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**Georgia House Speaker Jon Burns, R-Newington, announces plans for an increased state income tax deduction for children, Wednesday, Jan. 24, 2024, at the state Capitol in**

## House Speaker backs additional tax cut aimed at Ga. parents

By **JEFF AMY**  
Associated Press

ATLANTA — Georgia House Republicans are proposing an additional tax cut for parents.

House Speaker Jon Burns on Wednesday said his GOP caucus will back a plan to raise the amount that parents can deduct per child from their yearly state income taxes to \$4,000 from the current \$3,000. With Georgia's income tax rate currently at 5.49%, that works out to as much as \$55 more per child, or about \$150 million statewide.

"While rising child care costs are here with us every day, we're hoping this extra \$1,000 deduction per child will help alleviate some of those costs for the parents," Burns, of Newington, told reporters at a news conference.

The new tax cut proposal comes as Burns and the other 235 representatives and senators face reelection later this year.

The speaker also reiterated his earlier proposal to increase the state homestead exemption from \$2,000 to \$4,000. That amount could save homeowners nearly \$100 million statewide, according to projections. Senators have countered with a plan that would cap the rate at which assessed property values could rise for tax purposes, which could limit future property tax increases.

Voters statewide would have to approve the increased exemption in a November referendum if the measure passes.

Burns is also backing a plan announced by Republican Gov. Brian Kemp in December to speed up an already-planned cut in the state income tax rate. As of Jan. 1, Georgia has a flat income tax rate of 5.49%, passed under a 2022 law that transitioned away from a

series of income brackets that topped out at 5.75%.

The income tax rate is supposed to drop 0.1% a year until reaching 4.99%, if state revenues hold up. The plan announced in December would retroactively drop the rate to 5.39% as of Jan. 1. The total change is projected to cost the state \$1.1 billion in foregone revenue, including an extra \$300 million for the cut from 5.49% to 5.39%.

Burns also unveiled a plan to move all of Georgia's unallocated surplus cash into its rainy day account, a bill also being pushed by Kemp. Georgia had \$10.7 billion in unallocated surplus at the end of the last budget year, in addition to a rainy day fund filled to the legal limit of \$5.4 billion, or 15% of the prior year's tax revenue.

Burns said the move would "allow the state to save responsibly, build our reserves, and provide more taxpayer relief to Georgia families both in the short term and the long term when our financial situation may not be as strong."

It's unclear what the practical effect of putting all the surplus cash into the rainy day fund would be. Lawmakers can only spend up to the amount Kemp allows, whether from the rainy day fund, the unallocated surplus, or regular revenue.

However, it could reduce political pressure to spend the unallocated surplus, a move Kemp has mostly resisted before allocating \$2 billion of it for spending in his current budget proposal. Democrats have attacked the surplus, saying the state is piling up cash while ignoring critical needs.

"We're starting this year with a \$16 billion surplus, \$11 billion in unallocated funds," Democratic Sen. Nabilah Islam Parkes of Lawrenceville said at a news conference last week.

## Obituaries

### Mr. Henry Jones

retired

*Craig R. Tremble Funeral Homes, Inc., Pembroke Chapel*

"Earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot heal."

Mr. Henry Jones, age 97, of Pembroke, Ga., passed peacefully away on Friday morning, January 19, 2024, at St. Joseph's Hospital in Savannah, Ga.

He was a native of Bryan County and retired from the Department of Transportation with the highway department.

Mr. Henry was a member of Mill Creek Baptist Church in Ellabell, Ga.

He enjoyed gardening and doing mechanic work and was a man of style (sharp dresser).

He is survived by his niece, who was also his caretaker, Rose (James) Jackson; and a host of other nieces, nephews, cousins, relatives and friends.

A walk-through viewing will be held on Friday, January 26, 2024, from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m. at Craig R. Tremble Funeral Home Chapel, Pembroke, Ga.

The celebration of life service will be held on Saturday, January 27, 2024, at 11 a.m. at Mill Creek Baptist Church, 327 Mill Creek Church Road, Ellabell, GA 31308, with the Rev. Earl Harmon, pastor/eulogist. Interment will be in the church cemetery.

The service will be live-streamed.

We will adhere to CDC guidelines.

Friends may sign the online register book at [www.craigrtremblefuneralhome.com](http://www.craigrtremblefuneralhome.com).

Celebration of life services have been entrusted to the care of Craig R. Tremble Funeral Homes, Inc., Pembroke Chapel, 66 Ledford Street, Pembroke, GA 31321.



