

Legislative Report

By: Chandler Haydon

Each June the Georgia Chamber of Commerce's Governmental Affairs Committee of which I am a member holds a summer meeting. Many legislators from both parties are invited to discuss key issues which passed (or failed) during the legislative session. Rep. Jerry Keen (R-St. Simons), the House Majority leader, and Senator Chip Rogers (R-Woodstock), the Senate Majority Leader, discussed HB 1405. HB 1405 which was introduced by the Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, Rep. Larry O'Neal of Warner Robins, created the 2010 Special Council on Tax Reform and Fairness for Georgians. Rep. Keen was the 3rd signature on the bill behind Speaker Ralston. The bill was a bipartisan effort to revamp Georgia's tax system. Sen. Rogers carried the bill in the Senate.

The council is charged with conducting a thorough study of the state's current revenue structure and reporting its findings and recommendations for legislation to the Speaker of the House and the Lieutenant Governor no later than January 10, 2011.

The 2010 Special Council on Tax Reform and Fairness for Georgians consists of the following members:

Four economists including Dr. David Sjoquist of Georgia State University, Dr. Jeffrey Humphreys of the University of Georgia, Dr. Roger Tutterow of Mercer University, and Dr. Christine Ries of Georgia Tech; Governor Sonny Perdue;

The 2010 chairperson of the Georgia Chamber of Commerce - Suzanne Sitherwood, President of AGL Resources, and the 2010 Georgia chairperson of

the National Federation of Independent Business – Mr. Gerry Harkins; two members appointed by Lieutenant Governor Casey Cagle, Skeeter McCorkle and Bradford Dickson, and two members appointed by Speaker of the House, Rep. David Ralston, are A.D. Frazier and Roy Fickling.

The legislation also creates the Special Joint Committee on Georgia Revenue Structure which consists of the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker Pro Tempore of the House of Representatives; the majority leader of the Senate and the majority leader of the House of Representatives; the minority leader of the Senate and the minority leader of the House of Representatives; the chairpersons of the Senate Finance Committee and the House Ways & Means Committee; two members of the Senate to be appointed by the President of the Senate, one from the majority party and one from the minority party; and two members of the House of Representatives to be appointed by the Speaker of the House, one from the majority party and one from the minority party. Co-chairs of the special joint committee will include the chairs of the Senate Finance Committee and the House Ways & Means Committee.

According to Rep. Keen and Sen. Rogers, we can expect to see sweeping changes in sales tax exemptions. As your lobbyist, I will be attending these meetings and keeping you informed of the council's recommendations.

http://www.legis.state.ga.us/legis/2009_10/versions/hb1405_HB_1405_AP_7.htm