

Q&A with Representative Doug Collins

by Todd Smith, Steve Gordon, & Jesse Weathington | Feb 15, 2018 | News | 0 comments



Inside Democracy: From the Peach State to the Potomac

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In this edition of *Inside Democracy: From the Peach State to the Potomac*, we highlight Congressman Doug Collins, who represents the Ninth Congressional District of Georgia, located in the northeast part of the state. He has served in Congress since 2013 and is Vice Chairman of the House Republican Conference.

Q: How does your work on intellectual property rights impact Georgia's economy?

A: Intellectual property represents a critical and growing part of Georgia's economy, and protecting intellectual property rights is essential for strengthening our economic future. Our state ranks in the top five states for software publishers and is home to more than 200 health information technology companies. From video game development and credit card processing to film production and music scenes in Atlanta, Athens and beyond, industries based on intellectual property provide jobs throughout Georgia.

Congress has a Constitutional duty to make sure that U.S. laws and federal agencies like the Copyright Office and Patent and Trademark Office are guarding the property rights of Americans. I serve on the House Judiciary Committee and am vice chairman of the subcommittee that has jurisdiction over intellectual property issues. To that end, I have worked with my colleagues on the Judiciary Committee on initiatives like the Defend Trade Secrets Act, which became law in 2016 and created a federal remedy for the misappropriation of trade secrets.

This December, I also introduced the Music Modernization Act to update copyright policy and make the music landscape fairer for songwriters and other music industry stakeholders. Georgia is home to about 50,000 songwriters, and it's a privilege to be able to protect the intellectual property rights of Georgians who work in a spectrum of industries that contribute to the state's economy.

Q: What does your role on the House Republican leadership team mean for Georgia?

A: As Vice Chair of the House Republican Conference, I work with House leadership to advance smart, effective policy that serves Georgians. While advocating for tax reform that benefits businesses and individuals broadly, for example, I was also able to introduce the Facilitating Investments in Local Markets (FILM) Act to help bring film and television productions to communities across America. Georgia's own film industry supports jobs, fosters innovation and represents \$7 billion in revenue each year. Ultimately, the FILM Act became part of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act that President Trump signed into law last December.

Representing Georgia at the leadership table each week also allows me to share policy ideas that have

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Georgia's cotton industry is second in the U.S. only to Texas, so aid from the Price Loss Coverage program found in the new budget deal signed by President Donald Trump last Friday could be a big win. The move aids the state's cotton farmers, who have had a rough year between bad weather and pests. More help for Georgia's agriculture industry has its ship **RIISING...**



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demonstrated success in our communities, like prison reform. I introduced the Prison Reform and Redemption Act this Congress in order to increase public safety and better steward tax dollars by lowering recidivism rates. This bill would give offenders the opportunity to complete evidence-based programs that are shown to lower a person's likelihood of reoffending, giving them the resources they need to re-enter society as productive citizens. While fathers, mothers, sisters, and brothers are in federal custody, I believe we have the opportunity to help them take responsibility for their decisions and become agents of positive change in their own lives and in the lives of those around them.

Q: What are you doing to improve broadband access for rural Georgians?

A: While many Georgians may not realize it, many of their neighbors in northeast, southwest, and other corners of the state have seen their growth stalled by a lack of meaningful broadband access. More people each day are realizing that 21st century jobs, education, and economic success are tied to digital infrastructure. I was pleased to see President Trump's recent executive order directing federal resources to develop broadband infrastructure, and I've introduced the Gigabit Opportunity (GO) Act to increase broadband investment in rural America through smarter, simpler policies based on market competition.

The GO Act would allow companies to defer certain capital gains taxes when they convert those gains to long-term investments in broadband infrastructure within state-designated "Gigabit Opportunity Zones." While many rural and low-income areas lack access or are limited to a single provider, this bill would also encourage market competition by enabling companies expanding infrastructure in Gigabit Opportunity Zones to expense the cost of any gigabit-capable equipment on the front end. It dovetails with the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) plan to support government efforts to streamline broadband regulations and with the President's newly released vision for improving American infrastructure.

Q: How have you seen the recent tax reform plan benefit Georgia businesses and workers?

A: Congress worked with the White House to deliver relief to both individual filers and job creators through the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. While we're looking forward to workers' seeing extra money in their paychecks as federal tax withholding tables reflect the new tax code this month, we've already seen unprecedented benefits coming to workers from businesses who are updating their operations in light of lower corporate tax rates.

To date, well over three million Americans have received bonuses or other benefits from companies that are paying corporate tax relief forward. Large companies like Home Depot and Aflac employ Georgians, and so do smaller firms like Gainesville's Mincey Marble and Toccoa's CMC, which have both awarded bonuses of up to \$1,000 to their employees.

My neighbors are reporting that they're using that extra income to save for a daughter's schooling or for other future investments, and that's exactly what we want to see coming out of a tax overhaul—more money invested throughout our economy, fueling job creators, and giving individuals more momentum as they write their own American dreams.

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