

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

March 4, 2024

Y'all, I am taking a break this week, so in my place, my dog, Gus, is going to report out. Here he goes:

Hi everybody! Here is what happened at the state capitol this week, as deduced by my abundant curiosity coupled with my superior canine olfactory talents:

MyPerson encountered approximately 2,437 school children, 125 peanuts, 4 Diet Cokes, 1 hamburger (most likely from Farm Burger), 9 lattes (6 from a self-serve machine), 211 breath mints and a piece of gum. Additionally, she appears to have walked by (but did not consume) 12 Bar-B-Que sandwiches, a gallon of sweet tea, and 18 jars of candy (on desks). Additionally, on the less attractive side of things, her shoes climbed 1,309 stairs, and her suit sat on 22 different chairs, which, prior to her, seated no less than 9,284 other people each. I also sense a heavy residual of printer ink, which means that she likely stared at quite a bit of paper, though I am not sure why. On the downside, she did not fulfill her GPQ (Gus Petting Quota), nor did she pony-up the weekly snaxtax (3 treats, 2 rawhides, and a twice-monthly steak-bone), or daily drag (because I pull too hard for it to be called a "walk"). Thus, the Gus-O-Meter gives her a low score of 4 out of a possible 20. Let's hope she does better next week.

Bark.

Gus

PS - MyPerson wants you to see the below for Crossover Day outcomes and Action Alerts, but they don't smell like anything, so I'll just be taking a nap while you read.

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Amended Fiscal Year 2024

Yellow highlight = Conference Committee changes agreed to by both chambers

Statewide

A one-time \$1,000 salary supplement for full-time, benefit-eligible employees for recruitment and retention.

Secretary of the Senate

- *Budget Direction:* Utilize existing funds (\$75,000) for a consortium study on educational testing.

Judicial Council

- **\$125,000 Added** for an economic impact study on access to justice initiatives.
- **\$ 0 Added** for Civil Legal Services for families of indigent patients.

Juvenile Courts

- **\$12,500 Added** for grants to counties for the Atlantic Judicial Circuit
- **\$12,500 Added** for grants to counties for the Coweta Judicial Circuit
- **\$170,000 Added** for the Juvenile Court Judges' salary supplement pursuant to the General Appropriations for FY 2023 (HB 911).
- **\$650,000 Added** to procure and manage information technology and data migration for the Juvenile Courts

Dept. of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities

- \$59.54 Million in total from 1. agency-wide transfers (\$7,610,761), 2. existing funds (\$461,188), and 3. added funds to address Regional State Hospitals' urgent and significant capital needs.

Adult Forensic Services

- **\$664,462 Added for an additional 30-bed jail-based competency restoration program pilot.**

Adult Mental Health Services

- \$475,625 Added for the Georgia Housing Voucher program to support the requirements of the Department of Justice (DOJ) Settlement Agreement.
- **\$750,000 Added for a pilot to implement transportation alternatives for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis.**
- \$500,000 Added for one-time funds to expand mental health services in Warner Robins.
- \$450,000 Added to support mental health community wellness and outreach programs.

Child and Adolescent Developmental Disabilities

- \$60,000 Added for adaptive play for children with disabilities and their families.

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Child and Adolescent Mental Health

- \$15.5 Million Transferred to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services from Adult Mental Health Services to fund the construction of the Gateway child and adolescent crisis stabilization unit in Savannah.

Direct Care Support Services

- \$59.54 Million total from: transferred (\$7,610,761) from the Adult Developmental Disabilities Services, Adult Forensic Services, Adult Mental Health Services, Child and Adolescent Forensic Services, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, and Departmental Administration (DBHDD) programs to Direct Care Support Services program, utilize existing funds (\$461,188), and increase funds to address Regional State Hospitals' urgent and significant capital needs according to the 2023 Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission (GSFIC) campus survey.

Dept. of Community Affairs

- \$2.125 Million in total state dollars from 1. existing funds (\$800,000), 2. transferred funds from State Community Development Programs (\$400,000), and 3. additional funds to the State Housing Trust Fund to leverage federal grant funds for the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (Total State and Federal Funds = \$2,924,806).
- \$250 Million Added to the Georgia Fund to support water and wastewater infrastructure development through low-interest loans to local communities.
- \$23.9 Million Added for the Rural Workforce Housing Program. (Also will use existing funds (\$26,078,821) for a total of \$50,000,000)
- \$0 Added for one-time community improvement grants.
- \$0 Added for Special Project - State Community Development Programs to administer and award community improvement grants.

Dept. of Community Health

Health Care Access and Improvement

- \$148,250 Added to support existing and new housing with the Area Health Education Centers (AHEC).
- \$250,000 Added for one-time funding for one federally qualified health center start-up grant in Cobb County.
- \$2 Million Added for one-time grants up to \$1,000,000 for the development of Programs of All-Inclusive Care (PACE) to provide home and community-based services.
- \$250,000 Added for one-time funding for Side by Side Brain Injury Clubhouse.

Medicaid - Aged Blind and Disabled

- \$120.96 Million Added for growth in Medicaid based on projected utilization.
- \$92.92 Million Added for skilled nursing centers to reflect 2021 cost reports.
- Replace \$2,237,205 in state general funds with hospital provider fees.
- Replace \$2,981,404 in state general funds with nursing home provider fees.
- \$0 Added to increase reimbursement rates for speech-language pathology, audiology, physical therapy, and occupational therapy providers, with a note from the Conference Committee directing, "Consider inclusion of funds to increase reimbursement rates for speech-language pathology, audiology, physical therapy, and occupational therapy providers in FY2025 General Budget."

