

Georgia insight

Sue Ella Deadwyler
www.georgiainsight.org
"She hath done what she could."
Mark 14:8a
"...and having done all ... stand."
Ephesians 6:13c

Driver's Licenses, Illegal Aliens & a Gray Fox

S.B. 6 Georgia Road Safety and Driver's License Integrity Act by Senator Josh McKoon (R), pre-filed but officially introduced January 28, 2015, is an extremely important bill that would have positive effects on Georgia as follows:

- (a) Federal immigration law could not be the basis for issuing driver's licenses to illegal aliens.
- (b) Eligibility for a driver's license could not be based on approved deferred action status.
- (c) Driver's licenses or ID cards obtained by illegal aliens would not be proof of lawful status.
- (d) Illegal aliens could not qualify for welfare benefits under the SAVE program.
- (e) Drivers caught driving without a valid license could have their vehicle impounded.
- (f) On or after July 1, 2015, the Department of Driver Services would participate in Homeland Security's Records and Information E-Verify initiative.

S.B. 6 cosignatories are the author, Senator McKoon, 29th; Crane, 28th; Gooch 51st; Heath 31st; Ginn, 47th; Ligon, Jr., 3rd; Williams, 27th; Kirk, 13th; Thompson, 14th; Harbin, 16th; and Martin, 9th. If your senator is not listed here, please ask him to cosign and support S.B. 6.

ACTION – Support. Contact Public Safety Senators Harper, Ch., 404 463-5263; Albers, 463-8055; Dugan, 656-7454; H. Jones*, 463-3942; Seay*, 656-5095; Watson, 656-7880; and M. Williams, 656-7127. (* indicate Democrat.)

S.B. 44 "Citizenship Privileges for Illegal Aliens" by Senator Orrock (D) reverses current law prohibiting in-state tuition for noncitizen students who are not legally in Georgia and have no evidence that gives them in-state classification. The following is the amendment her bill would insert twice in Code Section 20-3-66 paragraph (d) to give in-state tuition to illegals:

"Except for noncitizen students who have received a grant of deferred action for childhood arrivals from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security students shall not be classified as in-state for tuition..." [Her amendment (underlined above) raises deferred action to citizenship status for illegal aliens.]

Further, S.B. 44 reverses technical college tuition regulations in order to give noncitizens the same privileges as citizens. She would negate current policies with the following amendment:

"provided, however, that such rules and regulations may extend the same consideration that is given to citizens of the U.S. to noncitizens who have received a grant of deferred action for childhood arrivals from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in determining whether such noncitizens qualify for in-state classification of tuition fees."

ACTION – Oppose. Contact Higher Education Senators Millar, Ch. 404 463-2260; Martin, 656-3933; B. Jones, 656-0082; Beach, 463-1378; L. Jackson*, 463-5261; McKoon, 463-3931; Orrock*, 463-8054; B. Thompson, 656-0065; and M. Williams, 656-7127. (* denotes Democrat)

H.B.70 proposes gray fox as Georgia's official mammal. Official State Symbols: fruit, peach; song, "Georgia On My Mind;" vegetable, Vidalia onion; crop, peanut; marine mammal, the right whale; state gem, quartz; state fossil, shark tooth; state mineral, staurolite; state wildflower, azalea; state butterfly, the tiger swallowtail. Gray fox as state mammal— yes or no?

ACTION – You decide. Contact Special Rules Committee Representatives Allison, Ch., 404 656-0188; Watson, V-Ch., 656-0213; Spencer, Sec., 656-0126; Anderson*, 656-7859; Beverly*, 656-0221; Gordon*, 656-0287; Hightower, 657-1803; Holmes, 656-0177; Kirby, 656-0177; LaRiccia, 656-0287; Prince*, 656-0116; Rakestraw, 656-0178; Scott*, 656-0314; M. Smith*, 656-0265; Tanner, 656-0152; Turner, 656-0152; and Waites*, 656-0221. (* denotes Democrat).

February 1, 2015

Marijuana: Big Business, Miracle Medication or Trouble?

“Next year, Georgia may legalize its own home-grown medical marijuana industry if a Macon lawmaker has his way. Meanwhile, some companies and nonprofits are lined up, waiting for the door to open.”

– “Business investors watch Georgia’s cannabis debate,” *Macon Telegraph*, 01-18-2015

The above referenced lawmaker is Representative Allen Peake who, officially, introduced his pre-filed marijuana bill on January 27th, to continue last year’s effort to legalize “medical” marijuana in Georgia. His previous bill entitled “Haleigh’s Hope” was named after a high cannabidiol (CBD) strain of marijuana developed by Jason Cranford in Colorado, who named the strain after five-year-old Haleigh from Monroe County, who suffers seizures and resides temporarily in Colorado to undergo marijuana treatment.

