



STATE OF GEORGIA

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Nathan Deal
GOVERNOR

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Deal announces appointments for leadership positions

State representative from LaFayette to head Office of Transition, Support and Re-entry

Gov. Nathan Deal today announced appointments to positions of leadership in state government.

Rep. Jay Neal (R-LaFayette) will serve as the executive director of the Governor's Office of Transition, Support and Re-entry. Neal will replace Braxton Cotton who is leaving to serve as a member of the State Board of Pardons and Paroles.

Deal also appointed Robert E. Keller, currently a member of the State Board of Pardons and Paroles, to join Renee Snead as an additional deputy director of the Office of Transition, Support and Re-entry.

These appointments are effective Nov. 15.

Rep. Jay Neal



Neal was first elected to the Georgia House of Representatives in November 2004 and serves Walker and Catoosa counties. He is known for his work in spearheading criminal justice reform in Georgia. Neal serves as vice chairman of the Insurance Committee, a member of the Education Subcommittee of Appropriations, a member of the Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee, and a member of the Economic Development and Tourism Committee. He serves his local community as a board member of Yobel House, a residential drug treatment facility. He was also pastor of Gordon Lake Wesleyan Church until May 2009. Neal and his wife, Gretchen, have two children and two grandchildren. They reside in LaFayette.

Braxton Cotton



children. They reside in Atlanta.

Cotton was appointed executive director of the Governor's Office of Transition, Support and Re-entry in June 2013. Prior to that, he was the executive director of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council. Cotton served in the Georgia State Patrol for five years. He also worked as deputy sheriff and as a detective in the Baldwin County Sherriff's Department in Milledgeville, where he won the 2004 Officer of the Year Award. During his time in the U.S. Army, he was awarded with the Army Achievement Medal. He received an associate's degree in Criminal Justice from Georgia Military College, a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from Saint Leo University (Fort McPherson) and is currently studying to obtain his master's in Public Policy. He and his wife, Danielle, have two

Robert E. Keller



earned a bachelor's degree from Birmingham Southern College and a law degree from Emory Law School.

Keller was appointed to the State Board of Pardons and Paroles by Gov. Sonny Perdue in 2007. Keller served as executive counsel of the Prosecuting Attorneys Council of Georgia. Before joining the Prosecuting Attorneys Council, he served as both Assistant District Attorney and District Attorney of Clayton County. He also maintained a private practice from 1974-1977. He served as a member of the Georgia Board of Public Safety, the Board of Trustees of the Georgia Judicial Retirement System, the Georgia Code Revision Plan Committee and the Commission to Assess Crime Laboratory Needs into the 21st Century. He served as vice chair of the Governor's Commission on Certainty in Sentencing. Keller