

- I. Conflict of Interest with Board of Regents' attorney, Attorney General Sam Olens**
- II. Georgia Constitution allows no ethical or fiscal accountability by the Board of Regents to anyone**

**I.**

**Conflict of Interest with HB 397  
with Attorney General Sam Olens  
in the Cases he and his Office Defend**

Atlanta Progressive News

Date: 8 March 2012

OPEN GOVERNMENT

HB 397, a bill to dramatically revise Georgia's Open Meetings Act and Open Records Act, passed the Georgia House on March 05, in a vote of 154 to 5.

As previously reported by APN, **the bill is a mixed bag, containing several good provisions on the side of openness and citizens, and containing several bad provisions on the side of secrecy and government agencies.**

At a hearing on February 22, State Rep. Jay Powell (R-Camilla) noted that the bill had been amended to address concerns raised by APN's News Editor regarding the requirements for the recording of voters in the minutes.

APN had been concerned that the way the bill had currently been written, the requirements for non-roll call votes would have been confusing.

The Supreme Court of Georgia recently ruled in favor of APN's Editor on February 06, that secret votes are not allowed in the State of Georgia, as per the way the Open Meetings Act is currently written.

Additionally, a controversial provision regarding allowing agencies to bill individuals requesting records under the Georgia Open Records Act, for time spent by agencies' attorneys reviewing the documents for possible exemptions or redactions, was removed.

**Attorney General Sam Olens originally told the House Judiciary Civil Subcommittee II on February 22 that he had no problem with any of the provisions as proposed at that time.**

**However, ironically, Olens held a private meeting with Powell and Chairman Jacobs, to relay his concerns.**

**"I can't be expected to disagree publicly with the bill's sponsor," Olens told the Fulton County Daily Report newspaper.**

<http://www.atlantaprogressivenews.com/interspire/news/2012/03/08/georgia-legislature-crossover-day-an-overview.html>

**FACT: Attorney General Sam Olens has filed two "Responses in Opposition" to two Motions to lift the Protective Order that seals documents that confirm serious ethical and fiscal violations by his defendants – the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia.**

**Olens' Oppositions were filed 11 August 2011 and 2 February 2012 in Fulton County Superior Court.**



**Attorney General Sam Olens pushed for major rewrite of the state's sunshine laws that passed the Georgia House on Monday**

## Georgia House approves rewrite of sunshine laws

By [Christopher Quinn](#) The Atlanta Journal-Constitution 7:02 p.m. Monday, March 5, 2012

The state House passed a major rewrite of the state's sunshine laws Monday that could affect public and media access to meetings and government records.

Attorney General Sam Olens pushed House Bill 397, which would increase penalties for those who break the state's sunshine laws and make it easier to obtain civil sanctions against open records or meetings violators.

**It would also add protection to governments against harassing requests for records and impose some new costs on obtaining records.** Governments also would have the right to vote in closed sessions on settlements of suits, though once a settlement is affirmed, the government would have to vote for its acceptance in open session.

The bill now goes to the Senate for consideration.

Find this article at:

<http://www.ajc.com/news/georgia-government/georgia-house-approves-rewrite-1373757.html>



## Georgia House approves rewrite of sunshine laws

By [Christopher Quinn](#)

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution 7:02 p.m. Monday, March 5, 2012

The state House passed a major rewrite of the state's sunshine laws Monday that could affect public and media access to meetings and government records.

**Attorney General Sam Olens pushed House Bill 397**, which would increase penalties for those who break the state's sunshine laws and make it easier to obtain civil sanctions against open records or meetings violators.

**It would also add protection to governments against harassing requests for records and impose some new costs on obtaining records.** Governments also would have the right to vote in closed sessions on settlements of suits, though once a settlement is affirmed, the government would have to vote for its acceptance in open session.

The bill now goes to the Senate for consideration.

Find this article at:

<http://www.ajc.com/news/georgia-government/georgia-house-approves-rewrite-1373757.htm>

■

## special reports

### AG collected \$696K from donors regulated by ethics panel

Click on: <http://www.atlantaunfiltered.com/2011/08/03/ag-collected-696k-from-donors-regulated-by-ethics-panel/>

August 3, 2011 -- By **JIM WALLS**



**Georgia Attorney General Sam Olens**

Attorney General **Sam Olens** – who’s taking on a larger role in investigations of public officials, political action committees and lobbyists — has raised more than a third of his campaign money from public officials, PACs, lobbyists and their clients, an analysis of campaign reports shows.

Donors include parties in high-profile inquiries into possible misuse of campaign funds or receipt of improper contributions, such as Philip Wilheit, who was Gov. Nathan Deal’s campaign manager in 2010, and House Speaker David Ralston. Robert K. Finnell, an attorney for two insurance companies accused of improperly funneling \$120,000 in donations to Insurance Commissioner John Oxendine, contributed to Olens three times.

The Georgia Campaign Finance Commission, adjusting to recent budget cuts and the loss of its top two staffers, plans to use Olens’ office to write consent and compliance orders to settle alleged violations of campaign and lobbyist reporting laws. The AG’s staff would also present investigative findings in formal hearings before the commission.

Olens has agreed to the arrangement for a 90-day trial run. A vote on the proposal could come Friday. To try to keep politics out of Georgia’s campaign finance enforcement, state law bars commission members from some political activity. Turning more of the commission’s duties over to an elected official with a hefty campaign war chest could create the impression that investigations are not properly insulated from political pressure.

“There is always a potential for a conflict,” commission vice chairman Josh Belinfante acknowledged, “but I don’t think ... that means a conflict exists.”

Belinfante noted that Olens’ office already represents the commission when its decisions are reviewed by an administrative law judge. Olens’ staff will provide legal advice, but the commission’s staff will conduct investigations and compile evidence.

Lawyers in the attorney general’s officer “will be assisting in the investigations, but they’re not leading the investigations,” he said.

Lauren Kane, Olens' director of communications, also noted that the AG's office would play a secondary role."

We actually would not have an investigative role," Kane said. The commission "would still investigate the claims and the Department of Law would simply present the results of the investigations to the ... commission, which is not materially different from our current role of prosecuting the cases before an administrative law judge."

The commission now has one auditor to investigate complaints and plans to hire a second. Investigations had been led until recently by executive secretary Stacey Kalberman, who was forced to resign in June, and her deputy, whose job was eliminated — personnel moves that some suggest were politically motivated.

In other arms of state government, elected officials are forbidden from accepting campaign donations from entities that they license or regulate. Insurance companies can't give to the insurance commissioner, for example, and utilities can't donate to members of the Public Service Commission.

Olens has raised about \$1,864,000 since he launched his bid for attorney general in 2009. Of that amount, an analysis of campaign reports shows, at least \$503,000 came from sources registered with the Campaign Finance Commission: campaign and political action committees, which must regularly report donations and spending; appointed public officials who must file an annual summary of their personal financial holdings; and lobbyists, who must report at least once a month on their spending on public officials. An additional \$193,000 in donations came from the clients of registered lobbyists.

