

Plumbing and Mechanical Association of Georgia

Legislative Report

May 5, 2010

Qualifying is over and the political season will soon be in full swing. The primaries will be on July 20, giving incumbent legislators less than three months to raise financial support and begin campaigning.

Election overview – the Georgia General Assembly

On paper at least, the majority appears to be very much in play in the House of Representatives, with 61 seats assured for the Republicans and 58 assured for the Democrats. However, in several of the contested races, there are multiple Republicans qualified and only one Democrat, an indication that those districts will go Republican.

In the Senate, Republicans are assured of 20 seats, just nine short of the majority. Democrats have locks on just 12 Senate seats.

Key House Races

Rep. Ron Stephens of Savannah is opposed in the General Election by Democrat Zena McClain, a lawyer. Stephens is Chairman of the House Economic Development Committee, and serves on the Ways & Means Committee.

Rep. Tom McCall of Elberton has drawn General Election opposition from Democrat Marilyn Bridges, a photographer. McCall has been a long time friend to PMA. He is Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee and Chairman of the Environmental Quality Subcommittee of the House Natural Resources Committee.

Rep. Roger Williams of Dalton has a primary opponent in Dennis Mock. Williams is on the House Ways & Means Committee. He is chairman of the House Regulated Industries Committee.

Rep. Bill Hembree, Chairman of the House Rules Committee, is opposed in the General Election by Kimberly Alexander, an internal auditor.

Hank Huckaby, who was director of the Office of Planning and Budget under Governor Zell Miller, is running for the District 113 seat vacated by Bob Smith. He will have two opponents in the Republican Primary and, if he wins the primary, a Democratic opponent in the General Election. He recently retired as the Senior Vice President of Finance for the University of Georgia.

Rep. David Knight of Griffin has opposition in the Republican Primary from Bill Mauldin. Knight serves on the Ways & Means committee.

Rep. Willie Talton of Warner Robins has opposition in the General Election from Democrat Fenika Miller.

Key Senate Races

Senate Majority Leader Chip Rogers of Woodstock is opposed by Democrat Patrick Thompson in the General Election.

Senate Rules Chairman Don Balfour has three opponents in the Republican Primary, and if he wins, a Democratic opponent in the General Election. His indecision about seeking re-election undoubtedly triggered most of the opposition.

Rep. Fran Millar is running for the open seat in Senate District 40. Two other Republicans, real estate broker Jim Duffie and Attorney James Sibold, oppose him in the primary. Democrat Eric Christ is also running for this seat previously held by Dan Weber.

Rep. Barry Loudermilk is running for the open seat in Senate District 52. Opposing him in the Republican Primary is businessman Jeff Knight. Retired teacher Mike Burton is running on the Democratic ticket.

Senate Transportation Chairman Jeff Mullis has two opponents in the Republican Primary – retiree Jim Pope and business manager Jeremy Jones. Mullis was a co-sponsor of SB 409.

Senator Jim Butterworth is opposed by Terry Rogers in the Republican Primary. Butterworth was a co-sponsor of SB 409.

Senator Judson Hill has drawn opposition in the Republican Primary from former House member Lynda Coker.

Senator Buddy Carter of Savannah has General Election opposition from Democrat Carry Smith.

The Gubernatorial Race

All job openings are attracting a lot of applicants in this economy, and the Governor's race is no different. 14 applicants have qualified, evenly split between Republicans and Democrats. The Republicans are:

- State Senator Jeff Chapman of Brunswick, a businessman.
- Congressman and former State Senator Nathan Deal of Gainesville.
- Former Secretary of State Karen Handel of Alpharetta.
- Former Senate President Pro Tempore Eric Johnson of Savannah, an architect.
- Ray McBerry of McDonough, a radio/television professional.

- Insurance Commissioner John Oxendine.
- Otis Putnam of Brunswick, a Walmart employee.

The Democratic candidates for Governor are:

- Attorney General Thurbert Baker, a former House member.
- Former Governor Roy Barnes of Marietta, an attorney.
- Bill Bolton of Marietta, a management consultant.
- Carl Camon of Ray City, educator.
- Rep. Randal Mangham of Decatur, an attorney
- House Minority Leader DuBose Porter of Dublin, a newspaper publisher.
- David Poythress of Atlanta, former adjutant general.

