

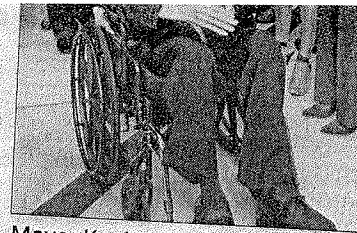
ional Airport.

Surrounded by red, white and blue bunting, Mayor Kasim Reed and local veterans welcomed the marble Wall of Honor on Thursday, just two weeks before the one-year anniversary of the United Service Organization's Hartsfield-Jackson office opening.

Mayor Reed said it was a "timely, well-deserved recognition" off all

Airport continued on B2

Hartsfield-Jackson has prided itself on reducing average TSA wait times to less than 20 minutes in recent weeks, but the spike in traffic could slow things down again. Council expects 81,000 people to go through the airport on July 1. Throughout the weekend, the total should be in the hundreds of thousands.



Mayor Kasim Reed pushes Norris Connelly, a 95-year-old Tuskegee Airman, to see the new veterans memorial.

By Asia Burns
Asia.Burns@ajc.com

The Georgia Department of Transportation is trying to ease Fourth of July traffic congestion, officials said. In a press release, the department said it will suspend construction-related closures on interstate and state system highways during the holiday weekend.

Ga. nurses say secretary of state puts 'patients at risk'



Chris Joyner
AJC Watchdog

Three years ago, I reported that the nursing board had a backlog of more than 3,000 unanswered complaints against nurses ranging from medical errors to unlicensed people posing as nurses to drug-addicted nurses stealing narcotics from patients.

Complaints that made it to the board took an average of 15 months to decide, but most spent years in unending holding pattern. Today the board continues to struggle with a massive workload, but things have improved.

In the fiscal year that ends June 30, the board has ruled on 741 complaints, issuing a mix

of public and private discipline on nurses that broke the rules. The backlog of unanswered complaints is in the hundreds instead of the thousands, and wait times to resolve those complaints — while still more than a year on average — are down.

So I was surprised to learn that Jim Cleghorn, the board's executive director since 2010, was being removed by Secretary of State Brian Kemp in exchange for a less experienced director — from the cosmetology board.

I wasn't the only one surprised. The board members themselves learned just two weeks ago that Cleghorn, whom many on the board give much credit for the recent improvements, was taking his talents to regulate the state's barbers and beauticians.

Chairwoman Brenda Rowe said the move and lack of consultation by Kemp with the board left her "very, very concerned."

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Labor secretary Perez wide in attack on Trump



"Go look at a Trump product. They're all made in China."
— Thomas Perez on Saturday, June 18th, 2016 in an interview.

By Sean Gorman
PolitiFact

U.S. Labor Secretary Thomas Perez says Donald Trump does a fine job of creating jobs — in China.

Perez made that dig in an interview with the Richmond Times-Dispatch shortly before he gave the keynote speech at the Democratic Party of Virginia's Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner on June 18.

"Go look at a Trump product. They're all made in China," Perez said.

No doubt, many Trump prod-

ucts are made overseas, a point the presumptive GOP presidential nominee has acknowledged in debates and interviews.

Perez went a few leaps beyond that in saying all Trump products are made in China. So we checked to see whether the secretary is right.

We asked Perez's office for the source of his information. Mattie Munroe, his press secretary at the Department of Labor, said that since comments were made on private time during a political event, s

METRO

Watchdog

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"It was made unilateral," Rowe said at a hastily convened board teleconference Monday. "The board didn't provide any input into it."

Board member Della Shilling put her distress in even more stark terms: Kemp is being reckless. Changing directors will hamper the board's progress, meaning it will take even longer to deal with dangerous nurses.

"I just find it very difficult to say why you would knowingly put patients at risk," she said to a member of Kemp's staff.

Stakes high for nursing in Ga.

Kemp's pick to head the nursing board is Andrew Turnage, executive director of the Georgia Board of Cosmetology and Barbers. That board is similar to the nursing board in that it licenses and regulates barbers and cosmetologists,

but it is fair to say that regulating the nursing profession is significantly more complex and the stakes are very high. After all, a bad haircut grows out, but people literally die at the hands of bad nurses.

The proposed staffing moves come as the nursing board also is losing its nursing education consultant, another key staff member it took years to find and hire. That person submitted her resignation and is leaving at the beginning of July, meaning the new director won't have her help as he learns the ropes.

