have seen. The debacle of the House of Representatives leadership has been something to watch and should be the subject of an upcoming soap opera if not a full scale reality show. The People of Georgia are the real winners in the outcome. **Rep. David Ralston, R-Blue Ridge**, has been selected by his fellow representatives to be the new *Speaker* and has promised to bring open dealings and fair treatment to all members of the House—and the consensus of observers is that he means it! **Rep. Jan Jones, R-Alpharetta**, is the new *Speaker Pro-tem*. A native of Dublin, she has been a strong advocate of public education and providing new opportunities for public schools to reach students more effectively. She has impressed many with her willingness to listen to a variety of opinions and viewpoints. If you don't know, that is a total opposite of the leadership that the House has seen in recent years.

There will be a number of new midterm faces due to resignations stemming from folks running for statewide offices or becoming judges.

There is no news on whether **Speaker Ralston** will replace some of the powerful committee chairs. One thing is certain—the *Gang of Eight—sometimes nine* will not be in control of the House—it will indeed be a new day!

## Same Song, Second Verse

The dark cloud that hung over the Legislature on Day 40 of 2009 is still there and if anything it is even worse. The financial crisis facing the State has not improved and has darkened. There are speculations galore as to what has to be done to deal with declining revenues and none of them are pretty. More and more legislators are climbing on the bandwagon to reduce the teacher salary scale rather than impose more furlough days. Cutting the salary schedule will put teachers behind for years to come but does not result in a loss of student days. **Speaker Ralston** has promised no new taxes and that limits how the revenue shortfall can be overcome—but the new

leadership has earned a reputation of listening and so we will just have to wait.

## **First of several *Ooops***

Legislators across the State have been hammered by National Board Certified Teachers about the loss of their supplement that was guaranteed by law. More and more legislators are coming out of their shell and advocating for the NBC teachers. Anything can happen now!

## **Weekly Crier of our Partnership**

Each week of the 2010 General Assembly session every member of GASSP will receive the *Weekly Legislative Update*. All that I ask as your liaison is that you take seriously your responsibility to communicate with your legislators regarding the issues that speak to you.

Legislators are so impressionable—particularly when emails, phone calls, and personal contacts come from their constituents. YOU are the most powerful tool to bring about righteous and responsible legislation. Don't hesitate to contact me if you need me: [stokes30650@bellsouth.net](mailto:stokes30650@bellsouth.net) or on my cell phone, 770-601-3798. And now ladies and gentlemen, let the fun begin!