Medicaid - Low Income

- \$213.47 Million Reduced for Medicaid based on projected utilization.

- Replace \$20,134,839 in state general funds with hospital provider fees.
- **\$0 Added** to increase reimbursement rates for speech-language pathology, audiology, physical therapy, and occupational therapy providers, with a note from the Conference Committee directing, "Consider inclusion of funds to increase reimbursement rates for speech-language pathology, audiology, physical therapy, and occupational therapy providers in FY2025 General Budget."

PeachCare for Kids®

- \$4.03 Million Transferred from Health Care Access and Improvement (\$459,000) and increase funds (\$3,569,736) for growth in Medicaid based on projected utilization.

GA Board of Healthcare Workforce

- **\$100,000 Added** and note to use existing funds (\$100,000) and increase funds for one-time funding for statewide healthcare specialty assessments to evaluate gaps in healthcare services in Neurology, Psychiatry, and Endocrinology.

Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce: Physicians for Rural Areas

- **\$850,000 Reduced** to align budget with expenditures until authorizing legislation is passed to establish a loan repayment program for mental health professionals.
- **\$300,000** Transferred from the Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce: Physicians for Rural Areas program to the Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce: Undergraduate Medical Education program to utilize unallocated award amounts from multi-year physician loan repayments for funding of nursing faculty loan repayments.

GA Commission on Family Violence

- **\$40,250 Added** to update the Georgia State Plan for Ending Family Violence.

Dept. of Corrections

- \$6.13 Million total from Transfer funds from Offender Management program (\$3,551,094) and **Added funds (\$2,574,744)** for a recruitment advertising campaign and work culture review.
- **\$65.27 Million Added** for physical health and pharmacy service contracts.

Private Prisons

- \$5.2 Million Added for 200 temporary additional beds at Coffee and Wheeler facilities to allow for maintenance and repairs at state prisons.

State Prisons

- **\$172,200 Added** for Technical College System of Georgia vocational education contracts.
- **\$19.71 Million Added** for safety, security, and technology initiatives.
- **\$250,000 Added** for radio communications at facilities, statewide.
- **\$600,000 Added** for offender call monitoring at facilities, statewide.

Transition Centers

- **\$4.67 Million Added** for six months of operational cost for the Metro Re-Entry Phase IV to add 400 transition center beds.

Dept. of Early Care and Learning

- **\$100,000 Added** for startup grants of up to \$10,000 per provider to establish additional Summer Food Service Program meal sites in areas with high rates of child food insecurity.

Pre-K Program

- **\$1.39 Million Added** to reflect the correct employer contribution rate for State Health Benefit Plan.
- **\$9 Million Added** to expand the Summer Transition Program with income eligibility requirements.
- **Budget Direction:** Utilize existing lottery funds for three Pre-Kindergarten administrative positions.

Dept. of Economic Development

- **\$25.29 Million Added** for the GA World Congress Authority for public safety and infrastructure costs related to the 2026 FIFA World Cup and 2025 College Football Playoff National Championship.

Dept. of Education***Central Office***

- **\$39,200 Reduced** for funding allocated but not spent on Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS) study.

Communities in Schools

- **\$1.58 Million Added** to leverage matching grant funds for program expansion.

Curriculum Development

- **Budget Direction:** Utilize \$10,000,000 of existing \$10,994,021 ESSER Funds to provide one-to-one match for character education programming.

Nutrition

- **\$6.33 Million Reduced** for the cost of breakfast and lunch for reduce-paying students through the 2023-2024 school year given the availability of existing funds.

QBE Local Five Mill Share

- **\$1.84 Million Adjusted** for the Local Five Mill Share for eight new State Commission Charter Schools.

Quality Basic Education Program

- **\$102.51 Million Added** for a midterm adjustment based on enrollment growth.
- **\$3.73 Million Added** for a midterm adjustment to the State Commission Charter School supplement for training and experience.
- **\$27.77 Million in formula funds Added** for the State Commission Charter School supplement.
- **\$8.98 Million Added** to reflect growth in the Special Needs Scholarship.
- **\$6.3 Million in formula funds Added** for the Completion Special Schools supplement pursuant to HB 87 (2023 Session).
- **\$277,905 Added** in formula funds for a midterm adjustment to the charter system grant.
- **\$23.5 Million Restored** in Quality Basic Education (QBE) formula funds for Mountain Education Charter High School and Coastal Plains High School due to establishment as a completion special school.
- **\$8.64 Million Reduced** to provide a salary supplement of \$1,000 to all custodian custodians given the availability of existing funds.
- **\$49,500 Reduced** to provide a military counselor to Chattahoochee County given the availability of existing funds.

Technology/Career Education

- **\$711,000 Reduced** to align budget with expenditures.
- **\$500,000 Added** for one-time funding for career development programs.

Testing

- **\$980,924 Added** to administer statewide standardized testing in accordance with federal assessment requirements.

Employees' Retirement System of Georgia

- **\$500 Million Added** to strategically invest in increasing the funded ratio in order to improve long-term financial viability of the pension system and support state retirees.

Governor's Office of Student Achievement

- **\$135,000 Added** to upgrade GA AWARDS dashboards and improve accessibility of literacy data.
- **\$250,000 Reduced** to align budget with expenditures.

Office of the Child Advocate

- **\$99,780 Added** to improve the legal representation of foster children.