Leaning on a state law that gives them specific power to approve its executive director, the board voted unanimously to reject Kemp's choice.

Kemp's answer? Too bad. Kemp writes the checks.

"This is not a proposal," Lisa Durden, director of the professional licensing division of Kemp's office. "This is a directive from Secretary Kemp."

This is what's best for our agency."

After the meeting Kemp issued a statement saying he was using his "clear authority under the law" to make staffing decisions.

The law Kemp's office is relying on is one that says he makes staffing decisions "notwithstanding any other provisions of law to the contrary."

Officially, the explanation for the job switch is for "cross training," so the boards would be able to operate more efficiently when an executive director leaves or retires. But Kemp's office has been displeased with the board for some time, which it considers difficult to work with and in a constant turf war with staffers in the professional licensing office.

Key legislator disappointed

State Sen. Renee Unterman, chair of the Health and Human Services Committee and a nurse herself, started getting word of Kemp's proposed change

last week in concerned emails from nurses around the state. Unterman, R-Bufford, discussed the change with Kemp's staff and said she is "very disappointed" with the decision.

The board has more money and staff than ever before and board members are all working together to manage its massive workload, she said. Now this.

"That director has been fabulous in helping the board reform," she said. "Why on earth, when you are being more constructive and going in the right direction, do you pull the wheels out from under the wagon?"

For years there has been sentiment among the nursing profession that the board needs to follow the example set by the pharmacy and dental boards, which revolted and left Kemp's office by convincing lawmakers in 2013

to transfer them to the Department of Community Health. This latest decision only furthers the conversation, Unterman said.

"Don't you think this gives the nurses ammunition? It gives me ammunition," she said. "Don't you think I'm going to write legislation to take the Board of Nursing out? They have plenty of money."

Private meeting with Kemp Wednesday

Kemp's decision has concerned and angered the nursing establishment. Marcus Downs, the CEO of the Georgia Nurses Association, a powerful lobbying group at the Capitol, said he has asked Kemp to delay the move to allow more input from the nursing community.

"It's not an unreasonable request," he said. "There are more than 150,000 nursing professionals in the state and we count on a streamlined process to make sure patients are safe."

Members of the Georgia Association of Nursing Deans and Directors, a coalition of public and private nursing schools across the

state, worried Kemp's decision will set the regulation of their schools back years. That's bad news for a state that, like many, suffers from a shortage of trained nurses.

"We have just finally gotten this on track. It feels like we're going backward in a great way," said Gella Hay, chair of nursing at LaGrange College.

The nursing board licenses twice as many Georgians and the next largest professional board, and the nurses are exerting pressure on Kemp to rethink.

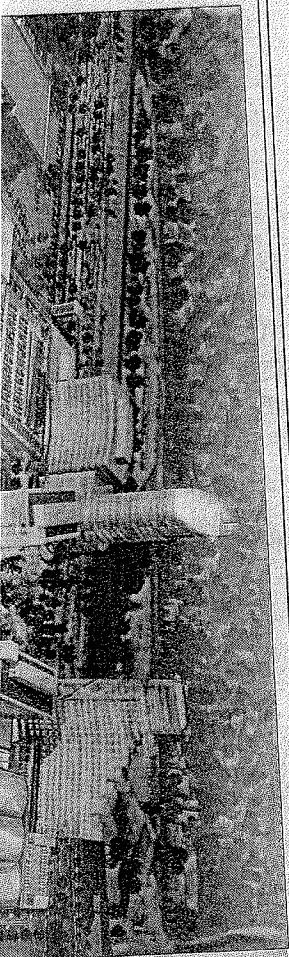
Representatives from various nursing groups met privately with Kemp Wednesday to air their concerns. After the meeting, spokeswoman Candice Broce said Kemp is open to working out a longer transitional period for the staffing changes, as suggested by the nursing association. Details are being worked out, Broce said.

GM site

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It's worse off."

School officials have balked at the TAD plan, saying the system isn't in the develop-



2008, denting the local tax base and eliminating a few thousand jobs.

The GM site, just northwest of the I-285/I-85 interchange, is prominent but also has challenges. Doraville's development hasn't kept pace with other major nodes along I-285 such as Dunwoody. Sandy Springs

Airport

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"While I can't go into specific security measures, can tell you we are in a state of hyper vigilance against threats," Council said. "The aftermath of Tuesday attacks, we are increasing