Other donors to Olens' campaign include Senate President Tommie Williams and Majority Leader Chip Rogers; Rep. Joe Wilkinson, chairman of the House Ethics Committee; Chuck Clay, a board member of Common Cause Georgia, a good-government group advocating tougher enforcement of ethics laws; James Walters, founder of a new political action committee believed to be connected to Deal; and PerduePac, former Gov. Sonny Perdue's political action committee.

Click on: <http://www.atlantaunfiltered.com/2011/08/03/ag-collected-696k-from-donors-regulated-by-ethics-panel/>

■

**UPDATE: Attorney General and his staff appointed legal voice for the State's New Ethics Commission Director in September 9, 2011 – a serious "Conflict of Interest."**

Article at:

<http://www.ajc.com/news/georgia-politics-elections/ethics-chief-arrives-amid-1164683.html>



---

## Ethics chief arrives amid makeover

By [Aaron Gould Sheinin](#) The Atlanta Journal-Constitution 5:50 a.m. Friday, September 9, 2011

As the revamped state ethics commission keeps its eye on elected officials, candidates and lobbyists, it is also adjusting to a much smaller budget, more reliance on the attorney general's office to conduct investigations and a director whose experience is being questioned.

Government watchdogs are taking a wait-and-see approach before forming an opinion on the commission's new structure and its leader.

The commission, which in late August named lobbyist Holly LaBerge its director, has diminished the role of its director while planning to rely more on the state attorney general and an in-house auditor to check thousands of ethics reports filed by elected officials and candidates. A second auditor will be hired to help with investigations.

LaBerge's hiring comes on the heels of controversy. The agency underwent its steep budget cut at roughly the same time its previous director had drafted subpoenas looking into Gov. Nathan Deal's 2010 campaign for governor.

### **Some observers wary**

LaBerge comes to the job from the Public Defenders Standards Council, where she lobbied state lawmakers. Before that, the Georgia State University finance graduate was an analyst with the state House Budget Office.

The commission's future is important, as it is responsible for making sure candidates, elected officials and lobbyists follow state law designed to ensure ethical behavior.

Open government advocates who monitor the commission's dealings hope LaBerge will demonstrate a willingness to stand up to powerful political figures such as Deal, whom the commission will continue to investigate over campaign spending.

"She's never managed, according to her background, a staff of nine or 10 people," said William Perry, executive director of the watchdog group Common Cause Georgia, of LaBerge. "And [another concern is] just making sure the investigative side is something that can match the ability the commission had before they received a 42 percent cut from the Legislature."

Patrick Millsaps, chairman of the five-member board of commissioners that governs the agency, said the agency is better positioned to carry out its mission following months of upheaval.

### **Agency reorganized**

In May, the agency was embroiled in a dispute with then-director Stacey Kalberman. The dispute went public after The Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported that Kalberman had prepared subpoenas for Deal's campaign that ethics commissioners had never signed.

The commission decided to eliminate the agency's top investigator's job and to cut Kalberman's salary from \$125,000 to \$85,000. Kalberman resigned. LaBerge will make the lower salary.

(over)

Amid the changes, Millsaps led an effort to reorganize the agency and to change the executive director's job from one that was designed to investigate politicians to one that is more administrative. With no attorney on staff, **LaBerge and her auditors will rely on the Attorney General's Office for legal guidance and to prosecute or settle violations of state ethics law.**

**Millsaps urged critics to give LaBerge time to learn the system and to work with Attorney General Sam Olens' staff to develop procedures for investigating cases.**

"Her role is going to be what she feels it needs to be," he said. "Her first responsibility is coming up with this procedure that both our office and the **AG's office** is comfortable with, and that is effective."

**Olens' office is on board, at least for a 90-day trial period. If, after three months, the process is working for all parties, it will continue. If not, the commission will have to reassess its situation.**

While the protocol for investigations is being created and a search for a second auditor is conducted, many of the commission's cases will be on hold. That includes the investigation into Deal's 2010 campaign for governor.

Getting up to speed

The commission is investigating whether Deal properly spent \$322,000 in campaign money with companies Deal owns or has an interest in, or with businesses controlled by his associates.

The commission's preliminary investigation found Deal's campaign may have exceeded limits on air travel expenses and political contributions, among other possible violations of campaign finance law, documents reviewed by the AJC show.

Deal's office says the governor did nothing wrong.

Because he was appointed by Deal, Millsaps has recused himself from the case. LaBerge said last Friday that she is not yet "up to speed on everything and not in a position to comment on a specific, ongoing investigation."

LaBerge said she is ready for the challenge of the job.

"I'm comfortable with any and everything that has been presented to me, that is expected of me, to be able to handle," LaBerge said in an interview.

LaBerge said she plans to be actively involved in all aspects of the commission, including investigations.

"My understanding is I'm going to be doing all of it," she said.

LaBerge noted that when the ethics staff comes to a conclusion on a case, it is still the five commissioners that must vote to move forward with a formal investigation. "At the end of the day, it's the commission that needs to make a decision on the information presented to them," she said.

Perry said Common Cause will be watching to see how the changes work.

"I'm anxious to see it get started so we can evaluate its performance."

Find this article at:

<http://www.ajc.com/news/georgia-politics-elections/ethics-chief-arrives-amid-1164683.html>

■

## Attorney general pledges to strengthen Sunshine laws

**Source URL:** <http://jacksonville.com/news/georgia/2011-02-25/story/attorney-general-pledges-strengthen-sunshine-laws>

By [Walter C. Jones](#)

ATLANTA - House Speaker David Ralston and Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle told Georgia Press Association publishers and editors Thursday they're in support of *efforts by Attorney General Sam Olens to strengthen the state's Sunshine Law.*

Olens is pushing a revision of the law that mandates that all government meetings and documents be available to the public unless covered by certain exceptions. He wants to raise penalties for violations and fine-tune the wording to eliminate areas of confusion.

And he told the publishers and editors he has resisted efforts by some groups to use his proposal as a vehicle for weakening provisions of the current law.

"I've had several requests to insert such language into the bill, and it's fair for you to assume I've said 'hell no' every time," he said.

In separate appearances before the journalists who were visiting the Capitol for Publisher's Day, Ralston and Cagle each expressed support for greater government openness.

Ralston has spoken with Olens about the bill, which was introduced Thursday and does not yet have a bill number or committee assigned to consider it. He encouraged the attorney general to take a comprehensive approach and recommended he have Rep. Jay Powell, R-Camilla, as the House sponsor.

Asked about the possibility of legislators amending the bill to weaken it, the speaker predicted they would be unsuccessful. "I don't anticipate it being stripped and gutted," Ralston said. "... I think it's something we're going to look at with a lot of favor. Otherwise, I wouldn't have had one of my best friends in the House carry the bill."

Cagle said since much of his political career was spent in the minority party, he appreciates the importance of laws that make information available to people outside the circles of power.