Child Welfare Services

- **\$3.17 Million Added** for technology upgrades and improvements to the SHINES child welfare case management system.
- **\$214,146 Added** for the full cost of two community action team pilot programs funded by HB 911 (2022 Session).
- **\$200,000 Added** for one-time funding for start-up costs of a heavy equipment operator certification program for high-risk youth.
- **\$1.5 Million Added** to match federal funds for wraparound services.

Departmental Administration

- **\$1.73 Million Added** to integrate Pathways and Georgia Access into the Georgia Gateway integrated eligibility system.
- **\$2.64 Million Reduced** for rent to reflect savings from office space consolidation.
- **\$1.5 Million transferred from Elder Abuse Investigations and Prevention (\$590,000) and increase funds for Medicaid Redetermination notice mailings.**

Federal Eligibility Benefit Services

- **\$2.06 Million Added** for labor and wage data verification services.

Out of School Services

- **\$750,000 Added** for community youth tutoring and wellness.

Residential Child Care Licensing

- **\$360,000 Added** for technology upgrades and improvements to the TRAILS electronic records management system to enhance efficiency.
- **\$82,102 Added** to establish an application and inspection process for Qualified Residential Treatment Programs.

Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Children Fund Commission

- **\$2.72 Million Added** for the full cost of the Gwinnett Commercial Sexual Exploitation Recovery Center funded by HB 19 (2023 Session).

Office of the Commissioner of Insurance

- **\$134 Million Added** for the state reinsurance program.
- **\$16.39 Million Added** for implementation of the State-based Exchange for healthcare insurance (Georgia Access).

Georgia Bureau of Investigation

- **\$174,178 Added** for the start-up cost for two criminal intelligence analyst positions to support the Criminal Street Gang Database.

Criminal Justice Coordinating Council

- **\$1.25 Million Transferred** from Criminal Justice Coordinating Council to the Georgia Public Safety Training Center for School Resource Officer and De-escalation training.
- **\$4.82 Million Reduced** to align budget with expenditures.

Council of Accountability Court Judges

- **\$613,124 Added** for Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT) training and MRT trauma training.

Family Violence

- **\$1.26 Million Reduce** funds to align budget with expenditures.
- **\$315,725 Added** for one sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE) coordinator for every sexual assault center starting April 1, 2024.

Dept. of Juvenile Justice***Community Service***

- **\$124,000 Added** for replacement ballistic vests.

Secure Confinement (Youth Detention Centers – YDCs)

- **\$0 Added** to implement music studios at the Eastman, Macon, Augusta, and Muscogee Secure Commitment (YDCs).
- **\$0 Added** for mobile tablets for a new pilot electronic grievance system in one Department of Juvenile Justice Secure Commitment (YDC) and one Secure Detention (RYDC) facility.
- **\$266,257 Added** for the integration of an electronic medical record system within the current juvenile tracking system.
- **\$395,384 Added** for body cameras.

Secure Confinement (Residential Youth Detention Centers – RYDCs)

- **\$0 Added** for mobile tablets for a new pilot electronic grievance system in one Department of Juvenile Justice Secure Commitment (YDC) and one Secure Detention (RYDC) facility.
- **\$408,743 Added** for the integration of an electronic medical record system within the current juvenile tracking system.
- **\$1.14 Million Added** for body cameras.

Public Defender Council

- **\$228,954 Added** for the Juvenile Conflict Defender Division

Dept. of Public Health***Epidemiology***

- \$637,940 in total Transferred from *Infant and Child Essential Health Treatment Services (\$560,389)* plus **Added funds (\$77,551)** for the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program to monitor the prescribing and dispensing of controlled substances.

Infant and Child Health Promotion

- **\$97,000 Added** to support development of donor breast milk bank.

Vital Records

- \$215,892 Transferred from *Infant and Child Essential Health Treatment Services* for enhancements to death certificate processing for the Georgia Vital Events Registration System

Dept. of Public Safety***Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council***

- \$0 Added for the Georgia POST Resiliency Program previously funded through the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council Law Enforcement Training Grant.
- \$0 Added for system maintenance support and onboarding for an online gang and human trafficking training system.
- **\$200,000 Added in** additional funds for Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police sponsored training (\$80,972) and Sheriffs' Training Academy (\$119,028).

Georgia Public Safety Training Center

- \$1.25 Million Transferred from the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council to the Georgia Public Safety Training Center for School Resource Officer and De-escalation training.
- **\$71,051 Added** for annual CPR training for dispatchers.

Office of Highway Safety: Georgia Driver's Education Commission

- **\$712,804 Reduced** for driver's education and training in accordance with FY 2023 Joshua's Law Collections.

University System of Georgia Board of Regents

- \$66 Million Restored FY 2024 formula funds for Teaching.
- **\$0 Added** for the construction of the Anne Frank Education Center.
- \$300,000 Added for the development of an update to Georgia Stories, a video series that supports teachers in providing the required eighth-grade course on Georgia geography, history, and economics.
- **\$200,000 Added** for one-time funding to GA Public Telecommunications Commission to market Georgia-developed educational resources to children and families.

Secretary of State***Professional Licensing Boards***

- **\$145,600 Added** for temporary labor to address a backlog of licensure applications.

Georgia Student Finance Commission***College Completion Grants***

- **\$2 Million Reduced** for College Completion Grants.

Dual Enrollment

- \$12.33 Million Added to meet projected enrollment.

HERO Scholarship

- \$300,000 (Reduced) Replace funds and utilize surplus funds to meet the projected need.

HOPE Scholarships - Public Schools

- \$2.83 Million Reduced based on projected expenditures.

