



## **EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY**

### **Legislative Summary**

### **2013-2014 Legislative Agenda**

Democrats have always been the champions of educational opportunity. We understand that the foundation of an education is the greatest predictor of economic success. However, successful students are developed through parental responsibility and strong schools. We also recognize that our policies in education should reach every child – that we cannot afford to serve or save only a few. The legislation introduced today will help students from the earliest days of learning through the post-secondary academics.

#### **SUPPORT SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS**

- **Restore and Build HOPE Act:** Sponsored by Rep. Stacey Evans and co-sponsored by Rep. Craig Gordon, this legislative will amend the HOPE Act to change the required G.P.A. for students at technical colleges to 2.5 to retain the HOPE Grant.
- **Anti-Discrimination Act:** Sponsored by Rep. Simone Bell and co-sponsored by Rep. Spencer Frye, this legislation would ensure that state financed schools receiving School Scholarship Organizations (SSOs) are not discriminating based on race, gender, national origin, religion, sexuality or disability.
- **Education Transparency Act:** Sponsored by Rep. Brian Thomas and co-sponsored by Rep. Nikki Randall, this legislation would require that School Scholarship Organizations (SSOs) to be transparent in their reporting of funding. Currently, SSOs in Georgia allocate \$50 million in taxpayer money for scholarships to students across the state. Individuals contributing to these organizations are granted a dollar-for-dollar tax credit under current state law.

#### **PROMOTE EMPOWERED PARENTS**

- **Parent Protection Act:** Introduced by Rep. Roger Bruce and co-sponsored by Rep. Tonya Anderson, this bill will empower parents to fully participate in the lives of their children without fear of losing their jobs. This Act will guarantee work leave for employees to attend school conferences and medical appointments on behalf of dependents.
- **Drop-Out Deterrent Act:** Sponsored by Rep. Keisha Waites and co-sponsored by Rep. Hugh Floyd, would increase the required age a child is in public school to 17 years old. By increasing the age, this legislation hopes to steer our children towards graduation rather than unemployment. Currently students can legally drop out of school without a parent's consent at the age of 16.



### **SECURE STRONGER SCHOOLS**

- **End Cyberbullying Act:** Sponsored by Rep. Pam Dickerson and co-sponsored by Rep. Carolyn Hugley, this legislation will expand our existing statute to include bullying actions that occurs using cell phones, PDAs and on social media websites. Currently, only bullying acts that occur using school-owned property are covered by the existing statute. By prohibiting cyber-bullying, we are protecting our children from those who would make it more difficult for them to learn and achieve.



## **ECONOMIC SECURITY Legislative Summary 2013-2014 Legislative Agenda**

The House Democratic Caucus offers key legislation to tackle the issues that continue to slow our economic growth. We have developed a package of legislation that will create good jobs and a strong economy, promote rural recovery and help small businesses grow starting today.

### **CREATE GOOD JOBS AND A STRONG ECONOMY**

- **Georgia Buy American Act:** Sponsored by Rep. Winfred Dukes and co-sponsored by Michele Henson, this legislation will maximize job creation by ensuring that manufactured goods used in taxpayer-funded projects and procured by government agencies are made in American Factories and Georgia Factories whenever our trade laws permit. This act will also reduce sales taxes on Made in USA products. These two focal points will, in turn, support jobs here at home rather than abroad and help promote economic security.
- **Georgia Jobs Matter Act:** Sponsored by Rep. Carol Fullerton and Rep. Ronnie Mabra, this legislation will require that any company bidding for state funds show that they will provide jobs for Georgians. This legislation would also require a jobs impact statement in governmental contract evaluation and procurement, we will be able to hold companies accountable for spending our dollars at home.

### **PROMOTE RURAL RECOVERY**

- **Rural Tourism Protection Act:** Sponsored by Rep. Debbie Buckner and co-sponsored by Rep. Mack Jackson, this legislation will require the Department of Natural Resources to notify cities and counties when considering the closure of a state park or historical site. This legislation also requires DNR to enter into a memorandum of agreement for the transfer of operation and management responsibilities for within a state park. The local governing authority can become the operator/manager, which can maintain the state park or recreation area.

