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## 19-Year-Old Markets Marijuana-laced Snacks in Metro Schools<sup>1</sup>

*"This dude set everything up as a business, targeting high school kids."*

– A Fulton County School Parent

### Menu for the Week, July 2016

Cookies and cream cake jars 10 left

Brownie jars 8 left

Red velvet jar 1 left

Fruity pebbles treats 11 left

Og Brownie 5 left

1 for 10, 2 for 15

Addea Simmons, 19-year-old baker, marketer, and seller, living with his parents, used a Trill Treats Instagram page to market THC-laced edibles for \$100. Personal delivery is \$5 more.

Simmons uses his Instagram page to ask students for their high school name, and receives notes such as this, "You need more people selling at Westlake. One person keep (sic) selling out in the morning." To that he replied, "I have two more people<sup>2</sup> up there beside the one girl."

Last summer a group of metro teenagers attended a Sweet 16 birthday sleepover at a Cobb County hotel. Parents in the next room served as chaperons. A parent reported that, after midnight, one of the girls began hallucinating "having little fits," kind of scratching herself. Paramedics said the 16-year-old was having seizures and rushed her to the emergency room, where she recovered.

The kids had ordered \$100 worth of pot-infused snacks online from Trill Treats and had them delivered directly to the hotel. One of the parents said, "They had 10 of these containers and there wasn't a morsel left."

After alerting law enforcement about their plan, a member of the FOX 5 I-Team became a Trill Treats Instagram follower and placed an order to be delivered to them in a Douglasville shopping center parking lot. Simmons made the delivery and explained, "I started in high school doing this. So, when I graduated people knew about it and I kept people selling for me."

The FOX I-Team bought 12 homemade brownies from Simmons and took them to Salvus Labs that brought in Clinical Lab Consulting. Reportedly, the brownies were laced with high-potency THC, at least three times the accepted dosage in pot-legal states like Colorado.

**Result:** Two months later, Douglasville police and Fulton County police conducted their own sting, since Simmons lives in Fairburn. Simmons is now in jail, held without bond and faces three felony counts in Douglas County and two in Fulton County, where he's charged with two counts of selling a Schedule 1 controlled substance containing pure THC. Fulton County seized boxes of baking items and over a dozen crock pots from the family residence.

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<sup>1</sup>Schools mentioned in these articles: Westlake, Banneker, Heritage High, Edwards Middle, Rockdale County

<sup>2</sup>The "people" he referenced are high school students.

## **Senate Transparency Project in Georgia General Assembly**

On November 17, 2017 Senate President Pro Tempore David Shafer (R-Duluth) announced the Senate Transparency Project for the Georgia State Senate that will include livestreaming Senate Standing Committee meetings and the Senate Press Conference Room.

Senator Shafer said, “Livestreaming is a way for everyone regardless of geographic location, to be involved, educated and informed about the day-to-day operations of the Senate. My fellow Senators and I look forward to sharing what our committees are vetting and voting on, as well as creating an open window for people to view their representatives in state government from anywhere in the state.”

Funding for the project as appropriated in the FY 2018 Budget will include livestreaming capabilities in the Senate Press Conference Room and in the following committee rooms: 450 Capitol, 125 Capitol, the Capitol Senate Mezzanine, 307 Coverdell Legislative Office Building (CLOB) and 310 CLOB.

Standing committee meetings that are livestreamed and meeting archives can be found at: <http://www.senate.ga.gov/spo/en-US/videobroadcasts.aspx>.

### **Compensation of Police<sup>1</sup> and Sheriffs (COPS) Task Force**

In its Final Report<sup>2</sup> of December 20, 2017, the COPS Task Force, comprised of legislative leaders, police officers, sheriffs, along with city and county officials announced a series of recommendations to strengthen support for local law enforcement officers.

Lt. Governor Casey Cagle had called on the COPS Task Force to bring forward plans to increase compensation, benefits, and retention of Georgia’s police officers, deputies, and jailers. After hosting numerous meetings across the state, COPS approved a set of 17 recommendations.

Cagle explained, “There are no exceptions – every single community depends on our law enforcement to keep them safe, and in our most vulnerable moments we rely on these men and women. Simply put, these individuals deserve our support. By acting on the recommendations from the COPS Task Force, we will be better positioned to compensate the officers who keep our communities safe.”

Retired Georgia State Patrol trooper, Rep. Eddie Lumsden (R-Armuchee), who understands the issue very well, said: “When the state raises salaries, local law enforcement migrates to those agencies. When local government has a better package, they go there. It’s time to acknowledge other facets of the problem. It’s getting harder to find candidates who can pass a drug test, and there’s an increased societal component that weighs on those in the field. We’re expecting, as a society, more and more from our law enforcement officers, but the compensation has not been there.”

Rome officials welcome the help, but not at the expense of local control. Commissioner Evie McNiece, a member of the Georgia Municipal Association’s legislative policy council said, “One size does not fit all. We’re asking the legislature to keep that in mind. We want to do what we can, but we may not be able to do everything.”

<sup>1</sup> “State may take on police pay,” by Diane Wagner

<sup>2</sup> Office of the Lieutenant Governor

## Telemedicine and Nurses

Most of us know what's happening in federal healthcare, but things are happening here, too. For example, a nine-member study committee authorized by S.R. 188 that passed March 28<sup>th</sup> recommends ways to remove barriers between patients and adequate health care in Georgia.

