



## March 2017 Newsletter

We are in the final month and scheduled to end the 2017 legislative session on March 30th. I am very proud of our efforts continuing to make Georgia the best place to live, work and play. We serve in a citizen's legislature that fortunately does not allow for career politicians. It assures elected officials return to their communities and regular employment to be well grounded. I believe this makes a positive difference serving our constituents.

Kari and I celebrated our 24th wedding anniversary last month. We are truly blessed and I have to start planning something big for our 25th next year! Ryan is wrapping up his term as Senior Patrol Leader of his Boy Scout Troop and having a great freshman year at Roswell High School. Will is working hard at college and can see the light of college graduation in the future semesters. We love the longer days and nicer weather allowing us to attend outdoor community events and take long walks.



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### Back the Badge

I was proud to co-sponsor and the Senate passed four bills benefiting law enforcement officers, the biggest being SB 160, better known as the "Back the Badge Act." Police officers have recently been at the forefront of violence in our country and this is just one measure we passed to help protect them. This bill seeks to impose harsher punishments against those who commit violent acts against our officers. The bill calls for additional punishments for the crimes of obstructing police officers, blocking highways and being involved in prison riots. Under current law, someone who harms a public safety officer receives a sentence of 5 to 20 years in prison. However, SB 160 imposes a mandatory minimum sentence by preventing any part of the five year minimum sentence from being suspended, deferred or probated. This bill represents our appreciation for all our officers and our support of all they do to keep us safe every single day.



### Surprise Medical Billing

Another important bill I co-sponsored and supported passed the Senate and protects Georgia's citizens against surprise billing by providers, hospitals and insurers for out-of-network services. Under Senate Bill 8, a process for appeal through the Georgia Department of Insurance would be created, and a database for usual and customary costs of services to be maintained by the Georgia Department of Community Health would be established. This should hopefully reduce the number of citizens who experience the frustration and burden of surprise billing.



## Firefighter Cancer Bill

Along with passing bills on the floor, the committee I chair passed out HB 146 which would protect another underserved group of people: my fellow firefighters. This bill would provide them with insurance coverage if they are diagnosed with a certain kind of cancer. This bill is important not only for firefighters, but also their children. We lose too many firefighters to cancer every year; and this serves as a small token of appreciation for everything they do to protect us. This bill would provide immediate relief to families and would take a burden off these brave men and women.

Supporting our public safety officers and firefighters will benefit our children and our children's children. They are the backbone of our communities and make sacrifices every day to ensure our safety. It was an honor to pass legislation that shows our unwavering support for these brave men and women.



## Bills & Resolutions

There are thousands of bills and resolutions each year. I have been actively sponsoring and co-sponsoring many initiatives. It would be impossible to mention them all, however I review many in my newsletter and weekly updates. I focus my efforts on serving families, job creators, military, public safety, education, etc.

View weekly legislative updates here: [UPDATES](#)

You can search all legislation by name, number, keyword or sponsor here: [GGA Website](#)



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