

CAPITOL UPDATE

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SR 68 Signed By Governor

As you know, TAG along with Senator Barry Loudermilk actively worked to see SR 68 passed through the General Assembly this past session. TAG is happy to report that Governor Deal recently signed this resolution.

Now that the resolution has been signed, we continue to work with Loudermilk and technology stakeholders to prepare for the Science and Technology Joint Study Commission's meetings. The first meeting is scheduled for July 20 at Cisco Systems in Gwinnett County, where the Commission will begin their important undertaking of reviewing Georgia's technology assets and developing a strategic plan for that state that will hopefully result in job and industry growth.

As the planning continues to develop, we look forward to the industry's input on what should be included in the recommendations that the Commission will produce in January of 2012.

TAG Government Relations Task Force Meeting

The TAG Government Relations Task Force (GRTF) recently held their first meeting since the legislative session concluded in April. At the meeting, they reviewed legislation that was not passed by the General Assembly and currently resides in committee and will be heard in the 2012 session. Each piece of legislation that impacts technology was assigned to a GRTF Working Group. These working groups, which coincide with TAG's public policy platform areas of Statewide Economic Development, Innovation, STEM Education and Economic Gardening, will review the legislation and make a recommendation on whether or not it is good for the industry and if TAG should support or oppose it.

Additionally, the GRTF created a new Working Group and policy platform area of Health IT.

Due to the overwhelming complex nature of healthcare and the delivery of healthcare, the GRTF felt it was necessary to develop a working group that could handle the many health IT policy issues that arose this session. The Health IT Working Group, along with the other Working Groups will be developing the 2012 Legislative Agenda for TAG over the coming months. We expect the agenda to be completed in the fall, with approval from the TAG Board of Directors in December of the this year, just prior to the 2012 legislative session.

Charter Schools Ruled Unconstitutional by Georgia Supreme Court

In a recent 4-3 decision by the Georgia Supreme Court 16 state commissioned charter schools will be closed. The Court ruled the Georgia Charter Schools Commission Act of 2008 unconstitutional. The Georgia Constitution gives local school boards the exclusive rights to education within their county, except for "special schools." The Court ruled that the term "special schools" only applied to schools for children with disabilities, and not to charter schools, which was the basis for creating the Georgia Charter Schools Commission through the 2008 Act. This ruling subsequently removed the authority for the state to fund charter schools authorized by the Georgia Charter Schools Commission.

Attorney General Sam Olens, along with others, has filed a petition for the Supreme Court to reverse their decision. Other attempts to allow the charter schools to continue are being made, and legislation is expected to be developed in the August Special Session to address the issue. TAG will continue to following this issue and keep you apprised of any developments.

For more information on these issues, or any other public policy concerns, please feel free to contact Richie Johnson, Director of Government & Public Affairs at (404)-920-2028.