

# CAPITOL UPDATE

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## Curtains set to close on legislative stage

The General Assembly has four legislative days left to debate and vote on any and all bills that will make it to the Governor's desk this legislative session.

The Georgia General Assembly operates on a biennium, which means the legislature spans over two years in two separate sessions. Under this system, bills that are unsuccessful in the first half of the two-year session are carried over into the second half, where they have another chance to become law. If a bill fails to make it through the General Assembly during the second legislative session, it becomes defunct.

Day 40, scheduled for April 29, is the General Assembly's final day of the session. This day is known as "Sine Die," a Latin phrase meaning indefinite adjournment. Since this is the cutoff for all 2009-2010 legislation, the Assembly has been known to convene until midnight.

After 36 days of legislative discussion, many of the bills TAG has been monitoring are still viable. Please read below for a status update of bills that impact the technology community.

### **HB 168 — Rep. Clay Cox (R-Lilburn)**

**Summary:** Modernizes telecommunications competition by eliminating artificial and outdated subsidy mechanisms in the form of contributions to the Universal Access Fund.

**Status:** HB 168 has gone five rounds between both Chambers. The House has approved the Senate's latest amendments, so the bill is now finished and ready to become law.

### **HB 938 — Rep. Allen Peake (R-Macon)**

**Summary:** Among other things, this bill seeks to prohibit texting while driving. Would also prohibit wireless communication in any form for drivers who have an instruction permit or a Class D license and are under 18.

**Status:** This bill has not seen any action since March 30, when it was read by the Senate and referred to the Senate Public Safety Committee.

### **HB 1023 — Rep. Tom Graves (R-Ranger)**

**Summary:** The JOBS Act creates a Georgia Works Tax Credit, among other provisions. It Also creates an income tax credit for angel or private investors who invest in a qualified business in the 2011, 2012, or 2013 calendar year. Credit is 20% of the investment or \$30,000, whichever is less. The credit is issued two years following the initial investment.

**Status:** The Senate has passed/adopted the JOBS Act, so it is headed to the Governor's desk.

### **SB 319 — Sen. Cecil Staton (R-Macon)**

**Summary:** Broadens the definition of a textbook to include computer hardware and technical equipment for classroom instruction.

**Status:** On April 12, the Senate agreed to amendments made by the House. SB 319 is now qualified to become law.

### **SB 374 — Sen. Chip Pearson (R-Dawsonville)**

**Summary:** Creates a Legislative Economic Development Council. Duties include facilitating job creation, reviewing tax exemptions and credits, and analyzing legislative proposals regarding economic development.

**Status:** The House passed/adopted SB 374 on April 14.

### **SB 432 — Sen. Lee Hawkins (R-Gainesville)**

**Summary:** Known as the Advanced Broadband Collocation Act. Streamlines the placement of new or additional wireless facilities on existing wireless support structures, to ensure the safe and efficient integration of facilities necessary for broadband and other wireless communication services.

**Status:** The House Committee on Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications favorably reported on this bill on April 1. The bill must be successful on the House debate floor in the next four legislative days for it to have the chance to make it into Georgia law.

## Senator Spotlight: "Taxpayer Champion"

**Senator Chip Rogers** (R-Woodstock) has been a member of the Georgia General Assembly for eight years. He became a Representative in 2002 and was elected to the Senate two years later. Sen. Rogers has served as the Majority Leader since 2008. Additionally, he currently serves on nine Senate committees.

Sen. Rogers earned the nickname "Taxpayer Champion" through his commitment to cutting taxes. He was very active during the Michael Vick scandal, working to promote tougher state dog fighting laws. He also takes a tough stance on illegal immigration and government spending.

Raised in Cobb County, Sen. Rogers received a B.S. in Economics from Georgia Tech and an MBA from Georgia State. He is self-employed in the arenas of real estate and broadcasting. He and wife Amy have four children.