

Votes recorded are for final passage. Vote counts and full texts of bills are available on the Georgia General Assembly web site, [www.legis.ga.gov](http://www.legis.ga.gov). **Georgia PTA 2011 Legislative Report - FINAL** is at [www.georgiapta.org](http://www.georgiapta.org) Click on Capitol Watch.

**Georgia PTA : SUPPORTS** three bills on this Voting Record.  
**OPPOSES** HB 162 and HB 325, and  
Took no position on the other bills surveyed.

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**SUMMARY** of legislation included in this analysis. All have been **SIGNED** unless otherwise noted.

**HB 40**, Benton – 31 **SUPPORT** Denatonium benzoate to be added to antifreeze to render it unpalatable. Excludes antifreeze in wholesale containers of 55 gallons or more or in a vehicle when sold. *This protects children and pets. Antifreeze is toxic, usually fatal, if ingested unless action is taken within 30-45 minutes after ingestion. The additive is already in some products, such as a lotion to keep children from chewing their nails, and no adverse effects have been noted. Oregon was the first state to require this additive, in 1991. There are now 13 other states.*

**HB 87**, Ramsey – 72 Law enforcement officers may enforce federal immigration law and require the verification of foreign nationals’ immigration status. Public and private employers with 10 or more employees must verify immigrations status of foreign nationals. Governmental services cannot be acquired by undocumented persons over age 18. Citizens may file a complaint with a watchdog agency which will investigate and bring charges if needed. Transportation of illegal immigrants will not be a crime if done by a public transportation agency, law enforcement, or a social service agency. *PTA withdraws its opposition to this bill. Children and youth are not now addressed in this legislation, even if illegal. Children will still be able to get an education and health care, as required by federal law. Their parents, however, will have great difficulty in getting a job or any governmental service. There is also a risk that school districts will be sued because some citizen thinks they are not following the law. This may expend funds unnecessarily for legal fees.*

**SB 88**, Mullis - 53 **SUPPORT** Children are to be restrained in a motor vehicle until age 8, currently age 6.

**HB 162**, Purcell – 159 **OPPOSE** Persons required to register on the state sexual offender registry are banned from photographing a minor without the parent’s permission. *Currently, no one may photograph a minor without the parent’s permission. PTA was very supportive of the law as now written. This bill is to correct the 2010 HB 571 which it is now felt is extraordinarily broad. It limits the impact to only those on the sexual offender registry, but not the creepies. PTA believes that parents want to know of any person who photographs their child and the uses to which that image will be put.*

**HB 192**, Coleman - 97 Creates a 20 member State Education Finance Study Commission to evaluate the Quality Basic Education Formula and other educational funding for public schools. Members to be appointed by the governor are: 4 members of the House including the chair of House Education, 4 members of the Senate including the chair of Senate Education, state school superintendent, a SBOE member, a LBOE member, a representative from the System Office of the University System, and Professional Standards Commission, a local school superintendent, a teacher, a principal or other administrator, a local school system financial officer, one from the business community and NO parents. The timeline proposed covers about 20 months. *The parent representatives have been removed from this proposal. Apparently, the 1.7 million public school children are not significant enough to have a representative on this*

**commission.** Moves from 2013 to 2015 the date for local boards of education to request improved flexibility by applying to the SBOE for Improving Educational Excellence, IE2, status, charter system status, or declaring 'status quo'. Expenditure controls and class size waivers are also extended. Teacher annual contracts delivery date is also extended, until May 15. *The waivers were allowed when the economy began to tank. The recovery has been far slower than expected. This bill gives school districts two more years before having to make the declarations for improved flexibility or to stand pat.*

**HB 200**, Lindsey – 54 **SUPPORT** Increases penalties for those who engage in human trafficking for labor or sexual servitude. Penalties if victim is under age 18 can go up to 50 years imprisonment and/or \$100,000 fine. Includes training requirements for law enforcement to better recognize such crimes and to assist the victims.