***"Openness in government is something that I've always been in favor of and will continue to be in favor of, and will support Attorney General Sam Olens," the lieutenant governor said.***

Olen acknowledges that he'll draw opposition from some local officials about various provisions.

For instance, the bill would prohibit members of local governments from getting together in small groups for sensitive discussions to avoid having a quorum which would require the conversation be open to the public. It will also require that job interviews conducted by commissions and school boards be done in public even though most local bodies go behind closed doors now when they're hiring senior managers and administrators.

The bill will also require all votes to purchase property be done in open meetings, a practice many local bodies avoid due to confusion in the law, he said. "Y'all like that one, but there will be others who will not," he warned the journalists.

*walter.jones@morris.com, (404) 589-8424*



---

## Rewrite of Georgia 'sunshine laws' on track

By [Kristina Torres](#) The Atlanta Journal-Constitution 3:40 p.m. Tuesday, August 30, 2011

A rewrite of the state's "sunshine laws" received a committee hearing Tuesday, with the changes on track for consideration once lawmakers begin work in January.

The bill, House Bill 397, would increase fines and allow for civil penalties if governmental agencies violate requirements allowing the public, the media and others to access public records and meetings.

Georgia Attorney General Sam Olens, who supports the bill, said other changes are meant to update the existing law and "literally put [it] into English." He said the update is coming at a crucial time, with his office on pace to receive 400 complaints this year, nearly double the usual number.

Olens worked with state Rep. Jay Powell, R-Camilla, to file the bill earlier this year. It is likely to be tweaked, as Olens and others work to find a balance between the need for transparency and the ability of government to do its job. A number of individuals and agencies, including the Georgia Press Association, spoke in favor of the overall changes. Representatives of local municipalities said they just want the laws to be clear.

"Open records and open meetings law is probably one of the keystones of open government and transparency in government," Powell said.

In the current law, the criminal penalty for open meetings violations is a misdemeanor with a \$500 fine. For an open records violation, it is a misdemeanor with a \$100 fine.

The bill proposes to increase fines for meetings violations to \$1,000. It would also tack on \$2,500 for each additional violation within 12 months of the original fine. Fines for records violations would increase to the same amounts and conditions. The bill also would clarify and update legal language and descriptions, and address the use of updated technology and communications, including electronic records.

**The House Judiciary Civil Committee held the hearing a month after Olens' office sanctioned the Atlanta Public Schools board and put it on a year's probation for violations related to Georgia's open meetings and public records laws.**

The extraordinary oversight stemmed from a series of complaints by city residents and The Atlanta Journal-Constitution about both the board and the administration of then-Superintendent Beverly Hall.

**The board agreed that it and key district staff members will take additional training about state law. Olens' office will also closely monitor the board over the next year to make sure it complies. If it does not, the attorney general says he will take the board to court.**

Find this article at:

<http://www.ajc.com/news/georgia-politics-elections/rewrite-of-georgia-sunshine-1151898.html>

## II.

### **Georgia Constitution allows no Ethical or Fiscal Accountability by the Board of Regents to Anyone**

**EDITOR: Jim Walls 404-275-7987 Email: [editor@atlantaunfiltered.com](mailto:editor@atlantaunfiltered.com)**

#### **University execs' deferred pay, often hidden, tops \$7 million**

October 5, 2009 --



When **Wayne Clough** left for the Smithsonian last year, he drove off from Georgia Tech with \$1.8 million in deferred pay, behind the wheel of a 2007 Lexus hybrid SUV given to him by the school's foundation.

Carl Patton got a similarly sweet seven-figure deal in January when he retired from Georgia State University.

And UGA president Michael Adams has at least \$1.5 million in deferred pay waiting whenever he moves on — half of it residing with the foundation that tried to dump him five years ago.

All told, presidents of seven Georgia universities and the current and former chancellors have collected or accrued more than \$7 million since 2004 in deferred compensation, Atlanta Unfiltered has found in a review of payroll records, tax forms and financial statements. News of the deferred compensation comes as state universities struggle with cost-cutting that has eliminated hundreds of jobs and furloughed virtually all employees for six days or more this year without pay. Officials say the deferred pay is considered a flat amount and is not reduced by the furlough days.

As a practical matter, much of the deferred pay is hidden from public view.

A summary of presidents' state-paid salaries is available for the asking from the University System's press office. But that's if you know who to ask. And it overlooks millions of dollars held by private foundations that have historically paid for perks and salary supplements.



**Carl Patton** pocketed \$412,000 in fiscal year 2008 in salary and benefits, according to [www.Open.Georgia.Gov](http://www.Open.Georgia.Gov) — the State Auditor's official source for information on state employees' pay. But records show Patton was collecting an additional \$300,000 a year in deferred pay, not counting his pension, that the Open Georgia Web site does not disclose.

By the time Patton stepped down in 2008, the state had paid him \$1.66 million in deferred salary — information that is unavailable on Open Georgia. (Patton's successor, Mark Becker, receives no deferred compensation, officials say.)

At Macon State College, Open Georgia reported President David Bell earned \$212,409 in fiscal year 2008. But the state paid him another \$33,333 a year in deferred compensation, records show, and the college's foundation has chipped in \$400,000 more, payable in January 2010.

Nor does Open Georgia report deferred pay of \$30,000 a year for Kennesaw State's Dan Papp (rising to \$50,000 in 2010) or \$30,000 a year for Beheruz Sethna at the University of West Georgia.

State auditors ask that agencies report deferred compensation each year, as it accrues, as part of the total pay for affected employees. (Open Georgia lists salaries for the presidents of UGA, the Medical College of Georgia and West Georgia University that appear to include deferred amounts.)

But some universities haven't done that. Several don't report deferred pay to the auditors until the money is actually handed over to the president. "Somebody has to actually get a check for it to appear," said John Millsaps, the University System's associate vice chancellor for media and publications. Auditors rely on reporting agencies for accuracy. "We do not test it in order to determine the validity of what they submit," said Claire Arnold, the State Auditor's manager over colleges and universities.

Open Georgia also does not report deferred pay held by several foundations that support universities, since it's not taxpayer money. Sometimes, even the foundations aren't clear about past payments for deferred compensation. Financial statements for the University System of Georgia Foundation show \$271,453 spent on deferred compensation for the three fiscal years spanning most of Chancellor

Thomas Meredith's tenure. But executive director Candace Sommers earlier today was still trying to track down records that would show who collected that deferred pay.

With staff turnover and a recent change in bookkeeping software, Sommers said, "researching such information can be challenging." All this means Georgia taxpayers can't get a clear sense of executive compensation in the University System without digging through audited financial statements or payroll records. Until 2004, foundations supporting several Georgia universities paid these salary supplements. The State Board of Regents ended the practice in the wake of a nasty battle between Adams and the UGA Foundation, which threatened to dock his pay because trustees blamed him for running off beloved ex-coach and athletic director Vince Dooley.