During several meetings, the committee heard from private practice health professionals, as well as personnel from the Georgia Departments of Community Health and Public Health.

The committee's goal is to improve Georgia's overall health care rank of 41<sup>st</sup> in the nation by expanding the authority of nurse practitioners and advanced practice registered nurses. Many nurse practitioners are in private practice. Some have their own office or are supervised by a family physician. Usually, they work in local clinics and serve the same families for years

Advanced practice registered nurses have at least a Master's Degree in Nursing, but may specialize as a nurse practitioner, nurse midwife, anesthetist or clinical nurse specialist. Legislation may be introduced in 2018 to authorize them to write prescriptions for medication.

**Telemedicine.** The committee, also, supports expansion of telemedicine where advanced registered nurses may facilitate and provide patient care. Telemedicine was enacted in 2005 by the Georgia Telemedicine Act outlined in H.B. 291 of 2005. It legalized health care delivery, diagnosis and treatment by audio, video or data communications, and authorized telemedicine providers to bill insurance companies for services.

In 2006 a private grant funded the statewide Georgia telemedicine program when the *Rural Health Initiative* provided \$100 million over 20 years for *rural* telemedicine and another \$11.5 million over three years for a *statewide* program. By 2008 the Georgia Partnership for TeleHealth, Inc. was formed and in 2009 telemedicine was introduced in school-based clinics, beginning in Berrien County where approximately 3,200 students were served.

The statewide program began with eight patient visits in 2006, grew to over 75,000 in 2012 and over 240,000 in 2014. Now, the Partnership network has more than 600 locations with over 200 professionals from 30 specialties, in addition to other health care partners.

## Final Report: Homelessness Study Committee

Of nine recommendations the Study Committee on Homelessness made, seven request continued funding. The committee worked from a Housing and Urban Development Point-in-Time Count that was completed in January 2017. According to that report, 10,373 individuals were considered as "literally homeless" in Georgia. That's a 25 percent decrease from 2015.

On the night of the count, HUD considered ten percent of the homeless to be chronically homeless. The committee focused on barriers such as affordable housing, mental illness, lack of services, and criminal background.

In Atlanta, alone, chronic homelessness costs the state and local taxpayers \$24 million in emergency room visits, \$37 million in in-patient hospital stays, \$1.8 million in jail stays, and \$347,000 in misdemeanor arrests. Statewide, 2,766 out of 681,840 Georgia veterans are homeless.

In the past ten years, units renting for \$800 per month declined by 261,000, while units for over \$2,000 a month increased by 1.5 million. Fulton County is one of the top ten in the U.S.

with the worst affordability trend; while Gwinnett, Cobb, and DeKalb are three of the nation's top ten counties with the highest affordability gap.

As of 2016, 390,755 students were identified as homeless in the state, the majority being in kindergarten, first, and second grade. As of 2017, the total of chronically homeless in Atlanta had reduced 75 percent, and the total unsheltered homeless had reduced 61 percent. However, in a typical summer month in metro Atlanta, approximately 3,300 homeless youth are on the streets, with over 54 percent having been involved with the criminal justice system.

Legislation about homelessness will be introduced in 2018.

### **U.S. Embassy to Move to Jerusalem**

An amazing document crafted in the United States Congress in 1995 as S. 1322 became law November 8, 1995. It has special appeal for "such a time as this," as President Trump plans to move the U.S. embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The following is a verbatim quote of the first part of that law.

"The Congress makes the following findings: Each sovereign nation, under international law and custom, may designate its own capitol. Since 1950 the city of Jerusalem has been the capitol of the State of Israel. The city of Jerusalem is the seat of Israel's President, Parliament, and Supreme Court, and the site of numerous government ministries and social and cultural institutions.

"The city of Jerusalem is the spiritual center of Judaism, and is also considered a holy city by the members of other religious faiths.

"From 1948-1967, Jerusalem was a divided city and Israeli citizens of all faiths as well as Jewish citizens of all states were denied access to holy sites in the area controlled by Jordan. In 1967, the city of Jerusalem was reunited during the conflict known as the Six Day War. Since 1967, Jerusalem has been a united city administered by Israel, and persons of all religious faiths have been guaranteed full access to holy sites within the city.

"... 1995, marks the 28<sup>th</sup> consecutive year that Jerusalem has been administered as a unified city in which the rights of all faiths have been respected and protected. In 1990, the Congress unanimously adopted Senate Concurrent Resolution 106, which declared that the Congress strongly believes that Jerusalem must remain an undivided city in which the rights of every ethnic and religious group are protected.

"In 1992, the United States Senate and House of Representatives unanimously adopted Senate Concurrent Resolution 113 of the One Hundred Second Congress to commemorate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem, and reaffirming congressional sentiment that Jerusalem must remain an undivided city."

**Then and now.** Although the deadline for moving the embassy had been May 31, 1999, former presidents used a waiver in the law to leave it in Tel Aviv. On December 6<sup>th</sup> President Trump announced the recognition of Jerusalem as the Capitol of Israel and directed the State Department to begin hiring architects, engineers, and planners to get the job done. It may take two or three years, but the U.S. embassy will be moved to Jerusalem.

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