

## Q&A with Representative Jody Hice

by Todd Smith, Steve Gordon, & Jesse Weathington | Mar 1, 2018 | The Forum | 0 comments



In this edition of *Inside Democracy: From the Peach State to the Potomac*, we highlight Congressman Jody Hice, who represents the Tenth Congressional District of Georgia, located southeast of Atlanta. He has served in Congress since 2015. Congressman Hice was recently appointed to the House Armed Services Committee, which is an important committee for Georgia. We recently asked Congressman Hice to visit with us and the *Inside Democracy* Readers.

### **How do you work to advance Georgia's priorities in Congress?**

As a new member of the House Armed Services Committee, or HASC, I'm looking forward to having a seat at the table when it comes to making decisions that affect Georgia's nine military installations and our nation as a whole. These bases are the lifeblood of their communities, with many bringing employment and opportunity to our rural areas. Our state is a hub for our Armed Forces, particularly developing facilities like the U.S. Army Cyber Center of Excellence at Fort Gordon in Augusta, which is a driving force in modernizing and strengthening our cyber operations and initiatives.

Cyber is one of the most hotly contested domains today, and I'm proud that the Augusta community is transforming itself into a cyber command center, with rich opportunities to partner with schools, private companies, and public institutions that help build and maintain cyber expertise in the area. For example, in January, Governor

Nathan Deal fast-tracked a \$35 million investment into the second phase of the Hull McKnight Georgia Cyber Center for Innovation and Training, a 165,000-square-foot facility in Augusta that will serve as an incubator for public-private partnerships and support small and medium-sized enterprises in our local communities as we work to develop our cyber workforce.

As our adversaries and competitors constantly look for new ways to find and exploit vulnerabilities, Georgia and, in particular, Fort Gordon are on the forefront of responding to this battlespace, both now and in the future. With my placement on the Emerging Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee on HASC, I will be delving deeper into the cyber missions conducted in our home state.

The Georgia delegation – in both Chambers and across the aisle – recognizes how important each and every one of our military installations is to our national security and to our local communities. As we start developing the FY'19 National Defense Authorization Act, I will be working closely with our colleagues to ensure that Georgia's military installations are fully equipped with the tools and resources needed to accomplish its goals.

**What are some important priorities for the state on the federal level this year?**

Maintaining Georgia's waterways is vital to keeping our state competitive in the global marketplace, and I'm hoping to see action being taken when it comes to the Savannah Harbor Expansion Project. Although there have long been commitments made to fully fund this vital project, it's been continually moved to the backburner.

America's infrastructure and waterways are the lifeline of the export and import trade that is key to our international competitiveness and job growth, while also generating billions of dollars in annual federal, state, and local tax revenue. SHEP, in particular, is the fastest-growing port in our nation and has the greatest return on investment of any project being overseen by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. SHEP offers immense opportunity to local businesses and the community at large, and I'm optimistic that this Administration will make it a priority as well.

Just a few weeks ago, Director of the Office of Management and Budget Mick Mulvaney testified before the Senate Budget Committee about his expectations for infrastructure reform in the coming months. Director Mulvaney specified that deep-water ports, and particularly programs that can contribute their own portion of the funding – like the Port of Savannah – are going to be high priorities.

I'm hopeful that we can maintain our water infrastructure, while being good stewards

of federal dollars.

### **How do you expect the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act to impact average Georgians?**

Already this year, we've seen massive growth stemming from the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, both nationwide and right here in Georgia. As a result of this historic bill, roughly half of the yearly income of the average Georgia family will now be tax-free, and the average family in the 10th District could receive a tax cut of up to \$2,000!

One testimonial I would like to share comes from Melissa in Monroe, Georgia. Melissa recently discovered that following the implementation of tax reform, her family is now receiving a monthly increase of \$184 in their paychecks. She remarked, "[T]hat is a big help in our tight financial situation at the moment, can't say how much we appreciate it. And Nancy Pelosi calls it crumbs, really?"

These are the significant savings that the American people deserve, and this is positive news for workers who have struggled to make ends meet in a weak economy. Tax reform is defying the skeptics, and it's not hard to figure out why: this law is keeping its promises to America's workers.

On the business side, CNBC reported last week that small business confidence is surging in 2018 as optimism rises among small business owners about the newly enacted tax reform package. This is great news, because it means more jobs and greater opportunities for Georgians. Without a doubt, Main Street businesses are the engine of our economy, and I'm glad that we have been able to provide a win for our job creators.

Jennifer Rainey, the Director of Business Development at Harmony Crossing at Lake Oconee in Greensboro, reported that there are "a lot of smiles from [small business owners] regarding the tax reform." In the last eight weeks, we have tracked nearly 400 companies that have handed out employee bonuses in the ballpark of \$3 billion, including Georgia-based companies like Aflac, Home Depot, and SunTrust. This doesn't end with bonuses, however, with many, many more companies announcing boosted wages and better benefits increases for 401(k) retirement plans.

To put it simply, tax reform is working.

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