Since then, the state has taken responsibility for all salary payments. But the new policy does not affect certain perks or money that foundations had already set aside for presidents' deferred pay. Here's how much university presidents have accumulated or collected in deferred pay since 2004, according to records provided by the University System, tax returns and financial statements. The figures reflect payments or set-asides of state money and, where known, of funds from a school's associated foundation.

**\$1,820,697** — Wayne Clough, former Georgia Tech president (includes **\$500,000** cash, a **\$38,000** car and a split-dollar life insurance policy valued at **\$750,000** from the foundation)

**\$1,666,639** — Carl Patton, retired Georgia State University president

**\$1,573,606** — Michael Adams, UGA president (includes **\$786,106** from the UGA Foundation June 2008)

**\$600,000** — **David Bell, Macon State College president** (includes **\$400,000** from the Macon State Foundation and **\$200,000** from tax dollars).

**\$495,990** — Thomas Meredith, former University System chancellor (includes **\$180,990** from the University System of Georgia Foundation)

**\$480,000** — Daniel Rahn, Medical College of Georgia president

**\$262,500** — Erroll B. Davis Jr., University System chancellor

**\$127,000** — Beheruz Sethna, University of West Georgia president

**\$90,000** — Dan Papp, Kennesaw State University foundation

**\$75,000** — Bud Peterson, Georgia Tech president since April 1

**\$7,191,432 – Total**

**Link to full story:** <http://www.atlantaunfiltered.com/2009/10/05/university-execs-deferred-pay-often-hidden-tops-7-million/>

GEORGIA CONSTITUTION WEBSITE:

<http://www.sos.ga.gov/elections/GAConstitution.pdf>

*\*Section IV – not Section III as stated by former Gov. Perdue in his email also below.*

#### **SECTION IV.**

##### **BOARD OF REGENTS**

Paragraph I. *University System of Georgia; board of regents.* (a) There shall be a Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia which shall consist of one member from each congressional district in the state and five additional members from the state at large, appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. The Governor shall not be

a member of said board. The members in office on June 30, 1983, shall serve out the remainder of their respective terms. As each term of office expires, the Governor shall appoint a successor as herein provided . All such terms of members shall be for seven years. Members shall serve until their successors are appointed and qualified. In the event of a vacancy on the board by death, resignation, removal, or any reason other than the expiration of a member's term, the Governor shall fill such vacancy; and the person so appointed shall serve until confirmed by the Senate and, upon confirmation , shall serve for the unexpired term of office.

(b) The board of regents shall have the exclusive authority to create new public colleges, junior colleges, and universities in the State of Georgia, subject to approval by majority vote in the House of Representatives and the Senate. Such vote shall not be required to change the status of a college, institution or university existing on the effective date of this Constitution. **The government, control, and management of the University System of Georgia and all of the institutions in said system shall be vested in the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia.**

**(c) All appropriations made for the use of any or all institutions in the university system shall be paid to the board of regents in a lump sum, with the power and authority in said board to allocate and distribute the same among the institutions under its control in such way and manner and in such amounts as will further an efficient and economical administration of the university system.**

**Responses from Gov. Perdue, Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle, and Senator Cecil Staton to the over \$7.1 million dollars of deferred “bonus” compensations from Foundation and tax dollars filling the pockets of USG presidents and top officials at the University System of Georgia and approved by the Board of Regents are below:**

■

From: Georgia.Governor@gov.state.ga.us

Date: Mon, Aug 10, 2009 at 2:26 PM

Subject: Re: Contact the Governor From Barbara Murr (Jenny Murr – graduate of MSC)

## **STATE OF GEORGIA**

**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR ATLANTA 30334-0900**

**Sonny Perdue**

**GOVERNOR**

Thank you for taking the time to make me aware of your thoughts about the University System of Georgia. I understand your concerns about what you perceive to be unnecessary expenditures in these

difficult budget times. *I must tell you, however, Georgia's Constitution reserves to the Board of Regents the exclusive authority to make such decisions. See Ga. Const. Art. 8, Sec. 3, Para. 1(c).*

For that reason, I encourage you to share your concerns with the Board of Regents:

Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia

270 Washington Street, SW Atlanta, Georgia 30334 404-656-2211 [www.usg.edu](http://www.usg.edu)

### ■ Email from Senator Cecil Staton, District 18:

--Original Message-----

From: Conner, Betty <[Betty.Conner@senate.ga.gov](mailto:Betty.Conner@senate.ga.gov)> Assistant to Senator Cecil Staton

To: [cotn712@aol.com](mailto:cotn712@aol.com)

Sent: Wed, Oct 14, 2009 10:06 am Subject: Open Records

Thank you for contacting my office and sharing this information. I am glad that you have also made your views known to the Governor, who appoints the Board of Regents. As has already been pointed out, the General Assembly does not have oversight of the University System as our constitution gives that authority to the Board of Regents. And many of the activities you are concerned with are carried out by private foundations and are not funded by state appropriations to the university system.

Having looked into this, however, I would point out that these practices are not unique to Georgia. Large universities are complex entities with budgets often in the hundreds of millions of dollars and presidents are called upon to raise considerable funds for endowments and other expenses that are not paid for by the state. *Presidents of large universities are often paid as if they were CEOs of large corporations. It has been that way for some time.*

If you have not done so already, you may wish to contact the Board of Regents including **Chairman Hatcher**, who is from Macon, to share your views.

In the meantime, I am hoping the state's budget will turn around so that we can reverse some of the cuts that have been required of us. Our constitution requires a balanced budget, which has led to sizable cuts across our budget. I am glad that cuts to education have been less than to other areas of the budget. We all want this difficult time to pass quickly.

Warmest regards,

Senator Cecil Staton

P.O. Box 26427 Macon, Georgia 31221 478-757-0983

---Original Message-----

From: Lieutenant Governor <[CaseyCagle@ltgov.ga.gov](mailto:CaseyCagle@ltgov.ga.gov)>  
TO: [cotn712@aol.com](mailto:cotn712@aol.com)  
Sent: Wed, 11 Feb 2009 6:34 pm  
Subject: Lt. Governor Email

Dear Mrs. Caldon,

Thank you for taking the time to email and share with me the recent concerns regarding issues that have occurred at Macon State College. I appreciate you keeping me informed and I will forward this email to Senator Harp in order for him to examine as chairman of Senate Higher Education Committee. I am confident that Senator Harp will give each letter and email due consideration.

Sincerely,

Casey Cagle, Lt. Governor of Georgia

CC/ac

**Note: Chairman Seth Harp never responded; Lt. Governor Casey Cagle has received many updates since this email that has resulted in NO response.**

<http://www.ajc.com/news/georgia-politics-elections/university-system-execs-retire-957564.html>



## University System execs retire, still get paid

By **James Salzer** The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

5:54 p.m. Wednesday, May 25, 2011

**For nine years after he retired as the chancellor of the University System of Georgia, Stephen Portch remained on the state's payroll, collecting \$823,000 as an adviser and consultant**, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution has learned.

