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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Georgia Public Service Commission Blasts Atlanta Media Reports on Office Hours, Releases Unedited Interviews with WSB-TV

*AJC and WSB-TV highlight absences of Commissioner McDonald
Yet fail to disclose to the public the recent long illness and death of his spouse*

ATLANTA – November 18, 2010 – The Georgia Public Service Commission (Commission) today blasted an Atlanta Constitution-WSB-TV news report criticizing office hours kept by Commissioners. Calling the coverage "shoddy journalism," the Commission rebuked the news stories saying they were based entirely on unreliable records of key cards that are intermittently used to enter the parking garage or Commission offices.

Prior to the coverage, the Commission disputed the allegations of the reporters and issued the following statement:

"The electronic key card system is a security layer; it cannot be used to accurately determine attendance. The only true indicator of attendance at the PSC is the official meeting minutes. Key cards are not always required for entry to either the parking garage or the interior doors of the PSC. During morning and evening rush hour the garage doors are often open and security personnel only check for vehicle decals. Interior doors also do not require key cards for entry. Manual keys may be used at anytime to access interior doors. The security locks are often temporarily disabled during hearing days, or otherwise opened by approaching staffers or other visitors to allow entry of Commissioners. At least one Commissioner enters his office through a door outside the secured area. Last, some Commissioners will argue that if they are in their Capitol office every day, they are not being responsive to constituents who are out in the district."

The reports failed to adequately inform the public that use of a manual key would leave no record at all of entry. "I use my key card and manual key interchangeably, whichever is more accessible in my pocket at the time," said Commissioner Stan Wise. "These news outlets are aware of that fact yet they still go to press with faulty assumptions and report it as true."

The coverage was particularly incomplete and insensitive of Lauren "Bubba" McDonald, Jr., whose office does not require a key card for entry. No mention was made that Commissioner McDonald spent an unusual amount of time away from the office late last year and early this year tending to his critically-ill spouse of 46 years, Sunny, who passed away in February. During the interview, which was also taped by PSC staff, WSB-TV Reporter Richard Belcher acknowledges

the difficult period leading up to her death, yet he never informs viewers of such on air (at 1:22 of McDonald interview).

The members of the Georgia Public Service Commission serve in a quasi-legislative, quasi-judicial capacity. Meeting minutes in recent years have not reflected a problem with attendance or maintaining a quorum.

"This is a fulltime position to which I devote my fulltime attention," said Commissioner Stan Wise. "What the Atlanta media apparently doesn't understand is that if I do nothing but sit behind a desk all day in Atlanta I am not doing my job. In our legislative capacity, most of us regularly give speeches across the state, visit plants and infrastructure projects, meet constituents out of the office, participate in national policy groups, and even testify in front of Congress," said Wise.

Visit YouTube to view the unedited, full length interviews by Commissioners Wise and McDonald with WSB-TV at www.youtube.com/ThePSCGa

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