Public Safety Memorial Grant

- \$540,000 (Reduced) Replace funds and utilize surplus funds to meet the projected need.

Service Cancelable Loans

- \$3.2 Million Reduced for public law enforcement officer loan repayments.

Tuition Equalization Grants

- \$2.17 Million Reduced to meet the projected need.

Technical College System of Georgia**Quick Start**

- \$10.25 Million Added for construction to complete Rivian training center.
- \$4.75 Million Added to meet existing training obligations.

Technical Education

- \$13 Million Added for renovation and startup equipment costs for specialized technical programs to support growing workforce needs in the electric mobility industry across the state.
- \$1.1 Million Reduced to align budget with expenditures.
- \$657,910 Added one-time funds for start-up and equipment costs for 22 additional campus police officers.

Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission – Capital Projects Fund**Board of Regents**

- \$178 Million Added for the design, construction, and equipment of the dental school at Georgia Southern University, Savannah, Chatham County.
- \$50 Million Added for the design and construction of the Medical School at the University of Georgia to match institutional funds, Athens, Clarke County.

Technical College System of Georgia

- \$5.5 Million Added for the design and construction of a commercial driver's license pad at Augusta Technical College, Augusta, Richmond County.
- \$3 Million Added to establish one new college and career academy.

Dept. of Corrections

- \$436.75 Million additional funds Added for construction of the new state prison, Davisboro, Washington County.
- \$135.34 Million Added for facility maintenance and repairs, statewide.
- \$4.6 Million Added to purchase the Augusta Transition Center, Augusta, Richmond County.

- \$1.73 Million Added to replace food and farm equipment, statewide.

Dept. of Juvenile Justice

- \$2.31 Million Added for additional facility maintenance and repairs, statewide.

University System of Georgia Board of Regents

- \$1.55 Million Added for one-time funding for the development of exhibits for the Anne Frank Education Center via Georgia Commission on the Holocaust.



Justice, Public Safety, & School Discipline

THE FOLLOWING BILLS CROSSED OVER

[HB 500](#)

(Silcox-53rd) Creates the offense of arson of a law enforcement vehicle. Any person convicted of the offense is punished by a fine up to \$100,000 or by imprisonment for a minimum of five years with a maximum of 20 years, or both.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

[HB 509](#)

(Ballinger-23rd) Expands the crime of burglary in the first and second degrees to include when a person enters the house, or other specified building or structure, of another person with the intent to commit an act of family violence.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to the Senate Children and Families Committee. The bill will be heard in committee this TUESDAY.

[HB 873](#)

(Gunter-8th) Codifies the ability of juvenile courts to establish a juvenile treatment court division as an alternative to the traditional judicial system for juvenile delinquency cases or child in need of services (CHINS) cases. A case may be assigned to these new courts: 1) if the prosecutor or other petitioner consents prior to the entry of adjudication or disposition; 2) as part of a disposition in a case; or 3) upon modification or revocation of probation or a new petition. Each new juvenile treatment court division must establish a planning group to develop a work plan. Planning groups are required to include: judges, prosecutors, sheriffs, public defenders, community supervision officers, and probation officers. The Council of Accountability Court judges must establish standards and practices for these divisions taking into account current research and findings published by experts on children's health needs/treatment options. The council will also create and manage a certification/peer review process to ensure local divisions are adhering to standards/practices. Further, they will create a waiver process that divisions will need to apply for if they want an exception to standards/practices. The council will also create a certification process to allow a court to demonstrate a need for additional state grant funds for one or more part-time judges to operate these divisions. Divisions established on and after July 1, 2026, will be certified or receive a waiver if they have good cause. The council is also required to develop and manage an electronic system for performance measurement that accepts data in a consistent manner. On or around July 1, 2026, and every three years afterward, the council must conduct a performance peer review of the divisions to improve the policies/practices. The court that institutes the division can request that one or more prosecutors and one or more defense attorneys serve in the division, and the clerk of the juvenile court will serve as the clerk of the division.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill will be heard in committee TODAY (MONDAY).

[HB 909](#)

(Hagan-156th) Automatically restricts and seals the record of an offense by an individual after July 1, 2024 who was sentenced to Title 42, Chapter 8, Article 3 ('First Offenders Act'). If first offender status is revoked, then a court will unseal the records, and courts, law enforcement agencies, jails, and detention centers may disseminate the records. Those who were exonerated of guilt and discharged as a first offender prior to July 1, 2024 may petition the court to have the records sealed, and those records will be automatically sealed.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Judiciary Committee.

[HB 926](#)

(Reeves-99th) Provides for issuance of certificates ("Program and Treatment Completion Certificate") by a court for purposes of demonstrating rehabilitation and good moral character. The bill also sets out certain provisions regarding driver's licenses. The bill also adds the crime of battery of a healthcare worker or emergency health worker in the juvenile code.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Yet to be assigned to Senate Committee.

[HB 996](#)

(Vance-133rd) Authorizes jailers who have been certified by the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Council as having successfully completed the course of training required by the 'Georgia Peace Officers Standards and Training Act' to arrest any person in violation of a criminal law which occurs in the jail or within the perimeter of jail guard lines. The jailer may also arrest anyone who has a complaint or arrest warrant pending and surrenders themselves.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Judiciary Committee.

[HB 1201](#)

(Gaines-120th) Allows a victim of human trafficking to have their sentence vacated when sentenced pursuant to O.C.G.A. 42-8-60, relating to probation, or O.C.G.A. 16-13-2, relating to conditional discharge of possession of controlled substances as a first offense, so long as the crime was a direct result of being a victim of human trafficking.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Yet to be assigned to Senate Committee.