The payments continued through two state fiscal crises and regular complaints from university officials about having to cut their budgets.

Before leaving the state's employ last fall, Portch had been on the payroll longer as an adviser and consultant than he'd been as chancellor. He declined to comment directly on his state payments, although

the current chancellor described Portch's service as "extremely valuable." His responsibilities included advising chancellors and staff, helping to identify talent for top administrative posts, and other services, system officials said.

Portch was not the only top official to continue being paid after retiring.

Some former Georgia public university presidents have received six-figure salaries for a year or more to prepare for teaching assignments or for transitioning to life off campus. One ex-president was paid about \$180,000 in a year to help develop a president's evaluation program, records show. Another is being paid five years after she retired as she lectures and promotes the school she once ran.

A national expert in compensation for college presidents said such arrangements are not uncommon and are useful tools for recruiting top talent, but others found the payments infuriating.

Rep. Bill Hembree, R-Winston, former chairman of the House Higher Education Committee, called the payments an example of why lawmakers have a hard time believing University System officials when they complain about the financial constraints campuses are facing.

"As a taxpayer and a member of the General Assembly, I am outraged," Hembree said. "I can speak for many in the General Assembly in saying that this is the kind of thing that causes a rift between the Legislature and the system."

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution requested data from the University System and reviewed state Department of Audits records to piece together how much public money had been spent over the past decade.

Records were also sought from individual universities, which in some cases supplied incomplete pay records or no records at all. So it was impossible to determine exactly what has been paid out.

#### **'Limited-time executive'**

Agreements the AJC was able to review spell out, in some cases, what the ex-presidents would be doing while being paid. In some cases, the retirees were paid simply for being retirees, state records suggest:

Former Albany State University President Portia Holmes Shields was listed as receiving \$78,893 in fiscal 2007 as a "retiree" after being paid \$118,340 the previous year under the heading "limited time executive." She stepped down as president in 2005. **(over)**

Former longtime Georgia State University President Carl Patton was paid \$365,571 in 2009, the year after he left office. He was listed in audit reports as a "professor," although system staffers said he, too, should have been designated as "retiree." Patton declined to comment for this article.

Former Armstrong Atlantic State University President Thomas Jones was paid about \$180,000 in fiscal 2010 and listed as a "consultant." A letter from the University System said he was supposed to spend his time in part working on a new president's evaluation program.

Former Georgia Southern University President Bruce Grube is scheduled to have made more than \$300,000 on "educational leave" that began last year and ends June 30, according to an agreement with the Board of Regents. He will earn about \$148,000 a year from the state to teach.

Ex-Kennesaw State President Betty Siegel has received more than \$300,000 since she retired in 2006, according to audit reports. She works as president emeritus, giving lectures, sitting on community boards, working to build relationships with colleges in other countries, and promoting Kennesaw State across the globe, she said.

"If you have something to share, you want to keep sharing it as long as you can," Siegel said. "I never go out without being aware that I am representing the interest of Kennesaw State."

Current President Dan Papp said Siegel's work in promoting the school has been well worth the cost for Kennesaw State.

"She is doing a ton of things for KSU," Papp said. "She was president for 25 years; she knows everybody. When Betty was president of Kennesaw State, she was the face of Kennesaw State."

## A good policy?

Raymond Cotton, a Washington lawyer who has advised more than 250 university boards and presidents on compensation, contracts and performance issues, said agreements to continue paying presidents for a limited time after they leave office are not unusual.

Ex-presidents often get payments to prepare to go back into teaching or to write a book or transition into another job. Such end-of-job policies are the kind of perks that attract top administrators, he said.

“Once they have been an administrator for a long time, they have to feel their way around what they want to do,” he said. “They are not quite ready to go to the seashore and just dip their feet in the Gulf of Mexico.

“Your system in Georgia, which is on the generous side, is considered very favorable and it helps you recruit top talent.”

Katherine Paist, a Georgia State University student who is a member of the activist group Georgia Students for Public Higher Education, called the payments “ridiculous” at a time when many students are having a hard time affording school.

“You would think if we were seeing such an increase in tuition, you would think we would see a cut to these payrolls,” she said. “I think a lot of students would be really upset if they knew there were people who weren’t working anymore getting paid six figures when they are in school 18 hours trying to graduate so they can work.”

## How it began

Some of the payments stem from a policy the Board of Regents adopted before Portch joined the system in 1994. The system essentially allowed outgoing top officials to be paid 90 percent of their previous salary for a year, and 60 percent for a second year. Portch said the aim was to make up for the Board of Regents’ decision not to grant tenure job security to chancellors and president faculty. **The policy of post-presidency payments was known as 90/60.**

“I was able to use the policy to provide some assurances to [job] candidates reluctant to give up tenure status” in their current jobs, Portch said in an email. “It helped provide assurances to potential candidates that should their presidency end, there would be a reasonable transition.”

Presidents or chancellors who left the University System for other jobs — with no transition period — were not allowed to receive the payments.

The policy has since been changed to give the chancellor more discretion over who gets paid what, and for what reason.

While the promise of some post-retirement income seemed like a good perk to help attract talent, lawmakers question the practice in an era when they have had to slash the state budget by more than \$3 billion because of falling tax collections during an economic downturn.

“Wow. This is something we are going to have to take a look at,” said Rep. Earl Ehrhart, R-Powder Springs, chairman of the House higher education budget subcommittee.

Hembree called the ex-presidents’ payments “part of a good ol’ boy system to pay them and provide for them, when our goal should be to educate students.”

System officials said Portch has done a lot for the system since retiring as chancellor.

He was initially paid under the 90/60 policy as an adviser, although he spread the payments out over several years.

## Portch ‘extremely valuable’

Then, about five years ago, the regents gave him a contract to remain with the system as a part-time consultant. He remained eligible for state health insurance coverage.

System staffers said Portch, who lives in Alabama, provided policy advice to his successors and other regents staff; helped in the search and selection of top staffers; conducted retreats for the current chancellor, Erroll Davis, and his staff; and helped to investigate problems on one of the campuses and provide counseling.

"I think he has been extremely valuable," Davis said.

Davis, who ends his tenure as chancellor June 30, had reservations about the 90/60 ex-presidents' pay policy after he joined the system.

"I felt like it looked like an entitlement to me, and I don't particularly care for entitlements," he said.

**So the policy was changed in 2007 to give the chancellor more freedom to decide who received what.**

Davis, who earned about \$534,000 last year, notes that he has not accepted any raises since he took over and that he will not receive money from the state after he retires. He got a \$125,000 bonus in February for staying beyond his five-year agreement with the Board of Regents. But he won't get ex-chancellor payments, like Porch.

"I simply didn't take this job for the money," he said. "When I leave here, I will have nothing that follows me ... not one penny will I be getting from the system."

