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Notes from the Georgia State Senate

By: State Senator Bill Heath



Beginning with Governor Sonny Perdue's State of the State Address this past Wednesday, our Legislative Session has plunged into the serious concerns affecting Georgians today. The most critical and widespread issue of the 2009 Legislative Session is our state government budget which will see one of its steepest drops in years. Our budget adjustments are a necessary evil that will, in turn, allow our legislation to focus on what is important and drop unnecessary and fruitless issues. An issue that I oppose, Senate Bill 12, is an example of such legislation.

Under Senate Bill 12 all handgun ammunition manufactured, sold, or possessed in Georgia must be coded by the manufacturer by January 1, 2010. This means that the ammunition has to be marked based on Department of Public Safety (DPS) regulations using a unique identifier etched onto the base of each bullet. All handgun ammunition manufacturers and vendors would be required to register with DPS in addition to keeping on-site records of sales. Misdemeanors will be charged to those who do not follow these guidelines with a few exceptions including peace officers or U.S. armed forces. A \$.005 per ammunition round fee will also be imposed on purchasers.

First and foremost, Senate Bill 12 is an infringement on the Second Amendment, because for the mass of law-abiding citizens carrying arms, this bill is an insult and unnecessary burden that will only bring about additional paperwork and taxes with no proven benefits. In addition, this bill is the first step to taking away Second Amendment rights and generating a more centralized government. To put this bill into effect, it would demand outrageous costs

which go against every responsible budget readjustment we need at this time. Most importantly, this method of coding ammunition is unproven to actually help law enforcement, further proving it to an expensive, unnecessary, and unproductive bill.

I hope my explanation of Senate Bill 12 allows everyone to see its futility. The theme of our 2009 Legislative Session is budget responsibility, and this bill goes against the demands of our economy and citizens. I will always try to exercise policy responsibility. This upcoming week will initiate all serious budget debates, and I will carefully consider all productive and helpful legislation that meet the crucial needs of Georgia's citizens at this time.

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Sen. Bill Heath Sen. Bill Heath serves as Chairman of the Retirement Committee and Governor Sonny Perdue's Floor Leader in the Senate. He represents the 31st Senate District which consists of Haralson and Polk counties and portions of Bartow and Paulding counties. He may be reached at 404.651.7738 or by email at billheath@billheath.net.