[HB 1283](#)

(Persinger-119th) Clarifies that aggravated assault with a firearm is included within the definition of "Class A designated felony act" in the Juvenile Code.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Yet to be assigned to Senate Committee.

[HR 1042](#)

(Leverett-123rd) Creates the Joint Study Committee on Judicial System Compensation, which seeks to examine the current state of how public employees in the judicial system, such as state judges, county judges, prosecutors, and public defenders, are compensated and to discuss potential legislation on establishing a more uniform compensation system. The committee will consist of eight members: four senators and four representatives.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Yet to be assigned to Senate Committee.

[SB 10](#) (Jones-10th) Increases penalties for drag racing.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee.

[SB 63](#) (Robertson-29th) Prohibits a local jurisdiction from creating a bail schedule, or policy, that mandates releasing a person from jail on unsecured judicial release. It also modifies the definition of "bail" in the code section. The bill modifies the list of crimes under "bail restricted offenses" to include various crimes, including misdemeanors and second or subsequent violations of certain crimes. No person is eligible to be released on unsecured judicial release if they were charged with a bail-restricted offense. Those individuals are only eligible for release through the use of secured means, professional bondsmen, and approved property. Any person arrested for any offense who has previously been convicted of a felony within the past seven years is not eligible for an unsecured judicial release. The bill removes the exemption for those who were deported from the country by the federal government, meaning that a judgment can be made by a court on a forfeiture of an appearance bond if the person at issue was deported and could not attend court for that reason. A surety is now released from liability if, prior to a judgment, the person at issue participates in an accountability court or enters into a pretrial release program. The bill increases the amount that bail recovery agents can charge for continuing legal education programs, the timeline for when sureties are relieved from liability due to a failure to timely file a bench warrant and forfeiture of bond, and the amount of remission of a bond to be paid to the surety.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. Awaits transmission to the Governor for his consideration.

[SB 110](#) (Walker-20th) Creates a Back the Blue Fund of which the revenue commissioner will be the custodian and administer to sheriffs' offices through the Georgia Sheriff's Association for the purpose of providing bonuses to deputy sheriffs and jailers. An option will be provided to contribute \$5 to the fund upon issuance or renewal of a motor vehicle car tag.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Motor Vehicles Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

[SB 232](#) (Kennedy-18th) Provides for probate court fees and to provide for funding of the State Children's Trust Fund, among other things.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Judiciary Committee.

[SB 407](#) (James-35th) When documenting incidents of family violence, requires law enforcement officers to prepare an incident report that includes whether any party to the incident involving actual or alleged family violence is the subject of an active or expired protective order in the Georgia Protective Order Registry; and, to the extent reasonably obtainable, the number and nature of prior incidents involving law enforcement between the parties to the incident involving actual or alleged family violence.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Yet to be assigned to a House committee.

[SB 490](#)

(Cowsert-46th) Increases the penalties for the felony offense of fleeing or attempting to elude a police officer.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Yet to be assigned to a House committee.

[SB 517](#)

(Robertson-29th) Provides for immunity from certain criminal prosecutions and civil liability against law enforcement officers whose threat or use of force is justified or otherwise lawful.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Yet to be assigned to a House committee.

[SB 533](#)

(Strickland-17th) Provides for jail-based competency restoration programs.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Yet to be assigned to a House committee.

[SB 453](#)

(Payne-54th) Transfers probation and intake services of the Juvenile Court of Gordon County to the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. Awaits transmission to the Governor for his consideration.

[SR 570](#)

(Robertson-29th) Creates the Senate Supporting Safety and Welfare of All Individuals in Department of Corrections Facilities Study Committee.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. This is a Senate Study Committee and therefore does not need House approval.

THE FOLLOWING BILLS DID NOT CROSS OVER

[HB 463](#)

(Ballinger-23rd) Revises the name of the Sexual Offender Registration Review Board to "Sexual Offender Risk Review Board." Among other provisions, the bill also provides for punishment for certain tiers of sexual offenses, including in certain circumstances, life imprisonment.

STATUS: House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 882](#)

(Bruce-61st) Prohibits the release or posting of a booking photograph unless and until the individual depicted therein is convicted.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 889](#) (Thomas-65th) States that in cases where the court has been unable to make contact on at least eight occasions within a 90-day period with such child's parent, guardian, or legal custodian, the court shall find that parental, guardian, or custodial consent has been waived and may order such child for rehabilitation, counseling, and in counsel and advice.

STATUS: House Juvenile Justice Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 930](#) (Ridley-22nd) Prohibits the release or posting of a booking photograph unless and until the individual is convicted.

STATUS: House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 932](#) (Mathis-149th) Provides that a person commits the offense of murder when, under certain circumstances, he or she causes the death of another human being irrespective of malice, by manufacturing or distributing the Schedule II controlled substance fentanyl or any controlled substance containing fentanyl or any derivative thereof.

STATUS: House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 1056](#) (New-64th) Enhances penalties for certain persons who manufacture, deliver, distribute, dispense, administer, sell, or possess with the intent to distribute any controlled substance, counterfeit substance, or marijuana when such violation involves the manufacturing, delivering, distributing, dispensing, administering, selling, or possessing with intent to distribute to a person 14 years of age or younger.

