

Georgia Senate Bill 303

The Reptile Nation prevails on Georgia S. 303.

February 11, 2010

The final hearing was held earlier this week in the Georgia Senate Committee on Natural Resources and the Environment on Senate Bill 303. This bill would have made owning any of the "Big 5 Constrictors" prohibitive. This bill failed to address the stated intent of the bill. Jobs would have been lost and Georgia families and businesses would have been hurt. The United States Association of Reptile Keepers (USARK) provided a well thought out alternative in the form of our Model State Legislation, which addressed issues of secure containment along with public and environmental safety measures. Committee staff drew up a Committee Substitute based on the USARK proposal.

During the hearing the bill's sponsor rejected this proposed Committee Substitute. Vice Chairman Bulloch questioned the decision to reject this proposed alternative. Other Senators commented in favor of the USARK proposal. Several Senators also commented on the number of emails generated to their offices by the USARK grass roots campaign. One Senator said, "I didn't know how many people were interested in snakes. I had hundreds of emails saying 'No on S. 303' in my mailbox." Subsequently Senator Bulloch motioned for a "No Pass" rating for S. 303. The Committee then voted and S. 303 received a majority "No Pass" designation. S. 303 is now officially dead in Committee. USARK appreciates the fair treatment and sincere efforts of the Committee Staff, Chairman Tolleson, Vice Chairman Bulloch and Committee Members who worked to improve S. 303.

Thank you to BW Smith of Animal South in Atlanta who attended the hearing on behalf of USARK. Also a special thanks to all those members of the Reptile Nation who participated in the grass roots campaign on S. 303!

Andrew Wyatt is the President of the United States Association of Reptile Keepers (USARK) and has been an avid herp enthusiast for more than 35 years. He has traveled the world and has had his animals featured in a number of television productions. For more information about USARK, [click here](#) .

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