Find this article at:

<http://www.ajc.com/news/georgia-politics-elections/university-system-execs-retire-957564.html>

May 15, 2011

## Paying big shots long after they're gone

● **How we got the story:** Staff writer James Salzer filed an open records request with the University System for all post-retirement state payments to former chancellors and college presidents during the past decade. He also reviewed a decade of state Department of Audits reports to piece together payments to former chancellors and presidents. Salzer found that former Chancellor Stephen Portch collected \$823,000 for nine years after he retired from the system; among others, a former Georgia State president got more than \$365,000 the year after he left, and a former Albany State president got

May 15, 2011

# The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Credible. Compelling. Complete.

AJC Investigation: Watching your tax dollars

Chancellor's pay

U.S. oil drilling

University System

State House

Legislature

State House

State House

## Ex-college chiefs stay paid

more than \$197,000 for two years after retiring.

● **Impact:** Notified of the payments, state Rep. Bill Hembree said they illustrated the reason there is a rift between the University System and the Legislature. "As a taxpayer and a member of the General Assembly, I am outraged," Hembree said.



## College tuition hikes get support from strapped lawmakers

10:27 am February 24, 2010, by Aaron Gould Sheinin (*in part below*):

**Still, (Chancellor) Davis could not immediately answer some questions, such as when \*Rep. Austin Scott (R-Tifton) asked how many employees of the system have total compensation packages of more than \$500,000.**

\*NOTE: Former Rep. Austin Scott is now a US Congressman and former Chancellor Erroll Davis is now the Superintendent of the Atlanta Public Schools and overseeing the public scandal with alleged teacher cheating; yet, Erroll Davis ignored ethical and fiscal violations by top officials in our state's higher education system.



## Study: Recession hasn't cut college president salaries

By [Laura Diamond](#) 5:37 p.m. Monday, April 4, 2011

### The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

At a time when public colleges have increased tuition and reduced services, presidents in Georgia and nationwide continued to be well paid, according to a survey from The Chronicle of Higher Education.

Compensation packages held steady during the 2009-10 academic year even though state funding to college budgets was cut because of the recession, the report found.

G.P. "Bud" Peterson from Georgia Tech was the highest paid president in the University System of Georgia, according to the Chronicle. He received \$644,120, which included base pay, deferred compensation and money toward retirement. University of Georgia President Michael Adams followed at \$611,017.

The median total compensation for 185 presidents running the country's largest public research universities was \$440,487. About one-third earned more than \$500,000 and the 10 highest earned more than \$725,000 each. Ohio State University President E. Gordon Gee received \$1.8 million, the highest.

The report used new methodology and the data can't be compared with previous years.

While presidents earned these salaries, students worked extra jobs to afford tuition, said Hira Mahmood, who attends Georgia State University. Tuition increased by 25 percent during the year of the report.

"We're feeling the budget cuts but it doesn't seem like they are," said Mahmood, a member of the activist group Georgia Students for Public Higher Education. "Frankly we're all very angry and upset. These compensation packages show we run public universities like a business instead of a college."

Rep. Ed Rynders, R-Albany, said the free market should determine salaries, adding some wonder if baseball players should earn millions.

"That being said, I do believe the University System of Georgia needs to be as frugal and efficient as any other agency," said Rynders, who introduced House Resolution 383, which would prohibit the system from increasing tuition and fees at rates that exceed inflation without approval from lawmakers.

University system spokesman John Millsaps said he understands the concern over salaries but said the issue is one of supply and demand because there is a small pool of people who have the talent to run these colleges. Colleges cited in the study deferred all questions to Millsaps.

"You could find someone to do the job for a lot less money, but the person you would get would not be the person you really want for the job," he said.

College presidents are eligible for the same merit increase as any other university system employee, Millsaps said, adding there were none the year of the report.

The survey's time period covered the minimum of six furlough days the university system required from employees. Mark Becker, president of Georgia State, took 12 that year. His total compensation package was \$530,412, according to the report.

### **President Salaries**

The Chronicle for Higher Education surveyed how much presidents of public research colleges earned during the 2009-10 year, including salary, deferred compensation, money toward retirement and provisions such as housing and car allowances. Here are Georgia's presidents:

College ... President ... Compensation package

Georgia Tech ... G.P. "Bud" Peterson ... \$644,120

Georgia Southern ... Brooks Keel\* ... \$216,003\*

Georgia State ... Mark Becker ... \$530,412

University of Georgia ... Michael Adams ... \$611,017

Source: The Chronicle for Higher Education, data for 2009-10 academic year.  
*started in January, 2010.*

\* Keel

Find this article at: <http://www.ajc.com/news/study-recession-hasnt-cut-898135.html>

## Regent sold \$76 million in cars to state — \$9.8 million to universities

April 3, 2009 -



Car dealer Allan Vigil (**right**) has sold \$9.8 million of cars and trucks to the University System of Georgia, which he oversees as a member of the state Board of Regents, since 2002.

That figure represents just a fraction of his dealerships' \$76 million in sales to state agencies in the past seven years, according to a [recent disclosure](#) filed with the Georgia Secretary of State.

Georgia law [requires](#) state officials to report every business transaction with a state agency once a year. Violators could be fined up to \$10,000 and removed from office.

Since his appointment to the board, Vigil has disclosed that his dealerships sell cars to the state, but only once reported the dollar amount – \$9.2 million in 2003.

For 2007, Vigil's disclosure reported sales to the state as "\$0.00." In fact, Vigil sold \$8.5 million in cars to various state agencies that year, according to his disclosure. Vigil filed his amended disclosures on Jan. 20, about two weeks after The Atlanta Journal-Constitution [reported](#) on some of the undisclosed sales. A computer analysis by the AJC showed state colleges and universities paid Vigil's businesses at least \$869,000 in 2007.

In the cover letter filed with the Secretary of State, Vigil said he believes the transactions are exempt from disclosure because the sales were the result of sealed, competitive bidding. In fact, no transactions are exempt from disclosure. Georgia law says a state employee cannot do business with his own agency unless he submits a sealed bid.

Vigil served as chairman of the Board of Regents from 2006 through 2008. His disclosure shows that his dealerships' car sales to other state agencies fell sharply in those years. But the dealership's sales to the University System nearly doubled from 2006 to 2007, and rose again slightly in 2008, according to his disclosure.

<http://www.atlantaunfiltered.com/2009/04/03/regent-sold-76-million-in-cars-to-state-9-8-million-to-universities/>

SATURDAY, AUGUST 15, 2009 ♦ 7A

## UNIVERSITY

From page 4A

tions whose primary purpose is to raise funds for scholarships and direct betterment of the students?

This is only one nightmare that Georgians are sleeping through.

And it's not just the government who is playing the game of cover-up. In an effort to bring attention to this matter and get citizens to stand against corruption in the University System, emails have been sent to media outlets across the state. However, none of the media has seen fit to answer the emails or print an investigative article addressing issues of "golden parachutes" . . . and punitive action taken against anyone who questions the status quo.