Mr. Cranford, reportedly, owner/founder of America’s first marijuana cigarette business, a licensed hemp grower in Colorado, owner of a marijuana dispensary chain, specializing in building marijuana cultivation facilities, as a licensed general contractor.

According to a January 18th article in *The Macon Telegraph*, businesses in Georgia are “lined up, waiting for the door to open,” for a marijuana industry. Atlanta-based Surterra, an “innovative agriculture” business incorporated last year to supply marijuana to states where it becomes legal, is focusing on Georgia, currently.

But Surterra is not alone. Georgia’s Halcyon Organics identifies itself as the “first medical marijuana company in the south,” and is tracking the legislature’s handling of marijuana bills. Also, several professional lobbyists are registered at the State Capitol to influence the process.

H.B. 1, introduced officially on January 27th by Representative Allen Peake (R), has garnered the most publicity. At first-reading, H.B. 1 seems to be an unthreatening means to legitimize marijuana as a medicinal marvel. While the author’s intent may be as simple as that, the bill does not reflect that narrow vision. The only item prohibited in this bill is the “smoking” form of marijuana. There is no mention of pediatric seizures or children for whom the bill was, supposedly, introduced; it does not prohibit the growing of marijuana; it does not indicate who would prescribe, produce, track, test, or secure marijuana inventory as a raw or final product.

ACTION – Oppose. Contact Non-Civil Judiciary Committee Representatives Golick, Ch., 404 656-5943; Pak, V-Ch., 656-0254; Abrams*, 656-5058; Atwood, 656-0152; Cooper, 656-5069; Dickerson*, 656-0314; Kendrick*, 656-0109; Ramsey, 656-5024; Randall*, 656-0109; Reeves, 656-0287; Setzler, 656-7857; Strickland, 656-0109; Trammell*, 656-0314; and Willard, Ex-Officio, 656-5125. (*denotes Democrat)

Medical Cannabis Study Committee of 2014

S.R. 981 created the Prescription of Medical Cannabis for Serious Medical Conditions study committee that held five public meetings¹ in 2014. Senator Renee Unterman (R) and Representative Allen Peake (R) co-chaired the committee of six legislators², the Prosecuting Attorneys Council Director, and Dr. Matthews W. Gwynn, M.D., MAG Neurologist.

Senator Curt Thompson, a member of the Committee, pre-filed S.R. 6 and S.B. 7, but has not introduced either at this time. S.R. 6 is a proposed constitutional amendment to permit individuals age 21 or older to purchase limited amounts of marijuana for personal use, with resulting fees and revenues dedicated to education and transportation infrastructure.

¹ Videos of these meetings are available online at www.legis.ga.gov, accessed by links to “Joint Study Committees”.

² Senators Burke (R), Miller (R), C. Thompson (D); Representatives Golick (R); Gravley (R); and Kaiser (D).

Medical Cannabis Study Committee Report

The December 31, 2014 marijuana study committee report has two sets of recommendations – those **adopted by the committee** and those **rejected by the committee**. The differences between adopted and rejected recommendations reveal the two-sided continuing debate about (a) possessing, (b) cultivating, and (c) distributing cannabidiol (CBD) oil. Where do you stand?

Non-restrictive Recommendations Adopted by the Committee

- Change existing Georgia statutes on controlled substances to accommodate the use of certain specific strains of marijuana for treatment of medical conditions.
- Support clinical research efforts in Georgia regarding use of certain strains of marijuana for treatment of medical conditions.

Law enforcement testimony adamantly opposed the public possession/cultivation/distribution of marijuana and persistently requested strict controls on the entire process. Many requests of law enforcement officials are among recommendations rejected by the committee, as follows:

B. Restrictive Recommendations Rejected by the Committee

- Require licensing/registering medical marijuana businesses – owners, managers, employees, and contractors – at the State Revenue Department for enough fees to offset program costs.
- Require a secure, real-time inventory tracking system, managed by the State Department of Revenue, with “seed to sale” RFID tagging and tracking of every cannabis plant in the state.
- Authorize state and local law enforcement agencies to access tracking data, enter medical marijuana businesses at any time – with or without notice – and increase drug trafficking penalties upon conviction for criminally diverting Georgia-grown medical marijuana.
- Provide immunity from prosecution for certain crimes related to the Controlled Substances Act for holders of patient registry cards or their care-givers, who possess medical marijuana obtained lawfully in Georgia from a retail medical marijuana business or from another state.
- Require the Public Health Department to create and utilize a confidential patient registry database with software to interface with the Georgia Revenue Department tracking system.
- Set strict guidelines to implement statutory requirements for a physician to be permitted to recommend medical marijuana to a patient in this state.
- Create a Physician Advisory Board to counsel the Georgia Department of Public Health and issue findings to be reported to the Commissioner of Public Health and/or the General Assembly on patient and physician issues.
- Require the most stringent and broad independent laboratory test in the U.S. to be used when a marijuana plant is harvested and after it is processed into the final product.