Henry Jones

*Statesboro Herald, January 25, 2024*

*Sign the Legacy online guestbook at [www.statesboroherald.com](http://www.statesboroherald.com).*

## State brief

The Associated Press

### Ga. port awarded \$15M federal grant for new docks, terminal upgrades

SAVANNAH — One of Georgia's busy seaports is being awarded a \$15 million federal grant to help pay for new docks and other upgrades at one of its shipping terminals, the state's U.S. senators announced Wednesday.

The Port of Brunswick, about 70 miles south of Savannah, will receive the funding through a U.S. Department of Transportation grant funded by the 2021 bipartisan infrastructure law, Democratic Sens. Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock said.

Ossoff called the funding "a big win for coastal Georgia" and the state's economy overall, noting Brunswick's rapid growth as a U.S. hub for imports and exports of automobiles. He also told reporters the infrastructure law's bipartisan backing shows that lawmakers from rival parties can still work together.

"This is an investment in

Georgia that is the fruit of cooperation between Democrats and Republicans," Ossoff told an online news conference Tuesday.

In addition to automobiles and heavy machinery, Brunswick also handles bulk cargo such as agricultural goods, paper and rubber. The infrastructure grant will fund improvements to the port's East River Terminal, where bulk goods get loaded and unloaded from ships.

The project includes building a new 540-foot dock after demolishing the old one, as well as replacing half of a second dock on the site. The federal money will also help pay to install new electrical and water systems at the terminal and to dredge one berth to add depth for docking ships.

In a statement, Warnock said the port project will "ease vessel traffic and the flow of commerce at a major economic hub for our state."

The federal grant is expected to cover roughly half of the total cost of the terminal improvements, which the Georgia Ports Authority hopes to finish by 2027.

### Esther Mae Melvin

*Craig R. Tremble Funeral Homes, Inc., Statesboro Chapel*

Esther Mae Melvin was born in Statesboro, Ga., to the late Sherman Melvin Sr. and Ellen Jones Melvin on December 9, 1956. She peacefully departed her life on earth on the morning of Saturday, January 20, 2024.

Esther first came to know Christ at an early age and later rededicated herself back to that relationship with Christ by joining the Abundant Life Fellowship Center in Albany, Ga.

She was a 1976 graduate of Southeast Bulloch High School and continued her education at Albany Technical College.

Esther's professional career consisted of 20-plus years in the restaurant industry in Albany, Ga., as well as a certified medical professional and caregiver while living in San Antonio, Texas.

She loved sports, both watching them and playing them. In fact, she played softball even in her 30s as shortstop. She was also a cheerleader in high school at Southeast Bulloch.

Of all of her life's experiences and accomplishments, the greatest of them were her children and her grandchildren.

Esther leaves to cherish her memory: three sons, James Melvin of San Antonio, Texas; Micah T. Melvin of Atlanta, Ga.; and Alonzo (Angela) Chattmon of Albany, Ga.; nine grandchildren, four siblings, Sherman Melvin Jr. of Statesboro, Ga.; Min. Ronnie Melvin of Augusta, Ga.; Bishop Tommy Melvin of Claxton, Ga.; and Frankie Melvin of Statesboro, Ga.; and a host of great-grands, nieces, nephews, cousins, other family and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Sherman Sr. and Ellen Jones Melvin; and her siblings, Samuel Jones, Mary Alice Melvin, Freddie Melvin, Andrew "AJ" Melvin, Emma Jean Melvin and Pauline "Penny" Melvin.

A walk-through viewing and celebration of life service will be held on Sunday, January 28, 2024. Viewing will begin at 1 p.m., followed by the celebration of life service at 2 p.m. at Craig R. Tremble Funeral Home Chapel, 238 West Main Street, Statesboro, GA 30458. Interment will be at the Friendship Baptist Church Cemetery, Mud Road.

We will adhere to CDC guidelines.

Friends may sign the online register book at [www.craigrtremblefuneralhome.com](http://www.craigrtremblefuneralhome.com).

Celebration of Life services have been entrusted to the care of Craig R. Tremble Funeral Homes, Inc., Statesboro Chapel, 238 West Main Street, Statesboro, GA 30458.

*Statesboro Herald, January 25, 2024*

*Sign the Legacy online guestbook at [www.statesboroherald.com](http://www.statesboroherald.com).*

### George F. Carter III

*Joiner-Anderson Funeral Home & Crematory*

STATESBORO, Ga. — It is with deep sadness that we announce the passing of our beloved brother, George F. Carter III, who passed away unexpectedly at home on January 18, 2024, almost two weeks after his 42nd birthday.

Born in Savannah, Ga., on January 6th, 1982, to George F. Carter Jr. and Cheryl Ann Hancock, both of whom preceded him in death.

Frank is survived by four sisters, Rebecca Swindol (Terry) of Clayton, N.C.; Frankie Sizemore (Jimmy) of Evans, Ga.; Jackie Carter of Statesboro, Ga.; and Amanda Hall (Corey) of Guyton, Ga.; and one brother, Brian Carter (Kimberly) of Colbert, Ga.