Could it be that the University System of Georgia and its institutions of higher education are too valuable to the media as advertisers? Has money become more important than integrity?

The code of ethics of journalism states, "*The duty of the journalist is to [enlighten the public] by seeking truth and providing a fair and comprehensive account of events and issues.*"

By not covering this story, media outlets are ruining their credibility as a member of the fourth estate, watchdogs for the masses.

Since Gov. Perdue seems intent on letting the University System of Georgia govern itself, and since the media appears not to want to bite the hand that feeds them, it's up to the citizens of Georgia to take a stand.

Those government monsters doling out presidential bonuses guised as salary and the media goblins unwilling to reveal questionable practices of the University System of Georgia are real and they are harming our children.

While education funds are cut, college students are asked to pay higher activity fees for fewer services, and public teachers are man-

dated furloughs, how can our legislators and governor justify bonus parachutes equaling approximately 10 years salary of middle-class Georgia taxpayers to the presidents of the University System of Georgia (which are NOT disclosed to the public appropriately)?

Put an end to the nightmares today. Contact Gov. Perdue and let him know that we won't put up with cover-ups and bonuses that rival the national AIG mess.

Jenny Murr, Byron



**Recent Facebook Posts on *Common Cause Georgia* (Ethics & Fiscal Watchdog Group near the Capitol) and *C.H.A.R.G.E.* (Citizens Helping America Restore Government Ethics):**



- [C.H.A.R.G.E.](#)

What are your thoughts on the choice for interim superintendent for APS, Erroll Davis?. The former Chancellor of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia as reported to C.H.A.R.G.E. will be addressing serious ethical and fiscal violations by our state's higher education system in an upcoming Georgia Whistleblower case while he was in "charge."



**Susan Dupree Mincey, K-12 National Board Certified Teacher**

In regards to Erroll Davis, Chancellor of the Board of Regents being put in the position of Superintendent of Atlanta Schools, I thought we already knew about the outlandish behavior of the Board of Regents not serving the real concerns of our college professors and giving hundreds of thousands of dollars in BONUSES to college presidents for excessive luxuries while we K-12 National Board Certified Teachers lost our hard-earned stipend. Why would we want to elect/hire the same people to run any state entity? We can't fix any problem by continuing the same behavior.



**[Susan DuPree Mincey](#) (K-12 National Board Certified Teacher)**

I'd be grateful if you help our state budget take care of things such as lost stipend to teachers who spent a lot of money and hours earning National Board Certification. I lost \$5000+ earnings a year for 7 years as a NBCT whose contract with Georgia was broken. Sad state of affairs when college presidents walk off with hundreds of thousands of dollars in BONUSES to pay for vacation homes, fancy cars, and trips while National Board Certified Teachers struggle to put groceries on the table as they look after the education and well being at school of the children of this state. **See Whistle Blower Case of Denise Caldon who was assistant to the president at Macon State College for further insight. She is a patriot whose desire to restore ethics in our government is costing her her life savings but she is willing to do it for the benefit of all.** Thank you C.H.A.R.G.E. for taking a stand in her defense. Susan Mincey, National Board Certified Teacher

- [C.H.A.R.G.E.](#)
- Susan, [C.H.A.R.G.E.](#) is pleased and proud to support anyone who tries to expose unethical practices, corruption, or uncivilized behavior. *We applaud Ms. Caldon for her steadfast commitment to bringing forth the facts of this case against the Ga. Board of Regents.* We appreciate her courage and hope it will be a beacon for any others who feel they have sufficient proof of anything unethical. The public and the media have a right to full disclosure of any and all facts that are not bound by any legal restraint. And thank you so much for adding your own unique perspective as regards the facts of this case. We wish you a wonderful holiday weekend!



**Bill Shipp:**

## Try to find book on Adams-Dooley fiasco - A Tale Worth Remembering

Athens Banner-Herald | Story updated at 6:58 pm on 4/7/2009

**IMPORTANT NOTE: You can click on the arrow and read excerpts from the book:**

Click on: [http://www.amazon.com/Behind-Hedges-Politics-University-Georgia/dp/1588382060#reader\\_1588382060](http://www.amazon.com/Behind-Hedges-Politics-University-Georgia/dp/1588382060#reader_1588382060)

Richard Whitt, 64, a reporter at The Atlanta Journal-Constitution for 17 years and a Pulitzer Prize winner for the Louisville Courier-Journal, *keeled over one day in January and died of a massive heart attack*. The AJC didn't even bother to run an obituary. The Courier-Journal said Whitt had been one of the best investigative reporters around.

***Ironically, Whitt died just as a book he had authored hit the store shelves.*** The volume, "*Behind the Hedges: Big Money and Power Politics at the University of Georgia*," *sank from sight almost as soon as it was published*. In a brief mention, the AJC termed the volume a rehash of old episodes.

Rehash or not, "**Behind the Hedges**," a story of wheeling and dealing and plain misconduct at UGA, has all but vanished from the stores and mail-order houses. You'd think someone systematically bought out the book before it could be circulated. Old-timers still remember the strange disappearance of Herman Talmadge's tome, "Segregation and You," that occurred when he ran for his first re-election bid as a U.S. senator in a recently desegregated state. Vanishing books are not new to Georgia. Too bad Whitt died before he could promote his work. He might have had a bestseller on his hands, though he is a bit harsh on UGA President Mike Adams.

Whitt's campus tale contains something for everybody: juicy sex, multimillion-dollar prescription drug deals, Wall Street-level compensation packages and a giant but mistreated hero by the name of Vince Dooley. As you may recall, Adams forced the popular and successful Dooley into retirement as head sports guy at UGA in what must be one of the most ill-conceived personnel moves since Truman fired MacArthur. Dooley's loyal followers, including a majority of the UGA Foundation's board of trustees, were outraged. You could get favorable odds that Adams was a goner as president. (over)

Didn't happen, and therein lies Whitt's tale. We can't do "Behind the Hedges" justice in this space, but here is a sampler that may whet your appetite to read it - if you can find it.

► Senior management at UGA was highly critical of an unfavorable outside audit of Adams' expenses. There may have been good reasons for standing by Adams: According to state records, University Provost Arnett Mace was paid \$322,800 in 2008, up \$13,500 from his 2007 salary.

Vice President Tom Landrum received a 22 percent raise of \$41,000 - from \$193,550 in 2007 to \$235,360 in 2008. This is just the beginning. Executive salaries were jumping while student tuition was skyrocketing and employee layoffs were threatened.

► While university officials stood in the bank teller's line with their cash satchels, Gov. Sonny Perdue stepped in and ran off University System Chancellor Tom Meredith. According to Whitt, "One former regent said the board (of regents) no longer functions independently as required by law. It's run by the governor."

