

## A View from the House

By Representative Doug Holt

In the final week, the usual rush of legislative activity occurred during the four days we were in actual session. We considered over 90 bills and resolutions (sorry, I lost exact count).

Now I can conclude the story of HB 2, part of which I described a couple of weeks ago. Once the bill was in the Senate, it was time to start all over again. It was my responsibility to get it through Senate committee consideration, and the Senate Rules Committee process, before I could turn it over to my Senate Sponsor. Both ACCG and GMA had asked for Senator Jeff Mullis, from Chickamauga. Senator Mullis very courteously accepted the request to sponsor. The bill had been assigned to the Senate State and Local Governmental Operations Committee. The Georgia's realtor's lobby had asked for a few alterations to HB 2 back in the House, and ACCG and GMA had agreed. Now they had several additional requests that they wanted in the bill. We literally reached a point where we there was an ongoing negotiation between the three parties one half hour before the committee meeting. I had to go to the meeting to speak to the committee Chairman, in order to ask him to hold a place for us on the agenda. After another 45 minutes, five amendments were agreed on, and the committee graciously acted on our request to add those amendments, but make no other changes.

Then on to Senate Rules. We were down to little more than a week of session left, and it is always hard to get a bill on either the House or Senate floor debate list by this time. I went through Senate Rules three times, and finally got the bill on the list for Thursday, the 19<sup>th</sup>. This was still no guarantee though, because it was one of 46 bills on the list. The Senate simply couldn't get to HB 2 on Thursday, so it was tabled for Friday. By Friday, of course, I was pretty tense. Having reached the last day, and knowing that finishing the negotiations over the 2008 Budget were the number one concern, I realized the odds were slim for passage. Senator John Douglas, and other HB 2 supporters, had to lobby very hard to get action on the bill. There were five or six times when we thought we were going to get the bill called, only to be disappointed when something of higher priority came up. Finally, at about 11:30 PM, the bill was called. Senator Mullis did his work at warp speed, passing the bill without further amendment, and by a wide margin. I then raced back to the House to submit my request for a motion to agree to the Senate substitute (with the realtor's amendments). Senator Douglas personally carried the physical bill through the Senate sign off process, and raced it over to the House in less than five minutes. Then all was ready: I made my motion, explained the Senate changes, and watched the vote unfold. Thankfully, the substitute passed by a wide margin, which meant final passage of HB 2 – and with only 20 minutes left until we adjourned! The rest was a blur.

I want to thank Kole and Kyle Cotton, who attend Indian Creek Middle School, for paging on Tuesday. Wesley Sherrell, of Eastside High, paged on Thursday. They all did a great job!

Now, my customary wrap-up. During this session, we voted on roughly 300 bills, resolutions, etc. I received almost 7800 contacts (phone calls, visits, mail and email), of which only 14% were from within the district. Email made up 58% of in district contacts, and 87% of all contacts. I also read over 250 bills.

For reference: bills and live session and committee video are online at [www.legis.state.ga.us](http://www.legis.state.ga.us). Contact Info: My office phone is 404-656-0152, and email address is [Doug@DougHolt.org](mailto:Doug@DougHolt.org).