



## April 2016 Newsletter

Each year, Senators gather to determine what our top priorities are for the upcoming legislative session. This year, our primary goal was to protect Georgians. We also recognized the need to protect teachers' ability to teach, the future of the disabled and our state's small businesses. Throughout this session, we passed many bills supporting the efforts we outlined, ultimately helping many Georgians feel physically safe, financially safe and safe from an over-reaching government. The 2016 legislative session is now complete; and I am proud to report we achieved our priorities!

Spring is in the air (and so is the pollen)... This summer my youngest son Ryan and I will attend Boy Scout Sea Base in Florida spending a week on sailboat with other scouts. I am looking forward to this great adventure and quality time. Will is wrapping up his junior year at UNG and applying for summer internships. Kari is doing great and making me look bad working out at CrossFit No Quarter.



### Less Testing & More Teaching!

Our state's teachers work hard to provide our students with the best education possible. However, with increases in the amount of standardized testing being pushed on our children, it is becoming increasingly more difficult to adequately prepare them for every test, while also covering Georgia's Standards of Education. In an effort to protect our teachers' ability to teach, we passed SB364 and SB 355. SB 364, the Quality Basic Education Act, streamlines testing.

SB 355, the Student Protection Act, allows students to be excused from taking mandated standardized tests by a parent or medical



## Solutions for Traffic

One of the biggest issues this session was MARTA expansion into North Fulton County. In its original form, the bill proposed would impose a half penny tax on all of the citizens of Fulton County to provide for heavy rail expansion. I did not support this proposal with an extraordinary tax increase and a negative impact to commuters. We needed a timelier and more cost efficient solution.

The Senate and House came to a compromise allowing a new bill for MARTA expansion in the city of Atlanta and separating the remaining parts of Fulton County to focus on a myriad of other options and solutions. This approach allows the flexibility for us to develop solutions to make a meaningful impact on people's lives now.



## Protecting GA Small Business Act to become law!

Georgia's small businesses are the lifeblood to our state. They not only provide unique products that may not be available through large retail chains, but they also provide opportunities for employment whether it is part-time, temporary, or full-time. These small businesses play a critical role in the economic development of Georgia. This is why I authored and passed Senate Bill 277, the Protecting Georgia Small Businesses Act. This legislation protects and supports franchisees, who are small business owners, and gives them the power to maintain control of their business operations. Local control allows small businesses to achieve their goals of growth and prosperity, without government overreach. SB 277 passed the Senate & House and now awaits the Governor's signature.



## Protecting our First Responders

I have had many important roles throughout my lifetime, including owning my own businesses and being a firefighter. All jobs come with occupational hazards; but I must say public safety

positions, including firefighting, come with a lot more. The Senate passed House Bill 216. This bill provides for workers' compensation benefits to firefighters who have been diagnosed with fire service-related cancers. It is extremely important to me that we work to protect and assist those brave men and women who risk their lives to do this for us.



### Capitol Address

Senator John Albers  
Room 110, State Capitol  
Atlanta, GA 30334  
(404)463-8055  
Legislative Assistant: Jennifer Guadalupe  
Jenny.Guadalupe@senate.ga.gov  
www.legis.ga.gov

### District Address

Senator John Albers  
1076 Canton Street  
Founders Hall - Lower Level  
Roswell, GA 30075  
(678)667-3656  
info@senatorialbers.com  
www.senatorialbers.com

Website

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