► A flamboyant and wealthy member of the University System Board of Regents, Don Leebern, a once-loyal patron of the Democratic Party, suddenly kicked in \$200,000 to the Georgia Republican Party. Whitt wrote, "*Maybe that was all it took for Perdue, the champion of morality and 'principle-centered' government, to discover that Don Leebern, beneath the bellicosity and the taste for high living and open adultery, was an acceptable member of the (Board of Regents).*"

Leebern also was a close friend of former Gov. Roy Barnes, who said of the businessman's retention as a regent: "*I'm loyal to my friends. But I would have dropkicked Don. I'd have brought him in and said, 'Don, you're a friend, but you're radioactive.'*" There is so much more torrid stuff here that an examination might have been performed on Whitt to verify his cause of death. Whitt strikes a thousand sore spots and reignites hatreds that were only beginning to cool. Sure, a lot of this is old stuff, but the real devilment is in the newly discovered details. The book contains several lessons that might be of use to the next chancellor - or maybe not. Mike Adams is said to be the No. 1 candidate for university system chancellor when current chancellor Erroll Davis' tenure ends, reportedly in the near future.

• Reach Bill Shipp at P.O. Box 2520, Kennesaw, GA 30156, e-mail [shipp1 @bellsouth.net](mailto:shipp1@bellsouth.net) or visit the Web site [billshipponline.com](http://billshipponline.com).

Originally published in the Athens Banner-Herald on Wednesday, April 08, 2009

## **FBI team takes aim at corruption**

**BY GREG BLUESTEIN Posted on Mon, Aug. 22, 2011**

ATLANTA -- ***The FBI has assembled a new squad to investigate corruption among judges and legislators in Georgia***, though the top federal agent in the state is being tightlipped about what cases are developing.

Brian Lamkin, who heads the FBI office in Georgia, told The Associated Press he decided to form the team after months of reviews and a look at the bureau's long-term priorities.

Georgia's FBI office has long used a single squad that handled the brunt of corruption cases, from law enforcement officials to government officials. But Lamkin set up a special team to look into wrongdoing by police and other law enforcement officers and landed a string of recent

corruption charges. That team will still check out officers, while the second new corruption squad will have a different goal, he said.

“It impacts the everyday system. It’s not just a dirty law enforcement officer that might be shaking you down,” he said. “**You’re talking about people that you elect to an office to represent you who try to line their pockets.**” Lamkin will personally sign off on the investigations before they go forward, and high-profile cases will be approved by FBI officials in Washington, he said.

“The reason is a corruption investigation can ruin reputations,” he said. “These are not quick hits. We will use sophisticated techniques and undercover operations to really go after these. That’s why the individuals that work these have to be patient.”

Lamkin wouldn’t say how large the team is, but he said he’s assigned about 40 percent of the staff in the bureau’s white-collar crimes unit to the mission.

The move was welcomed by government officials, who believed state and local funding cuts during the last few years have eroded other investigations.

“I just appreciate it. One of the frustrations you hear is that with the state budget cuts, you don’t have the resources to hire more investigators,” said state Rep. Joe Wilkinson, who chairs the House Ethics Committee. “This brings another much-needed level of scrutiny to the system.”

Fulton County Sheriff Ted Jackson, who has asked the FBI to investigate deputies at the Fulton County Jail for wrongdoing, applauded the new oversight.

That probe led to charges in June against four guards accused of smuggling drugs and cell phones into the jail.

“The FBI has been working with us to rid this agency of corruption and investigate other crimes involving civil rights,” said Jackson, a former FBI agent himself. “This effort is beneficial to the public by rooting out corrupt activity, which costs taxpayers.”

The new squad was formed as rounds of budget cuts have depleted key state investigative agencies. The Judicial Qualifications Commission nearly ran out of money to investigate judicial misconduct in December, but state lawmakers gave it a financial boost this year.

The agency has forced several judges to resign, and recently recommended that a north Georgia judge be ousted from the bench after concluding that he pointed a gun at himself in the courtroom and berated his boss in a bizarre televised rant.

And the Georgia Ethics Commission, which investigates finance complaints and registers lobbyists, has been rocked by deep funding cuts even as it takes on more duties. **The commission’s director resigned after a dispute over the agency’s budget and the status of several cases involving Gov. Nathan Deal.** \* And it went from fielding three investigators in 2008 to none now, said William Perry, the director of Common Cause Georgia.

“Our state is cutting back on monitoring elected officials and their ethical behavior, so we welcome the fact that the federal government is stepping up,” he said.

<http://www.macon.com/2011/08/22/1673295/fbi-team-takes-aim-at-corruption.html>

**\*Note: State's Attorney General Sam Olens and his staff – attorneys for the Board of Regents - were recently appointed the attorneys for the new State Ethics Commission Director – a major CONFLICT OF INTEREST. Sam Olens and his office have filed two “Responses in Opposition” (11 August 2011 and 2 February 2012) to the two Motions (3 Aug 2011 and 30 Jan 2012) filed in Fulton County Superior Court which prevent the Protective Order from being lifted that would have allowed the media and public to finally read the confirmed ethical and fiscal violations by Attorney General Sam Olens' defendants – the Board of Regents of the USG. One violation of many confirms that no appeals by any USG faculty, staff or student are actually read by the members of the BOR's Organization and Law Committee as they are told is part of their legal due process.**

**OPEN RECORD DEPOSITION FACT:** ALL USG employees and students from thirty five public higher education institutions are asked to submit an *Application for Review* for their **Legal Due Process** and appeal following their termination or expulsion. Regent Doreen Poitevint, Vice Chair of the BOR Organization and Law Committee, is on legal record in her Deposition that *Applications for Reviews* from USG employees and students from thirty-five public institutions are **not read** by the members of the Committee as the USG employees and students are purposely made to believe.

**Deposition of Regent Doreen Stiles Poitevint dated 8 February 2010, Page 11:**

**Q:** *“Is there a review of any documents or evidence by the Board of Regents?”*

**A:** **“Do you mean physical documents?”**

**Q:** *“Yes, Ma'am.*

**A:** **“No.”**

**Q:** *“Do the Regents review the applications for review that are submitted by the employees?”*

**A:** **“No.”**

**Q:** *“Why not?”*

**A:** **“I think just like I said time restraints.”**

Links to other articles of interest are below. There are many more.

<http://thekennesawwatch.com/lets-talk-whistleblower-for-a-minute/#comment-39>

<http://www.ajc.com/news/georgia-politics-elections/despite-budget-cuts-three-976909.html>

<http://www.ajc.com/news/georgia-politics-elections/university-system-execs-retire-957564.html>

<http://www.ajc.com/news/study-recession-hasnt-cut-898135.html>

<http://www.atlantaunfiltered.com/2009/04/03/regent-sold-76-million-in-cars-to-state-9-8-million-to-universities/>

[http://www.amazon.com/Behind-Hedges-Politics-University-Georgia/dp/1588382060#reader\\_1588382060](http://www.amazon.com/Behind-Hedges-Politics-University-Georgia/dp/1588382060#reader_1588382060)

<http://www.atlantaunfiltered.com/2011/08/03/ag-collected-696k-from-donors-regulated-by-ethics-panel/>