STATUS: House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 1214](#) (Neal-79th) Allows the court to choose not to impose the death penalty or life without parole for a defendant who was less than 18 years of age at the time he or she committed a crime, and provides for retroactive parole consideration of inmates serving prison sentences for a crime committed when they were less than 18 years of age.

STATUS: House Juvenile Justice Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 1307](#) (Holly-116th) Provides for fair market wages for inmate labor and for tracking of inmate labor.

STATUS: House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 1360](#) (Cummings-39th) Clarifies that the sale, manufacture, delivery, or possession of four grams or more of fentanyl and fentanyl analog structural class is within the prohibition of trafficking certain drugs.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HR 1254](#)

(Bell-75th) Amends the Constitution of the State of Georgia so as to authorize the General Assembly to provide by law for the legalization and regulation of marijuana; to permit persons 21 years of age or older to purchase marijuana for personal use; to provide for the dedication of fees and taxes from the production, sale, or personal use of such marijuana; and to provide a procedure to vacate previous convictions.

STATUS: House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[SB 513](#)

(Still-48th) Relating to sexual offenses, so as to provide that the provisions of Code Section 16-6-16, relating to masturbation for hire, shall be applicable only to persons 17 years of age or older.

STATUS: Senate Public Safety Committee. The bill did not cross over.



Child Welfare & Protection

THE FOLLOWING BILLS CROSSED OVER

[HB 144](#)

(Lewis-Ward-115th) Updates the rights of a ward in a guardianship by clarifying that a ward can communicate freely and privately with people other than the guardian through visitation, telephone calls, email, or personal mail. If a guardian violates the right of the ward to communicate, visit, or interact with others, in O.C.G.A. 29-4-22(b), then a ward or interested party can petition the court with evidence alleging that the guardian violated that right. If the court finds the guardian violated the ward's right, then a court can impose a maximum fine of \$1,000 for each violation. After two violations have been reported and ruled on by a court, the court can impose temporary suspension of the guardianship and appoint another guardian until the violations are resolved.)

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Children and Families Committee. The bill will be heard in committee this TUESDAY.

[HB 218](#)

(Hilton-48th) Defines "mentally incapacitated" as a mental impairment significantly affecting a person's ability to provide personal protection, necessities, carry out daily activities, or manage resources. It establishes that statements made by mentally incapacitated individuals aged 17 or older, describing nonconsensual sexual contact or physical abuse, are admissible as evidence if the person testifies at trial and the proponent provides pretrial notice to the adverse party. However, the adverse party can waive the testimony's use, and the individual who heard the statement can be cross-examined about it during trial.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Yet to be assigned to Senate Committee.

HB 499

(Hitchens-161st) Provides a court the discretion to require either one spouse, or both spouses, to pay child support for a disabled child who has become an adult but lacks the ability to take care of themselves independently. The spouses can be in a divorce proceeding, living separately, or in a state of separation. A "disabled child" is defined to be an individual who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities and that meets a disability under state or federal law. The bill allows for modification of the award for child support if there has been a substantial change in the child's or parent's ability to provide support for themselves. The court can direct one or both parents to maintain life insurance for the benefit of a disabled child who has become an adult but lacks the ability to take care of themselves independently.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Yet to be assigned to Senate Committee.

HB 839

(Dempsey-13th) Allows Georgia to enter into an interstate compact known as the "Social Work Licensure Compact" and authorizes the Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers, and Marriage and Family Therapists to administer the compact in this state.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Yet to be assigned to Senate Committee.

HB 910

(Jasperse-11th) Delineates crucial terms pertinent to regulating material deemed harmful to minors on public websites by commercial entities. Defines "commercial entity" broadly, encompassing various legally recognized entities such as corporations, partnerships, or sole proprietorships; clarifies the concept of a "digitized identification card" as a data file accessible on mobile devices, mirroring the details found on physical driver's licenses or ID cards, along with indicating the card's current status; and defines "distribute" to encompass actions like issuing, selling, or providing material through any means. The bill also outlines what constitutes "material harmful to minors," including content that, according to contemporary community standards, appeals to prurient interest, depicts explicit sexual acts, or lacks serious value for minors. It defines "publish" as the act of making information available to others on a public website. The bill establishes the threshold for a "substantial portion" of harmful material on a public website, exceeding 33.33% of the total content, and mandates that commercial entities must implement reasonable age verification methods before allowing access to public websites containing a substantial portion of harmful material. Acceptable verification methods include submitting digitized identification cards, government-issued IDs, or commercially reasonable methods meeting specific standards. Failure to comply renders commercial entities liable for damages resulting from minors accessing harmful material, subject to fines up to \$10,000 per violation. Proceedings to impose fines must be initiated within one year of the violation by relevant legal authorities.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Yet to be assigned to Senate Committee.

HB 993 (Powell-33rd) Creates a criminal penalty for those who groom a minor through a pattern of activity, and use electronic means to persuade, induce, entice, or coerce that minor to engage in a sexual offense, human trafficking, or any other offense within Chapter 6 of Title 16. A person who commits this crime will be subject to felony imprisonment of one to five years. This crime only applies to a person over the age of 18 and who is not within four years of age of the alleged victim.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Judiciary Committee.

HB 1022 (Sainz-180th) "Colton-McNeill Act" - Increases penalties for committing the crime of cruelty to children against a disabled minor. The first degree of the crime now carries a penalty of between 15 and 30 years, while the second degree of the crime now carries a penalty of between 10 and 30 years.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Judiciary Committee.

