

From: Representative Don Parsons

Legislation Passed by the Georgia House on Day 27 - February 24, 2016

HB 166 - entitled the Motor Cycle Mobility Safety Act -, sponsored by John Yates, increases the height limitation for motorcycle handlebars from 15 inches to 25 inches.

HB 381, (this was not voted on, recommitted to Rules) (sponsored by Rep. Andrew Welch, repeals Chapter 17 of Title 45, relating to notaries public, and creates the 'Revised Georgia Law on Notarial Acts of 2015'. The substantive changes include modernizing notary laws of Georgia, authorizing electronic notarial acts, and rendering Georgia's notary laws more uniform with other states. Notary publics are the guardians of the authenticity of a person's signature and the authenticity of certain records. Without their seal and signature, the validity of many of our most common and important documents would be in doubt: deeds and wills for example. This bill modernizes and enhances the security of our notary laws. It will allow for electronic notary seals but requires background checks before the issuance or reissuance of a notary certification. Also, it will phase in a requirement that notaries maintain a journal (or log) of their electronic notarial acts starting on July 1, 2017 and then for all notarial acts on January 1, 2022.

The bill requires a notary to maintain an electronic journal in which he or she must chronicle all notarial acts he or she performs, with entries describing the parties involved, date, time, and fee (if any). The notary must retain the journal for 10 years after the performance of the last notarial act chronicled in the journal. The bill provides requirements for lost or stolen journals, and procedures for when a notary's commission is suspended or revoked, or the notary dies or is adjudicated incompetent. The bill requires a notary to pass an examination administered by the Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority (GSCCCA).

GSCCCA must adopt rules and regulations to implement the requirements laid out in the Act including among other things: to regularly offer a course on becoming a notary; to approve a notary's requested use of technology if it conforms to the standards adopted by such authority; and to maintain an electronic database of notaries for individuals to verify the authority of a notary. The bill provides for recognition of other state's or federally-recognized Indian tribe's notaries if the laws of the state or tribe are substantially similar to Georgia laws and also recognizes that a notarial act performed under authority and in the jurisdiction of a foreign state (excluding Cuba, Iran, Sudan, or Syria) or under the authority of a multi-national or international governmental organization has the same effect as though performed by a Georgia notary.

HR 502, (this was not voted on, recommitted to Rules) (sponsored by Rep. Andrew Welch, proposes a constitutional amendment to allow the General Assembly, upon a two-thirds majority vote, to dedicate revenues from a fee or tax to the specific purpose for which the fee or tax is to be collected. In the event that the governor declares a financial state of emergency, the General Assembly may suspend the dedication of revenues

temporarily by passing a joint resolution; however, the suspension may not last more than two fiscal years and the resolution may not be adopted more than twice in any ten-year period.

HB 614 - known as the Landon Dunson Act -, sponsored by Rep. Valencia Stovall, would authorize the Department of Education to establish a program for placing video cameras in classrooms used for special education services. Video taken would be retained for no less than three months and cover all areas of the classroom to the extent practical. Participating schools would also have to provide for the protection of the confidentiality of student records contained in videos. Such videos would be used solely for classroom instruction, monitoring classroom interactions, and teacher observation.

HB 773, sponsored by Rep. Penny Houston, increases the Georgia Housing and Finance Authority's bond limit for the single-family, residential housing program from \$1.3 billion to \$3 billion.

HB 806, sponsored by Rep. Kevin Tanner, changes certain Code provisions relating to the issuance of drivers' licenses by the Department of Driver's Services (DDS). Specifically, it amends the provision providing for drivers' licenses to be renewed every five years by increasing the renewal timeline to eight years. It also creates a two-year statute of limitations for citations that have been adjudicated in a local court and require the suspension of an individual's driving privileges, but the citations have not been processed with DDS.

HB 838, sponsored by Rep. Shaw Blackmon, requires insurance companies that sell health insurance plans through an agent in Georgia to compensate the agent with a minimum of five percent of the collected premium required for small group policies and four percent of the collected premium required for individual policies.

HB 874 - the Criminal Street Gang and Terrorism Prevention Act Revision -, sponsored by Rep. Albert Reeves, revises anti-street gang laws to expand the witness intimidation law, clarify admissible evidence to prove a Street Gang Act violation, and enhance penalties for certain violations including the use of telecommunication devices by prison inmates to commit criminal gang activity and those individuals - including prison guards - who smuggle contraband to prison inmates.

HB 916, sponsored by Rep. Dusty Hightower, prevents the Department of Community Health (DCH) from recouping full payment for medical assistance if the provider makes a clerical or record-keeping error in their reimbursement documentation. However, if such error results in an overpayment, the department can recoup the amount overpaid. Further, under the provisions of this bill, no state agency that provides recoupment or reimbursement to another entity can establish rules that require full recoupment for any clerical or record-keeping error. This legislation was introduced in response to findings from the Study Committee on Community Based Intellectual and Developmental Disability Services that detailed instances where providers were forced to make full repayments to

DCH simply for clerical errors - just as they would have for something as egregious as a failure to provide a service related to a patient's care.

HB 948, sponsored by Rep. Alan Powell, raises the fee that a non-indigent adult offender pays when applying to transfer supervision from Georgia to any other state from \$25 to \$100.

HB 949, sponsored by Rep. Alan Powell, adds locally elected constitutional officers - specifically the locally elected clerk of the superior court, judge of the probate court, sheriff, tax receiver, tax collector, or tax commissioner - to the list of individuals regulated in the code regarding the illegal use of government-issued financial transaction cards.

HB 980, sponsored by Rep. Alan Powell, provides for the reopening of qualifications in municipal elections if someone fails to qualify during the regular qualifying period. Under current law, it would require the calling of a special election.

HR 1363, sponsored by Rep. Wendell Willard, creates a committee to study the reform of the Judicial Qualifications Commission with the authority to issue and enforce subpoenas for witness and documents. The committee is composed of seven members to be appointed by the Speaker of the House