



Georgia HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Thursday, December 4, 2025

Rep. Rick Townsend Honored with PAGE Award for Leadership in Education Policy

ATLANTA – State Representative Rick Townsend (R-Brunswick) was recently recognized as a 2025 Torchbearer for Education by the Professional Association of Georgia Educators (PAGE) for his leadership on House Bill 235, the Georgia Supporting Living Donor Educators Act, which he sponsored during the 2025 legislative session, as well as his support for public education and public educators. In addition to his efforts on HB 235, Rep. Townsend has contributed to education initiatives through his service on the House Education Committee and his commitment to advancing school safety, literacy and technical education.

“I am honored to receive the 2025 Torchbearer for Education Award from PAGE,” said Rep. Townsend. “Having spent my career in the education field, supporting our educators and strengthening Georgia’s classrooms has always been a top priority for me. I am grateful to be recognized for the importance of HB 235, which ensures that teachers, school employees and postsecondary staff have the leave they need to donate bone marrow or organs – allowing them to make life-saving contributions without jeopardizing their livelihood. I remain committed to advancing policies that uplift our teachers, support our students and move education forward in our state.”

“Congratulations to Rep. Rick Townsend for being recognized as a Torchbearer for Education by PAGE,” said House Speaker Jon Burns (R-Newington). “Whether it's strengthening opportunities for students, educators or parents, Rep. Townsend’s work on the House Education Committee continues to make a meaningful difference in classrooms and communities across our state.”

“Rep. Townsend deserves to be recognized for his past contributions in the classroom and as a superintendent and, more recently, as a passionate advocate in the legislature for all Georgia students and educators,” said House Speaker Pro Tempore Jan Jones (R-Milton). “He generously mentors legislators on the practical effects of proposed education legislation and works towards compromise solutions that improve our state’s K-12 system. I’m honored to work alongside him.”

“As evidenced by his work to ensure leave for educator organ and marrow donors – part of his broader effort to strengthen schools for all who learn, teach and serve in them – Rep. Townsend has proven himself a strong ally to Georgia students and educators,” said Robert Aycock, Legislative Communications Specialist, PAGE. “PAGE appreciates the expertise Rep. Townsend brings to the capitol from his many years of service as an educator, and we look forward to continuing to address education challenges with him.”

HB 235, the Georgia Supporting Living Donor Educators Act, requires employers of school employees, teachers and postsecondary employees to provide leaves of absence for the donation of bone marrow and organs.

In addition to his efforts during the 2025 legislative session, Rep. Townsend was appointed by Speaker Burns to the House Study Committee on Student Attendance in PreK-12 Education. Over the past several months, the committee has held multiple meetings around the state to conduct a comprehensive review of student attendance from pre-kindergarten through grade 12, examining the root causes of chronic absenteeism, evaluating best practices to boost student attendance and engagement and recommending legislative and policy initiatives to support these goals.