HB 1090 (Newton-127th) amends O.C.G.A. 48-7-29.24, relating to tax credits for contributions to foster child support organizations, to expand qualified expenditures for the credit to include wraparound services for aging foster children and justice involved youth that meet one of the following: are enrolled in a public postsecondary education institution; enrolled in a program to obtain a high school diploma or equivalent; enrolled in a vocation school; or participating in a registered and compliant apprenticeship program. The bill defines "aging foster children" as former foster children up to the age of 21 who were either in foster care for at least six months after the age of 14 and were not adopted or reunited with family by the age of 18; adopted after the age of 14; or in foster care for at least six months after the age of 14 and meet the definition of "homeless children and youths" or qualify by reason of low income for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). HB 1090 defines "justice involved youth" as between the ages of 18 and 21 who are currently or previously committed to the Department of Juvenile Justice and were placed, or are currently placed, in a nonsecure facility or community setting. The bill includes mentorship services provided to justice involved youth as a qualified expense. The annual compensation threshold to receive the credit is increased from \$500 to \$1,200 per year, and payments made to employees of a qualified mentorship organization that provide services other than mentorship are a qualified expense. The bill adds business enterprises, defined as an insurance company required to pay the tax provided for in O.C.G.A. 33-8-4, to be eligible for the credit for qualified expenditures related to wraparound services. HB 1090 authorizes the tax commissioner to share information necessary to efficiently administer and enforce provisions when another state agency has statutory authority to administer such tax credits.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Finance Committee.

HB 1264 (Stephens-164th) Authorizes the Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers, and Marriage and Family Therapists and the Georgia Board of Nursing to establish a professional health program to provide for monitoring and rehabilitation of impaired healthcare professionals.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee.

HB 1361

(Thomas-21st) Outlines definitions and penalties regarding offenses related to trespassing and harassing wild animals. It defines "harassment" as any act that disregards the well-being of a wild animal or disrupts its normal behavior patterns. A "wild animal" encompasses any land or sea creature found in the wild, excluding domestic animals or livestock, even those housed in facilities for public visitation, conservation, or education. The code delineates degrees of criminal trespass involving wild animals, with first-degree offenses resulting in injury or death of the animal being a felony punishable by imprisonment for one to ten years, and second-degree offenses being misdemeanors punishable by up to 12 months' imprisonment. Offenders are liable for damages to property, including harm to the animal. The code specifies that certain defenses, like lack of sufficient guarding or provocation, are not valid excuses for trespassing or harassing wild animals. Additionally, it exempts individuals aiding others or animals in need from certain trespassing restrictions. Furthermore, the section introduces definitions pertinent to obscenity laws, such as "artificial intelligence system," "child," and "sexually explicit conduct," providing clarity for legal interpretation and enforcement.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Yet to be assigned to Senate Committee.

SB 335

(Albers-56th) Includes "by virtue of adoption" in the definition of relationships in which the offense of incest is possible.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee.

SB 342

(Robertson-29th) Authorizes the disclosure or use of information from child abuse and neglect registries by the Department of Human Services to locate, recover, or provide services to a child determined to be missing or a victim of sexual exploitation. The bill also allows for access to records concerning reports of child abuse and missing or exploited children to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Juvenile Justice Committee.

SB 370

(Hodges-3rd) Requires massage therapists, body art studios and convenience stores to post human trafficking hotline information; and provides for human trafficking awareness training for board members. The bill provides for inspections of massage therapy practices; and requires licensees to display a photograph along with their massage therapy practice licenses.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Regulated Industries Committee.

SB 376

(Tillery-19th) Clarifies requirements of parents, DFCS, and court in order to improve timely permanent placement of a child removed from their home. The bill provides for a hearing to be held prior to a dependent child's fifteenth month in foster care to review a determination of the Division of Family and Children Services not to petition to terminate parental rights.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Juvenile Justice Committee.

- SB 387** (Kirkpatrick-32nd) Provides that personal identification card applications of certain applicants who are either homeless or in the legal custody of the Division of Family and Children Services do not require signatures by the applicant's parent, guardian, or responsible adult; and authorizes the Department of Human Services to establish programs that will provide a child or youth entering foster care with a photograph.
- STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Juvenile Justice Committee.*
- SB 401** (Kirkpatrick-32nd) Require juvenile courts to collect additional data relating to adherence to time frames for post-TPR reviews and report data on those time frames and on cases of dually-adjudicated children to the Administrative Office of the Courts for further analysis and reporting to the legislature annually. The bill also eliminates service of process for parents under certain circumstances at the adjudication stage of a dependency case.
- STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Juvenile Justice Committee.*
- SB 454** (Strickland-17th) Provides for guidelines for child support award calculations.
- STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Yet to be assigned to a House committee.*
- SB 483** (Hatchett-50th) Enters Georgia into the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children, for the placement of dependent children in approved homes in other states.
- STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Juvenile Justice Committee.*
- SB 493** (Hatchett-50th) Provides for additional penalties for registered sexual offenders convicted of photographing a minor without the consent of the minor's parent or guardian. The bill also provides that such persons are prohibited from possessing, owning, or operating an unmanned aircraft system with the intent to photograph, observe, follow, or contact any person without his or her consent.
- STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Yet to be assigned to a House committee.*
- SB 512** (Still-48th) Establishes a Victims of Human Trafficking Fund Commission, administratively assigned to the Division of Family and Children Services. It creates a separate fund in the state treasury for disbursements, including for care, rehabilitative services, residential housing, health services, and social services for victims. The commission, comprised of appointed members, is tasked with overseeing fund disbursements, maintaining records, and adhering to state standards. The commission is empowered to recommend changes in state programs and policies relating to the care of exploited victims, solicit federal funds and donations, and impose additional penalties for certain offenses, with funds directed to the Victims of Human Trafficking Fund. Additionally, it grants victims a cause of action against perpetrators and allows for the forfeiture of property used in the commission of related crimes, and provides for a required human trafficking training program for hotels.
- STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Yet to be assigned to a House committee.*

SB 520 (Cowsert-46th) Changes and clarifies provisions relating to income withholding orders, aligning state law terminology with that of federal law by replacing the term "income deduction order" with "income withholding order".

