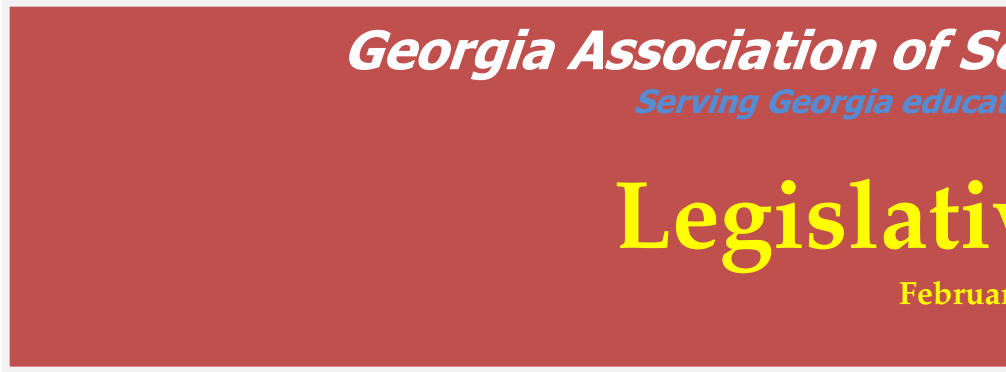


Jimmy Stokes

From: Jimmy Stokes [stokes30650@bellsouth.net]
Sent: Friday, February 26, 2010 11:14 AM
To: stokes30650@bellsouth.net
Subject: GASSP Legislative Update--February 26, 2010



The Legislature is in recess February 22—March 8 so news is limited

Some Are More Equal Than Others

The legislature is in recess for two weeks while joint House and Senate Committees hammer out the FY2011 Budget. Having less and less money to dole out in the face of ever increasing demands makes the work difficult at best. It continues to perplex Capitol observers how certain departments and certain revenues are hands off when it comes to the Legislature. The greatest mystery of all is the over \$1 Billion in uncollected sales taxes that continues to be the elephant in the room that the Department of Revenue and Legislators refuse to discuss or put on the table. It just doesn't make sense!

After all the publicity about tax exemptions enacted in the 2009 General Assembly, one would think that the Legislature would be hesitant to introduce additional tax exemption measures, but alas, not the case. There are numerous bills designed to give special interests and political friends tax breaks even in the most desperate of economic times. What will it take before politicians get the message?

State revenues are down over \$3 Billion over the last three years. Legislators are finally beginning to talk about *revenue*

enhancements. (If the Democrats introduce it, it is a tax increase; if Republicans introduce the measure it is revenue enhancement.) Bottom line is something is going to have to give or state government will be compromised almost to the point of no return.

Furlough Question

Educators across the state continue to inquire about furlough days. The Governor has *recommended* three furlough days for teachers between now and June 30. It is a recommendation because he does not have the authority to furlough teachers and legally it must be done by local BOEs. There has been **NO** mention of furlough days for FY2011, but a \$500 million austerity cut is looming and local BOEs will either have to institute 6-8 furlough days or reduce staff accordingly. There has been very little information coming from legislators as to what to expect for the FY2011 budget, but state revenues are down over \$3 billion over the last three years! Yuck!

NEW Legislation

House Bill 1217 Repeals the sales tax exemption on eligible food and beverages dispensed by vending machines.

House Bill 1227 Places a \$0.50 tax on all high school and college athletic tickets

House Bill 1232 Requires a parent conference with principal and/or teacher when a student receives a failing grade on two consecutive reports in a subject or course

House Bill 1249 Provides ad valorem tax exemption for businesses creating new jobs

House Resolution 1432 Constitutional amendment that would permit local sales tax for education that would reduce corresponding the ad valorem taxes

Senate Bill 426 Prohibits a local BOE member from receiving salary, benefits, per diem, or expense reimbursement if school loses it accreditation

Senate Bill 427 Establishes the Georgia Foundation for Public Education

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