



**Pat Gardner**

**YOUR State Rep. District 57**

*Holding State Government accountable to you*

*January 2011*

[www.patgardner.org](http://www.patgardner.org)



## Governor calls for job cuts, end to teacher furloughs

On Jan. 12, Gov. Nathan Deal delivered his first State of the State address and laid out his proposals for the midyear adjustment to the fiscal year 2011 state budget as well as the annual budget for fiscal year 2012.

Responding to an anticipated revenue shortfall of up to \$2 billion for FY 2012, the Governor is calling for the elimination of approximately 14,000 state employees' jobs, a reduction of more than 10 percent. His proposal requires state agencies to reduce spending by an average of 4 percent for the remainder of FY 2011 and by 7 percent in the next fiscal year, which begins July 1.



Gov. Deal promised to end teacher furloughs and restore a full school year, proposing a \$30 million increase in Quality Basic Education formula funding for K-12 schools,

which had been cut severely in seven of the last eight budgets. He also said he would shore up the HOPE Scholarship program but did not specify how that would be done.

Gov. Deal's proposal also includes \$563 million in bonded debt for capital projects, about half the annual amount borrowed during the previous administration. The governor's 2012 spending proposal totals almost \$18.2 billion, an increase of \$273 million over the current year.

*You're Invited!*

## TOWN HALL MEETING

Monday, January 31  
6:00 PM

**Rock Spring Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall, main entrance behind the church; handicap entrance at the gray side door. 1824 Piedmont Avenue.**

"As your State Representative, I want to meet you and hear your views. Please join us January 24th!" - **Pat**

**Call 404-656-0265 for more information**

**Special Guest: Council Member Alex Wan**

### Let me hear from you!

The 2011 session of the Georgia General Assembly is under way. Please contact me at the State Capitol with your views on the issues, or whenever I can be of service.

**BY MAIL:**

Rep. Pat Gardner  
604 Coverdell Legislative Office Building  
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**BY PHONE:**

404-656-0265

**BY EMAIL:**

[pat@patgardner.org](mailto:pat@patgardner.org)

## Tax Reform Council makes recommendations

The Special Council on Tax Reform and Fairness, created last year by the legislative majority to conduct a study of the state's current revenue structure, has made its recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly. The council is recommending a reduction in the top income tax rate from 6 percent to 4 percent, to be phased in over a period of three years.

The council is also recommending that the state reinstate the 4 percent state sales tax on groceries, which was eliminated in the early 1990s, and increase the cigarette tax from 37 cents per pack to 68 cents per pack. New sales taxes on 50 personal services not currently taxed, ranging from haircuts to dry cleaning to automobile oil changes, are also part of the Council's recommendations, along with eliminating sales tax holiday periods that were enacted in previous years. The Council's full report is available online at [www.fiscalresearch.gsu.edu/taxcouncil/](http://www.fiscalresearch.gsu.edu/taxcouncil/). A special legislative committee will consider the recommendations, with any legislation approved by that committee going directly to the floor of the House of Representatives for a vote.

**Parents of children ages 11 and over are encouraged to arrange for their children to serve as House of Representatives pages during the 2011 legislative session. For more information, call 404-656-0265.**

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## KEY ISSUES FOR 2011

**Immigration:** Legislation that has already been introduced would prohibit Georgia's public colleges and universities from accepting illegal immigrants as students. It is also expected that the newly increased Republican majority will propose an "Arizona-style" law cracking down on immigrants. But the Georgia Farm Bureau is among the groups opposed to such a proposal, calling immigration a federal issue and citing the \$65 billion Georgia agricultural industry's reliance on migrant workers.

**I value your opinion. Please participate in an online survey on these issues at: [www.patgardner.org](http://www.patgardner.org)**

**Water:** Gov. Deal says it is a top priority of his administration to reach a water use agreement with Alabama and Florida before the 2012 Federal Court deadline. He has also recommended spending \$300 million over the next four years for reservoir creation and expansion in an effort to ensure a sustainable water supply.

**Reapportionment:** As it does every decade, the state will redraw its district boundaries for the state House and Senate as well as our seats in the U.S. House of Representatives, based on the population data reported by the 2010 Census. Georgia will pick up one additional congressional seat for a total of 14. The new legislative and congressional districts will be finalized during a special session later in the year and will be in place for the 2012 election.

**Other Issues:** Increases in college tuition have outpaced growth in Lottery sales, causing a deficit in the HOPE Scholarship fund. Gov. Deal has signaled that he might propose changes in HOPE eligibility criteria to address the shortfall. The Sunday alcohol sales debate is also expected to be revived. Some legislators are advocating a change in the Constitution to allow pari-mutuel wagering on horse racing to promote tourism in Georgia and boost state revenues.



Rep. Gardner with her daughter Anita Gardner, son and daughter-in-law Bradley and Ida Gardner and granddaughter Ella Maxine Gardner, along with House Speaker David Ralston.

## MEET PAT GARDNER

Pat Gardner is serving in her 10th session in the Georgia House of Representatives. She represents District 57 and serves on the House Appropriations, Higher Education, Natural Resources & Environment and Transportation Committees, as well as the Health Subcommittee and Risk Management Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee. She also chairs the Health Policy Committee of the House Democratic Caucus and serves on the Transit Governance Study Committee. As a mother and former teacher who has lived in the neighborhood with her husband Jerry for more than 35 years, Pat has worked hard to improve the quality of our schools, our neighborhood environment and access to affordable healthcare. Pat has served on the Boards of the League of Women Voters, the Learning Disabilities Association of Georgia, the Mental Health Services Coalition, Project Interconnections, the Besser Foundation and Georgians for Choice. She is a member of the Midtown Atlanta Rotary Club and Leadership Atlanta.

**Sign up for Pat's weekly legislative e-newsletter by sending an email to [pat@patgardner.org](mailto:pat@patgardner.org).**

## Please attend Pat's Town Hall Meeting

Monday, Jan. 31 | 6:00 PM | Rock Spring Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall, main entrance behind the church; handicap entrance at the gray side door.  
1824 Piedmont Ave. NE, Atlanta, GA 30324 | Call 404-656-0265 for information