### **HELP SMALL BUSINESSES**

- **Small Business Protection Act:** Sponsored by Rep. Valencia Stovall and co-sponsored by Rep. Margaret Kaiser, the Act suspends the requirement of E-Verify for businesses under 50 employees until 2015. HB 87 adopted the requirement of E-Verify for all businesses of more than 10 employees; however, Georgia's businesses are mostly small businesses. The imposition of HB 87 and E-Verify places a heavy regulatory burden on companies that do not have human resources departments or the resources to hire outside consultants.
- **Citizen Protection Act,** sponsored by Rep. Patty James Bentley and co-sponsored by Rep. Pedro Marin, would repeal the controversial provision from HB 87 that requires American citizens to repeatedly prove their citizenship to renew licenses. This requirement has delayed renewal of professional licenses of insurance agents, medical professionals, and others who have lived and worked in Georgia their entire lives.



- **Georgia Fair Pay Act:** Sponsored by Rep. Al Williams and co-sponsored by Rep. Mike Glanton, this legislation will allow contractors faster, more prompt payments from the state, which will provide better economic security for Georgians. Under this bill, the state shall present contractors payment within 15 days if an invoice is filed electronically. The state shall present contractors payment within 30 days if an invoice was filed for paper claims.



## **SHARED RESPONSIBILITY**

### **Legislative Summary**

### **2013-2014 Legislative Agenda**

The House Democratic Caucus understands that citizens expect more of their government than simply taxes and regulation. We want government that works for the people and with the people. We expect a government that asks everyone to do his or her fair share and to play by the rules. And we demand a government that understands its business: to spend our tax dollars wisely. Today, House Democrats offer a package of legislation that will meet those key objectives: to fix government so it works, to defend civil rights and to protect taxpayer investments.

### **FIX GOVERNMENT, SO IT WORKS**

- **Foreclosure Reform Act:** Sponsored by Rep. Rahn Mayo and co-sponsored by Rep. Able Mable Thomas, this legislation will change the judicial process for foreclosure. This legislation will help to level the playing field and brings Georgia in line with other states that have placed into law common-sense consumer protections. Georgia continues to lag far behind in homeowner protection.
- **Right to Cure Act:** Sponsored by Rep. Billy Mitchell and co-sponsored by Darryl Jordan, this legislation will give homeowners a right to cure a delinquency, meaning the homeowners will no longer need the bank's permission to resolve a delinquency.

### **DEFEND CIVIL RIGHTS OF ALL**

- **Social Media Privacy Act:** Sponsored by Rep. Dar'shun Kendrick and co-sponsored by Rep. Dexter Sharper, this legislation will prohibit employers from demanding access to private information as a condition of employment. This includes access to social media accounts like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.
- **Gun Safety Act:** Sponsored by Rep. Pat Gardner and co-sponsored by Rep. LeDawn Jones, this legislation will prohibit unlicensed sellers at gun shows and require background checks for the purchase of guns at gun shows. This will enforce a 5 business day waiting period for purchases. This legislation also requires that an individual with a history of mental illness should undergo a court-mandated mental health screening before their permits can be reinstated.

### **PROTECT TAXPAYER INVESTMENTS**



- **Tax Accountability Act:** Sponsored by Rep. Kim Alexander and co-sponsored by Rep. David Wilkerson, this legislation will create an independent panel to review existing tax subsidies, tax credits and tax abatements to determine the fiscal impact and policy achievements of the tax treatment. The commission would be required to make a recommendation for each item and whether to continue the policy, modify the policy or end the policy.
- **Family Energy Credit:** Sponsored by Rep. Karla Drenner and co-sponsored by Rep. Karen Bennett, this legislation will provide an income tax credit of up to \$250.00 for home energy costs, as evidenced by natural gas and electricity bills. Families with incomes up to \$75,000 per year will be eligible for the credit.