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## Public Affairs & Government Relations

### Legislative Update for Week Ending 3-14-08

The General Assembly worked two legislative days this week. Tuesday was the 30<sup>th</sup> legislative day, which means all bills that have not passed at least one house will not be considered this session, unless they can be added onto another bill that is still active. We have now completed 31 legislative days. The House and Senate revised their legislative schedule after the Governor's announcement to reduce revenue estimates for the FY '08 supplemental and FY '09 budgets. They will be in session Tuesday through Thursday next week and then recess until the following Thursday. Senate President Pro Tem has estimated an end to this session the week of April 7.

Passed in the House this week: an amended version of the Speaker's tax reform legislation (HR 1246) that would eliminate ad valorem taxes for personal vehicles and the state's .25 mills on property taxes as well as freeze property tax values, a \$10 annual vehicle tag fee to fund trauma care in Georgia, and the Speaker's "Bridge Bill" which would offer vocational education to encourage non-college options for students and improve high school graduation rates. The House also passed the "Georgia Lemon Law" requested by the Governor's Office of Consumer Affairs (HB 470), an income tax credit for qualified low-income buildings (HB 405), and a sales tax exemption on energy used in manufacturing (HB 272). HB 470 has been assigned to the Senate Special Judiciary Committee, and HB 272 and 405 have both been assigned to the Senate Finance Committee. The House Transportation Committee passed a constitutional amendment that would allow groups of counties to band together for transportation projects if a majority of voters in the designated region approve a one-cent sales tax for the projects. The House Regulated Industries Committee amended and favorably reported legislation that would allow sales of alcoholic beverages at the new Gwinnett County stadium for the Braves minor league team to include Sunday sales for all retail outlets. The probate court bill (SB 508) and corporate code amendments (SB 436) will be heard in a House Judiciary subcommittee Monday, 3/17.

The Senate passed legislation exempting continuing care retirement communities from certificate of need (CON) requirements, the Governor's state employee savings plan bills, increased penalties for persons using state funds for personal gain, creation of the State Inspector General's office, and regulations for martial arts and "ultimate fighting." The Senate debated regulations for red-light cameras and then ultimately voted to table the bill that would have required a DOT permit and a public safety need before local governments could install a red-light camera. The Senate failed to pass a resolution urging congress, governmental agencies, and the automobile industry to substitute the terms "life belt" and "life bag" for "seatbelt and "air bag." Significant charter school reform (HB 881) passed the Senate Education and Youth Committee. Three senate bills and one house bill that would restrict development on Jekyll Island did not pass their house of origin, so they are effectively "dead" for this session.