**HB 322**, Roberts – 154 A sales tax exemption extension on fuel purchases for Delta Airlines at Atlanta airport for two years. Does not include local sales taxes. *Estimated loss of revenue to the state is \$20 million in 2011 and \$10 million in 2012. Delta is now profitable. Air Tran was previously included, but no longer.* The Department of Revenue Commissioner continues to have the authority to distribute unidentifiable local sales tax funds after 12-31-11, the current sunset date. *Unidentifiable revenues occur when the seller remits sales taxes to the state and does not remit sufficient funds to cover the obligation or the address is unknown. The commissioner distributes the funds pro rata to all the local taxing authorities in the county including school districts with an SPLOST.*

**HB 325**, Ehrhart – 36 **OPPOSE** Tax credits for donations to school scholarship organizations to fund private school vouchers for education. The statewide cap of \$50 million remains but rises in future years as indexed to the CPI. SSOs must spend 90% of annual revenues on vouchers. Allows scholarships to private pre-K programs, currently excluded. Ensure multi-year scholarships. Voucher amount capped at the state average for elementary and secondary education as computed by the state Department of Education. *PTA OPPOSES vouchers, tax credits, tax deductions, and other methods of funneling public money into private schools. The amount of the voucher is inflated by including an average, as some students are far more expensive to educate than others. There are 5,000 students on this voucher. 20,000 taxpayers contribute to school scholarship organizations. Author wants the dollars following the kids. PTA wants the dollars to go to the public schools which serve 92% of GA's children. It is odd that the new addition to the austerity cut for FY12 is \$60 million and the amount currently lost in tax revenues for these credits is nearly \$50 million.*

**HB 326**, Collins – 27 Lottery receipts will be distributed under new guidelines to stem the overspending in recent years. Changes to the pre-K program, HOPE scholarships to colleges and universities, and HOPE grants to technical colleges. Effective for all students in the 2011-12 school year. Lottery funds no longer meet the demand for them.

- Proportion of lottery funds available to stay the same, i.e. 1/3 to pre-K and 2/3 to HOPE
- Pre-K to remain a 6.5 hours/day program \*
- Program to be 160 days, down from 180 as in K-12 – i.e. 9 months rather than 10 months \*
- Number of slots increased by 2,000 to a new total of 86,000 children served in FY12 \*
- Two additional students in each classroom with two adults for an adult-student ratio of 1 to 11 \*
- HOPE grant recipients to maintain a 3.0 GPA. No GPA requirement currently exists.
- HOPE grant recipients who lose the grant will have one chance to recover it.
- HOPE grants will not be available to those who already have a college degree.
- HOPE scholarships to be adjusted to money available. In FY12, recipients will receive 90% of the 2010-11 tuition and nothing for books and fees.

- HOPE scholarship amounts to be determined annually by GA Student Finance Commission.
  - HOPE scholarship recipients must continue to maintain a 3.0 GPA.
  - HOPE scholarship recipients who lose their scholarship may regain it just once.
  - HOPE scholarship recipients graduating in 2015 must take at least two courses from the following areas: upper level math (advanced algebra and trigonometry, Math III, or an equivalent or higher course), upper level science (Chemistry, physics, biology II, or an equivalent or higher course), Advanced Placement courses in core subjects, International baccalaureate courses in core subjects or advanced foreign language courses.
  - HOPE scholarship recipients graduating in 2016 must take at least three courses from the above list,
  - HOPE scholarship recipients graduating in 2017 and beyond, must take at least four courses from the list.
  - HOPE will now fund a new Zell Miller Scholarship which will pay 100% of tuition in a public college. To be eligible, the student must have a high school GPA of 3.7, get 1200 on the SAT math and critical reading or 26 on the ACT. To keep the scholarship, the student must maintain a college GPA of 3.5 (H.) or 3.3 (S.)
  - HOPE Zell Miller Scholarship to be made available to every high school valedictorian and salutatorian.
  - HOPE scholars will have access to a loan program at 1%/year to be paid back over ten years.
  - Lottery reserves shall be limited to one, equal to 50% of the proceeds of the preceding fiscal year.
  - Lottery reserves shall be replenished in the year following any need to use them to meet appropriations.
  - Lottery Corporation to pay retailer commissions of 6%, down from 7%.
  - Lottery Corporation employee bonuses payable only in years where increases in net revenue to the state Lottery for Education Account have been realized.
  - Lottery Corporation employee bonuses limited to 25% of the employee’s base compensation.
- \* changes to be accomplished in rules of Department of Early Care and Learning, DECAL.

**HB 415, Atwood – 175** The Jury Reform Act. A state-wide master jury list is to be maintained in the Office of Secretary of State. Eligible jurors shall be taken from the voter registration and drivers license files, both of which are resident at the state level. Superior court clerks shall maintain and revise it. The SOS will distribute it to each county board of jury commissioners for use in the various courts of the county. Jurors must be citizens. *This is similar to the state-wide voter registration list – housed at the state but maintained by the locals.*

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**DOE** = Department of Education  
**LBOE** = local board of education  
**SBOE** = state board of education

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