



# ***ACTION ALERT***

***Georgia State Retirees Association—March 26, 2011***

## **SUPPORT BILL ANTICIPATED TO BE VOTED OUT OF THE SPECIAL JOINT COMMITTEE ON GEORGIA REVENUE STRUCTURE**

GSRA has reported on the recommendations of the Special Council on Tax Reform and Fairness and the activities of the **SPECIAL JOINT COMMITTEE ON GEORGIA REVENUE STRUCTURE** in several news articles. Our Legislative Committee reports that the Special Joint Committee on Georgia Revenue Structure met late last week to outline the Committee's proposal for Georgia's tax reform. We think that the Committee will vote to send identical bills to the House and Senate to be voted on during the week of March 28<sup>th</sup>.

Committee Co-Chairman Mickey Channell presented comments at the March 24<sup>th</sup> meeting. GSRA recommends support of the bill—to be finalized—by the Committee based on Representative Channell's comments and additional information published by the Georgia Budget and Policy Institute as follows:

- A 4.5 percent income tax rate will be established with a limit on itemized deductions and the addition of a low income tax credit;
- Sales tax will be required on casual sales of cars, boats, and aircraft, as well as on automotive repair services;
- A sales tax exemption on energy used in manufacturing, mining, and agriculture will be instituted;
- A tax on all communications services (telephone, cable, satellite, etc.) will replace existing franchise fees and other related taxes;
- Continuation of an income exclusion for seniors over age 62;
- Continuation of state sales tax exemption on groceries and prescription drugs;
- Continuation of a corporate income tax rate at 6 percent, most services untaxed, and tobacco and motor fuel tax rates untouched.

The anticipated bill generally is an improvement for the state as a whole and leaves retirees no worse off than they are currently. While this may seem to be worthy of a "who cares" shrug, it is most definitely MUCH better for retirees and lower income younger citizens than what was recommended by the Council on Tax Reform and Fairness.

**What do you need to do?** GSRA leadership urges you to **contact the members of the Special Committee to support passing out a bill that reflects the Committee's discussion on Thursday, March 24<sup>th</sup>**. We further urge you to contact **your own** legislators and urge them to vote for the bill coming out of the Committee—assuming that it is in fact consistent with committee discussion. As soon as we know the bill number, a short Action Alert will be distributed.

Secondarily, **depending on your personal view point**, you may ask the committee and your legislators to further consider whether other items such as additional services or cigarette taxes should be included. These additional provisions could ensure Georgia is revenue neutral to a good year, as recommended by the Council, rather than a year that will see us continue to cut school days, increase class sizes, and put off needed business-attracting investments in the state's infrastructure.

**When do you need to Rally? Soon.**

The Committee is expected to “favorably report” bills to be voted on by the House and Senate during the week of March 28<sup>th</sup>. Therefore, your contact is critical to assure that the Committee’s bills—leaving Georgia’s seniors in relatively their current position—are passed.

**Make Your Voice Heard . . .**

Email or fax a note to the Joint Committee on Georgia Revenue Structure and your representative and senator. Use your own words, but specify that you are “in favor” of a bill that is in conformity with the Committee’s discussion on March 24th.

The members of the Committee are listed below. You can find your representative and senator by visiting <http://www.legis.ga.gov/en-US/default.aspx> and then clicking on “Find your Legislator.” When the screen is presented, enter your address. Please take care to follow the [GSRA guidelines](#) for communicating with your elected officials.

Representative Larry O’Neal, District 146	<a href="mailto:larry.oneal@house.ga.gov">larry.oneal@house.ga.gov</a>	404-656-5052
Senator Chip Rogers, District 20	<a href="mailto:chip.rogers@senate.ga.gov">chip.rogers@senate.ga.gov</a>	404-463-1378
Representative Stacey Abrams, District 84	<a href="mailto:stacey.abrams@house.ga.gov">stacey.abrams@house.ga.gov</a>	404-656-5058
Representative Jan Jones, District 46	<a href="mailto:jan.jones@house.ga.gov">jan.jones@house.ga.gov</a>	404-656-5072
Representative Mickey Channell, District 116	<a href="mailto:mickey.channell@house.ga.gov">mickey.channell@house.ga.gov</a>	404-656-5103
Representative Bob Bryant, District 160	<a href="mailto:bob.bryant@house.ga.gov">bob.bryant@house.ga.gov</a>	404-656-0298
Representative Allen Peake, District 137	<a href="mailto:allen.peake@house.ga.gov">allen.peake@house.ga.gov</a>	404-656-5025
Senator Tommie Williams, District 19	<a href="mailto:tommie.williams@senate.ga.gov">tommie.williams@senate.ga.gov</a>	404-656-0089
Senator Robert Brown, District 26	<a href="mailto:robert.brown@senate.ga.gov">robert.brown@senate.ga.gov</a>	404-656-5035
Senator Bill Heath, District 31	<a href="mailto:bill.heath@senate.ga.gov">bill.heath@senate.ga.gov</a>	404-656-3943
Senator Steve Thompson, District 33	<a href="mailto:steve.thompson@senate.ga.gov">steve.thompson@senate.ga.gov</a>	404-656-0083
Senator Bill Cowsert, District 46	<a href="mailto:bill.cowsert@senate.ga.gov">bill.cowsert@senate.ga.gov</a>	404-463-1383

**If you want to express your opinion, it is important that you make your contact soon.**