H.B. 34, “Georgia Right to Try Act,” by Representative Mike Dudgeon, is a coat-tail bill for marijuana legislation. If passed, gravely ill patients could access and use investigational drugs, biological products, and devices involved in approved FDA clinical trials. Products such as home-grown marijuana would not be federally regulated if sold and used only in Georgia. The current case-by-case decision-making process should continue. No sweeping change is needed.

ACTION – Oppose. Contact Health & Human Services Committee Representatives Cooper, Ch., 656-5069; Jasperse, V-Ch., 656-0188; Rynders, Sec., 656-6801; Barr, 656-0326; Bennett*, 656-0202; Dempsey, 463-2248; Gordon*, 656-0287; Hatchett, 656-5025; Kelley, 656-1803; Pak, 656-0254; Petrea, 656-0109; Rogers, 656-0177; and Sims, 656-7855.

Morality Under Attack

S.B. 39 Woman's Right to Know Act amendments as introduced by Senator Nan Orrock January 26th, change current law requiring pertinent medical information to be provided to females prior to undergoing an abortion. 40 entire legislative lines have been deleted from the Woman's Right to Know Act and additional changes reverse current abortion regulations.

S.B. 39 would authorize abortion after the second trimester, if three physicians certify it would preserve the woman's life. It eliminates the requirement for abortion doctors to preserve the life of an unborn child, substitutes "product of the abortion" for the word "child," and requires medical aid for a surviving "product of abortion" to be supplied **ONLY** if the child is capable of "meaningful" life, leaving another life or death decision with the abortion doctor.

"Medical emergency" is required for the woman, but not for a surviving baby. The only abortion S.B. 39 prohibits is the grisly partial-birth procedure by which the emerging baby's skull is pierced. S.B. 39 deletes the law allowing law suits against negligent abortion doctors.

ACTION – Oppose. Contact Health & Human Services Committee Senators Unterman, Ch., 404 463-1368; Hufstetter, V-Ch., 656-0034; Millar, Sec., 463-2260; Burke, 656-0040; Butler*, 656-0075; Cowsert, 463-1366; Henson*, 656-0085; Judson Hill, 656-0150, L. Jackson*, 463-5261; Kirk, 463-5258; Ligon, Jr., 656-0045; Orrock*, 463-8054; Shafer, 656-0048; and Watson, 656-7880. (* denotes Democrat)

S.B. 47 is a hate crime bill introduced by Senator Fort to drastically alter Georgia's moral Code. Currently, every citizen has equal protection under the law, regardless of race, religion, sex, or national origin. Race is a characteristic of ancestry; national origin reflects the country of birth; sex is biological identity; and religion is a spiritual choice. S.B. 47 would add to those protected categories gender, gender identity and sexual orientation, though they reflect aberrant sexual behavior that has been prohibited for thousands of years under moral and civil law.

Gender is not a synonym for the word "sex," which depicts biological identification of male or female persons, animals and plants. Gender, gender identity and sexual orientation indicate the sexual preference, behavior or lifestyle of individuals.

S.B. 47 would enhance penalties for crimes, supposedly, based on the victim's lifestyle. An assault by a heterosexual on another heterosexual would be a misdemeanor. If the victim were perceived to be a different **gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation**, the charge would become a misdemeanor of a high and aggravated nature with a more severe penalty. The same enhanced penalties would apply to battery, aggravated battery, and damage to property.

ACTION – Oppose. Contact Non-Civil Judiciary Committee Senators Stone, Ch., 404 463-1314; Ligon, Jr., V-Ch., 656-0045, Kennedy, Sec., 656-7454; Bethel, 463-1383; Crane, 656-6446; Fort*, 656-5091; H. Hill, 463-2518; H. Jones II*, 463-3042; McKoon, 463-3931; Parent*, 656-5109, (* denotes Democrat)

H.B. 142 introduced by Representative Simone Bell January 29th would require organizations to give scholarships only to students attending public or private schools that have this policy: "Does not discriminate in *hiring or admission* on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, sex, national origin, **gender, sexual orientation, disability, or gender identity**."

ACTION – Oppose. Contact Education Committee Representatives Coleman, Ch., 404 656-9210; Dudgeon, V-Ch., 656-0298; Benton, Sec., 463-3793; Belton, 656-0152; Beskin, 656-0254; Cantrell, 656-0202; Carter, 463-2248; Casas, 656-0254; Chandler, 656-0254; Clark, 656-0325; Dickerson*, 656-0314; Dickson, 463-2246; Glanton*, 657-1803; Howard, 656-5373; J. Jones, 656-5072; Kaiser, 656-0265; Maxwell, 656-5143; Mayo*, 656-6372; Setzler, 656-7857; Stovall*, 656-0314; Tanner, 656-0152; Teasley, 656-5146. (* denotes Democrat)

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