Other statewide races

Lt. Governor

Lt. Governor Casey Cagle is unopposed in the Republican Primary, and will oppose either Carol Porter or Tricia McCracken in the General Election. McCracken is a journalist, and Porter, the wife of the House Minority Leader, is general manager of a newspaper.

Secretary of State

Former Senator Brian Kemp, appointed by Governor Sonny Perdue to serve the remainder of Karen Handel's unexpired term, will face businessman Doug MacGinnitie in the Republican Primary. The winner will then face Gail Buckner, Gary Horlacher, Michael Mills or Angela Moore in the General Election.

Attorney General

The Republican candidates are:

- Sam Olens, former chairman of the Cobb County Commission.
- Senator Preston Smith of Rome.
- Attorney Max Wood of Macon

The Democratic candidates are:

- Attorney Ken Hodges of Atlanta.
- Rep. Rob Teilhet of Smyrna.

Commissioner of Labor

Former Speaker of the House Terry Coleman faces Darryl Hicks of Fayetteville in the Democratic Primary. The winner will then face either current Rep. Melvin Everson of Snellville or current Rep. Mark Butler of Carrollton.

Commissioner of Agriculture

Gary Black, long-time head of the Georgia Agri-business Council faces farmer, businessman Darwin Carter of Alma in the Republican Primary. Senator J. B. Powell of Blythe is running unopposed in the Democratic Primary.

Commissioner of Insurance

Nine Republicans are vying for the privilege of facing Democrat Mary Squires, a former State Senator, in the General Election. The Republicans are:

- Senator Ralph Hudgens of Hull, long time Senate Insurance and Labor Chairman.
- Rep. Tom Knox of Cumming, former House Insurance Committee chairman.
- Senator Seth Harp of Midland, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee.
- Dennis Cain of Hazelhurst, an insurance agent.
- Rick Collum of Moultrie, an attorney.
- John Mamalakis of Savannah, an insurance agent.
- Stephen Northington of Acworth, an insurance agent.
- Gerry Purcell of Alpharetta, a businessman.
- Maria Sheffield of Atlanta, an attorney.

Bill status report.

HB 1016 – Golick of Smyrna: to include businesses as potential victims of identity theft. Passed Senate on 4/20.

HB 1069 – Wilkinson of Dunwoody: would provide tax credits for qualified equipment that reduces business or domestic energy or water use. 4/29 Conference committee report agreed to

HB 1196 – England of Auburn: would stipulate that no building code may require fire sprinklers in single family dwellings. Passed Senate 4/21.

HB 1206 – Maddox of Zebulon: would change provisions relating to the requirement for a water well contractor's license and drilling under the direction of a professional geologist or engineer. Passed Senate on 4/21.

HB 1388 – Bearden of Villa Rica: to provide that development authorities may finance certain conservation projects, including water and energy conservation projects. Passed Senate 4/21.

SB 148 – Shafer of Duluth: carryover bill from 2009, to provide for review and evaluation of existing occupational regulatory entities. 4/29 House agrees to Senate amendment to House substitute

SB 321 – Pearson of Dawsonville: to provide for private ownership of new public water supply reservoirs. Never passed out of House Natural Resources

SB 339 – Seabaugh of Sharpsburg: to make it unlawful to disqualify a licensed utility contractor from doing work on a utility system on the basis that the utility contractor does not hold a general contractor license. 4/29 Passed House under modified structured rule.

SB 346 – Rogers of Woodstock: to make comprehensive revisions in property tax law, providing more transparency and equity for property owners. 4/29 House agrees to Senate amendment to House substitute.

SB 362 – Weber of Dunwoody: would amend lien law to eliminate the requirement that a subcontractors' affidavit of non-payment be filed with the county clerk of court. Senate agrees to House substitute which was removing all language except for Section 1.

SB 370 – Tolleson of Perry: Administration bill to implement state-wide water management plan. Focuses on commercial and residential conservation, including installation of high efficiency plumbing fixtures in new construction. 5/3 sent to the Governor.

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