George went by several names in his lifetime. Frank, Little Frank and Frank the Tank were just a few, but the one he was most proud of was Uncle Franko.

His three nieces, Sarah and Emily Carter of Colbert, Ga.; and Grace Hall of Guyton, Ga., meant the world to him.

Franko was a light-hearted old soul who enjoyed making people feel loved.

His favorite things were his cat, Fitz; fishing, cooking, tending to his plants, watching golf — the Masters tournament being a huge part of his life and favorite — and all Georgia Southern sports.

In the fall if he was home, you would find him outside of his apartment waving to the Georgia Southern football team as they rode by in the school buses in route to a home game.

When he was younger, he loved nothing more than hanging out with a few good friends or catching a football game under the lights on a Friday night. As he grew older, he enjoyed spending time fishing with just about anyone who wanted to go or sharing a meal he prepared.

In 2000, after graduating from Beach High School in Savannah, Ga., Frank moved to the Statesboro area, where he held several construction and restaurant jobs. At the time of his death, he was working at WL Plastics, but a huge part of his professional life, he was a cook at Shane's Rib Shack, where he called many of his co-workers there friend.

Frank was a son, brother, grandson, nephew, uncle, cousin and friend. He will be deeply missed by all who knew him.

Rest in peace, Franko. You will be forever in our hearts.

The family will receive visitors on Friday, January 26, 2024, from 11 a.m. until the funeral hour.

The funeral service will follow the visitation in the chapel of Joiner-Anderson Funeral Home in Statesboro with Pastor Justin Click officiating. The graveside service and burial will be Friday at 3 p.m. at West View Cemetery in Wrightsville, Georgia.

Pallbearers will be Jimmy Sizemore, Rob Stavely, Corey Hall, Nathan Field, Christopher Stracuzza and Brandon Davis.

The family requests, in lieu of flowers, that a tree be planted in Frank's memory at [www.plantatree.fs.usda.gov](http://www.plantatree.fs.usda.gov).

Friends may sign the online register book at [www.joineranderson.com](http://www.joineranderson.com).

Joiner-Anderson Funeral Home & Crematory of Statesboro is in charge of the arrangements.

*Statesboro Herald, January 25, 2024*

*Sign the Legacy online guestbook at [www.statesboroherald.com](http://www.statesboroherald.com).*



Esther Mae Melvin



George F. Carter III

## Bulloch County Republican Party Precinct Caucuses

On Saturday, February 24, 2024, at 10:00 a.m., the Bulloch County Republican Party will convene Precinct Caucuses to elect Delegates and Alternates to the Bulloch County Republican Party Convention.

All Bulloch County residents who are legally registered to vote in Bulloch County and believe in the principles of the Republican Party are urged to participate in this process.

Registration will open at 9:00 a.m. on February 24, 2024, at the Honey Bowen Building located at 1 Max Lockwood Dr, Statesboro, GA 30458. All persons must be in line by 10:00 a.m. to register. No one arriving after 10:00 a.m. will be allowed to register. A government-issued photo ID will be required to register.

The Bulloch County Republican Party Convention will convene at 10:00 a.m. on March 23, 2024, at the Honey Bowen Building located at 1 Max Lockwood Dr, Statesboro, GA 30458, to elect Delegates and Alternates to the 12th Congressional District Convention and the Georgia Republican Party State Convention. Additionally, the Convention will conduct all other business as necessary. Delegates and Alternates will be required to pay a fee of \$10, which is to cover the cost of the County Convention. Registration will open at 9 a.m. All persons must be in line by 10:00 a.m. to register. No one arriving after 10:00 a.m. will be allowed to register. A government-issued photo ID will be required to register.

The deadline for any and all business to come before the County Convention will be at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, March 9, 2024. For full details, please visit [BullochGOP.org/convention](http://BullochGOP.org/convention)

The 12th Congressional District Convention will convene at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 20, 2024, at Aldersgate United Methodist Church located at 3185 Wheeler Rd, Augusta, GA 30909. The District Convention will elect three (3) Delegates and three (3) Alternates to the 2024 National Convention and conduct all other business as necessary. Delegates and Alternates will be required to pay a fee, which is to cover the cost of the Convention.

The Georgia Republican Party State Convention will convene at 2:00 p.m. on May 17, 2024, in Columbus, Georgia, and will elect At-Large Delegates and Alternates to the National Convention, elect a National Committeeman and a National Committeewoman, in addition to conducting all other business as necessary. Delegates and Alternates will be required to pay a fee, which is to cover the cost of the Convention.

For further information, contact Lawton Sack, Chairman of the Bulloch County Republican Party, at 912-515-9705.