

Engage Gwinnett Law Enforcement and Judiciary Work Group Members:

As we discussed, I'm sending some updated information based on further developments with the fees legislation that you can forward to the Engage Gwinnett committee members.

First, our lobbyists and ACCG staff members are still actively pursuing sponsorship for the bill. One additional piece of information that I sent to our lobbyists, following my meeting with members of the Engage Gwinnett committee, was a Gwinnett Daily Post article that was published in early January. The article contained some initial Engage Gwinnett recommendations, including one to increase court fees to cover the cost of services, and our lobbyists have been using it in discussions with elected officials.

Next, on February 9th, HR 624 from 2009 was brought back to life in the House Ways & Means committee. This resolution would create a House Study Committee to review fees. I've cut and pasted HR 624 below for your review. ACCG believes that this is in response to the talk about the fees legislation that we're wanting to have introduced and are still pushing.

Conversations continued to take place this week with Senators and the Lieutenant Governor about the fees legislation. I expect an update from ACCG and our lobbyists early next week.

Finally, Keith Shewbert had asked a question about how much revenue the increased fees would generate. I've asked ACCG for the numbers from the study that they're doing and will get back with you when I have those.

Please let the committee know that I'm glad to answer questions, pass along their comments, etc. They can call or email me.

Thanks.

A RESOLUTION

Creating the House Constitutional Officer Fees Study Committee; and for other purposes.

WHEREAS, the General Assembly established by general law most of the fees collected by the sheriffs, probate judges, superior court clerks, tax commissioners, and magistrate judges; and

WHEREAS, in order to ensure that the person receiving the service pays for most or all of the service, rather than shifting the cost to the property taxpayers, the fees should more closely reflect the cost of providing the service; and

WHEREAS, from time to time, these fees need to be reviewed, evaluated, and updated in order to ensure that the cost of providing the service is reflected accurately by the fee charged.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that there is created the House Constitutional Officer Fees Study Committee to be composed of seven members, four of whom shall be members of the House of Representatives to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The chairperson of the House Committee on Ways and Means shall be a member of the committee. The sixth member of the committee shall be an incumbent county commissioner and the seventh member shall be an incumbent constitutional county officer, both of whom shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The Speaker may seek the advice and recommendations of the Association County Commissioners of Georgia and the Constitutional Officers Association of Georgia regarding the respective appointments of the sixth and seventh members. The Speaker shall designate a member of the committee as chairperson of the committee. The chairperson shall call all meetings of the committee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the committee shall undertake a study of the conditions, needs, issues, and problems mentioned above or related thereto and recommend any action or legislation which the committee deems necessary or appropriate. The committee may conduct such meetings at such places and at such times as it may deem necessary or convenient to enable it to exercise fully and effectively its powers, perform its duties, and accomplish the objectives and purposes of this resolution. The legislative members of the committee shall receive the allowances provided for in Code Section 28-1-8 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated. Other members shall receive a daily expense allowance in the amount specified in subsection (b) of Code Section 45-7-21 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated as well as the mileage or transportation allowance authorized for state employees. The allowances authorized by this resolution shall not be received by any member of the committee for more than five days unless additional days are authorized. The funds necessary to carry out the provisions of this resolution shall come from the funds appropriated to the House of Representatives. In the event the committee makes a report of its findings and recommendations, with suggestions for proposed legislation, if any, such report shall be made on or before December 1, 2009. The committee shall stand abolished on December 1, 2009.

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