



**State Rep. Keisha Waites
(D-60)**

State Representative Keisha Waites represents the citizens of District 60, which includes southeast Atlanta, Hapeville, Forest Park, East Point, College Park and is also home to the world's busiest airport, Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport and Porsche Global Headquarters.

A native of Atlanta, Rep. Waites chose to remain in Georgia and continue her education at Georgia Southern University where she excelled as a political science major. As a college freshman, she was selected among an international pool of candidates to attend the Walt Disney World College Business Internship Program. She also attended Atlanta Metropolitan State College and Georgia Perimeter College, and holds degrees in both Criminal Justice and Political Science. Rep. Waites is also a proud alumna of the University of Georgia - Carl Vincent Institute: Biennial Institute for Georgia Legislators and Georgia Legislative Leadership, and the Georgia State University - Andrew Young School of Policy Studies: Legislative Health Policy Certification Program. In 2014, Rep. Waites was selected from an international pool of candidates and is a proud alumnus and graduate of Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government: Senior Executives in State and Local Government Leadership Program and is a 2014 David Bohnett Fellowship recipient. Most recently Rep. Waites was selected by the Council of State Governments (CSG) as one of 48 members of the 2016 class of Henry Toll Fellows. The Toll Fellowship Program is a national leadership development program for state government officials. Each year, Toll Fellows brings 48 of the nation's top officials from all three branches of state government to Lexington, Kentucky for an intensive "intellectual boot camp."

Dedicating much of her life to public service, Rep. Waites brings a broad record of civic involvement, strong business acumen, and fresh ideas to the Georgia General Assembly. As a member of the Juvenile Justice committee, Rep. Waites has devoted much of her time and talents to eradicating poverty and providing culturally enriching opportunities to disadvantaged youth. For this reason, Rep. Waites was a sponsor and vocal champion of the Ban the Box legislation. She partnered and joined activists around the state in lobbying for passage of the bill, and her efforts with other stakeholders garnered the support of Governor Deal, who later issued an executive order which was signed into law in 2015. Such policies will allow citizens the opportunity to explain their unique circumstance in person to a potential employer.

Rep. Waites, is also a champion of anti-bullying legislation. She authored and sponsored HB 40 comprehensive legislation addressing bullying in which her efforts received the support and endorsement of the nationally renowned law firm Montlick and Associates and a plethora of national Anti-Bullying organizations. Rep. Waites also takes tremendous pride

in working on behalf of those who sacrifice and put their lives at risk to protect and serve. For this reason, she authored the HB 54, or the Fallen Hero Bill, to support families by providing tuition assistance to the children of law enforcement killed in the line of duty. HB 54 passed both the House and the Senate unanimously in March 2016. Rep. Waites consulted and worked closely with the families of fallen hero's to ensure they had the opportunity to provide input. This work lead to Rep. Waites being named the 2015 Legislator of legislator of the year by the Georgia State Firefighters' Association and the Georgia Association of Fire Chiefs. HB 54 was signed into law in May of 2016 by Governor Nathan Deal.

After reviewing the alarming pandemic of newly diagnosed AIDS/HIV rates in the City of Atlanta released by the CDC, Rep. Waites made a special effort to work toward policy to decrease the number of newly diagnosed cases. A trail blazer, in 2015 Rep. Waites authored and sponsored HB 53, legislation requiring medical providers to offer HIV tests to patients as part of routine blood panel tests. Through her unwavering lobbying efforts, language from HB 53 was adopted and included in HB 436 and signed into law by Governor Deal in 2015. In 2016, HB 1058 also included language from HB 53, and Rep. Waites considers it an extraordinary privilege to play a vital role in this life saving monumental piece of legislation.

A tireless champion of underserved communities, Rep. Waites' most monumental action as a legislator is authoring and sponsoring HB 18, legislation that ensures accessibility for the disabled and visually impaired. Rep. Waites' collective efforts were the catalyst which prompted the Georgia Building Authority to adopt and implement HB 18 as internal agency policy, requiring that the State Capitol and legislative office buildings now be equipped with tactile and braille placards and be fully wheel chair accessible and ADA compliant.

In 2005, Waites was tapped to travel to New Orleans and participate in the Long-Term Recovery Response and Operations for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Waites helped to coordinate disaster assistance to more than 25,000 evacuees from the coastal communities that fled to neighboring states. She gained hands on experience of FEMA's programs, response and recovery operations, and technical expertise to make recommendations and improve the capacity to build disaster resilient communities. Supporting the eight southeastern states and continental United States, Rep. Waites served as a liaison to members of Congress during presidential declared federal disasters and international incidents. She has supported the following domestic and international incidents: Flint Water Crisis, Hurricane Isaac, BP Oil Spill, Haiti Earthquake, Hurricane IKE, Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Sandy. Rep. Waites has a proven background in crisis management and problem solving. In 2010 following the earthquake in Haiti, Rep. Waites was selected by FEMA headquarters to travel to Washington, DC to assist USAID's External Affairs and Public Affairs Team. Waites worked on-site to disseminate information to Members of Congress and the FEMA Emergency Response Team deployed to help coordinate international US response and recovery assistance.

In the summer of 2014, Rep. Waites was selected by the American Turkish Federation as an international delegate to travel to Turkey. Rep. Waites joined an international group of elected and political leaders to participate in the exchange with peer legislators from Turkey. The diplomatic and educational mission provided Rep. Waites with the opportunity to travel within the country, engage in dialogue regarding international issues, forge professional relationships, and interact with local, national leaders, and global businesses.

Rep. Waites has appeared on numerous panels, news and television broadcasts, including Georgia Public Broadcasting's "Lawmakers," to provide insights and analysis of political developments at the state and local levels. Rep. Waites has served on several legislative study committees, task forces and advisory councils. She is regarded as one of the most tenacious and effective state legislators serving in the General Assembly.