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Juvenile Justice Committee.

SR 616 (Still-48th) Amends the Constitution so as to provide that the General Assembly by general law may provide for the allocation of certain additional penalties and assessments to the Victims of Human Trafficking Fund for the purpose of providing care and rehabilitative and social services to individuals in this state who have been or may be sexually exploited.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Yet to be assigned to a House committee.

THE FOLLOWING BILLS DID NOT CROSS OVER

HB 425 (Gullett-19th) Allows an individual who is registered as a sex offender to petition the superior court to be released from the registry when he or she has reached the age of 80 years old and has completed all prison, parole, supervised release, and probation for the offense that required registration. A person can also petition the superior court to be released from the registry when he or she: 1) was convicted and required to register under the laws of another jurisdiction and been removed from that other jurisdiction's registry; 2) has completed all prison, parole, supervised release, and probation requirements for the offense that required registration and 10 years have elapsed since the requirements have been met; and 4) the individual has been classified by the board as a Level I risk classification. When a person petitions the court to be removed from the registry solely on the basis that he or she completed all prison, parole, supervised release, and probation requirements, then he or she can do so if five years have elapsed since completing the requirements and if he or she is a level I risk classification. HB 425 also amends O.C.G.A. 42-1-15 to add a definition for "place of worship" and to incorporate places of worship into distance requirements for those on the sexual offender registry. The bill revises certain distance requirements with different distinctions for those who are classified as Level I and Level II.

HB 565 (Smith-18th) Extends the lifetime maximum cash assistance available through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program from 48 months to 60 months, and increases the monthly benefit amount to 30 percent of the federal poverty guidelines effective July 1, 2024. The bill increases the resource limit of an applicant to \$5,000, excluding the value of a vehicle if it is used for activities related to work, training, or education. If there is an additional vehicle not used for these purposes, a \$4,650 exclusion is applied.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Public Health Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 656](#) (Reeves-99th) Revises the offenses of cruelty to children in the second and third degrees and establish the offense of traveling to meet a minor for indecent purposes.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 840](#) (Fleming-114th) Provides for a right of action against any person who knowingly or negligently engages in sexually explicit conduct in the presence of a minor or who knowingly or negligently allows, permits, encourages, or requires a minor to be present while another engages in sexually explicit conduct in the presence of such minor.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Judiciary Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 875](#) (Roberts-52nd) Prevents persons convicted of family violence offenses or subject to family violence temporary protective orders from receiving, possessing, transporting, purchasing, or transferring firearms.

STATUS: House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 1057](#) (Park-107th) Revises the tax credit for qualified caregiving expenses, allowing a family caregiver a tax credit against for qualified caregiving expenses in an amount not to exceed 10% of the total amount expended for qualified caregiving expenses, with an annual maximum of \$1000. Additionally, the bill adds individuals at least 18 years of age who requires assistance with one or more activities of daily living (as determined by a licensed physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner) and qualifies as a dependent of the family caregiver to the definition of "Qualifying family member."

STATUS: House Ways and Means Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 1110](#) (Crawford-84th) Provides for dating violence protective orders.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 1129](#) (Holcomb-81st) States that a victim of human trafficking is not criminally liable for any sexual crime (as defined in Code Section 16-3-6) or any other criminal act committed as a direct result of, or incident to, being a victim of human trafficking (under Code Section 16-5-46).

STATUS: House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1130 (Holcomb-81st) States that individuals who commit an offense as a direct result of being a victim of trafficking (under Code Section 16-5-46) are immune from criminal prosecution. The immunity motion may include documentation of the victim's status as a trafficking victim, creating a rebuttable presumption. Official documentation can include records from legal proceedings or affidavits from professionals. The burden of proof in an immunity hearing lies with the defendant. The legislation clarifies that participating in an immunity hearing does not waive any defenses or objections at trial. Additionally, the bill specifies that certain factors, such as the failure to plead an affirmative defense or prevail at trial, are not relevant to proceedings related to trafficking victim defendants.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1136 (Mainor-56th) Clarifies that stalking and aggravated stalking can be committed both directly and indirectly; to provide that each violation of stalking and aggravated stalking constitutes a separate offense and shall not merge with any other offense. The bill also revises the information to be supplied in family violence reports and provides for periodic audits of police agencies with regard to the completion and filing of such reports.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1184 (Anulewicz-42nd) Adds communications made in the context of victim centered programs, including restorative justice practices, and sanctioned victim-offender dialogues in the list of conversations which are considered privileged.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Judiciary Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1209 (Clark-100th) "Ethan's Law" - Prohibits the court from mandating family reunification treatments, programs, or services that impose certain conditions on enrollment or participation. These conditions include violating court orders for no contact between a child and their parent or legal guardian, requiring overnight, out-of-state, or multiday stays, transferring physical or legal custody of the child, involving private youth transporters using force or threats, and employing coercion, verbal abuse, isolation, or other distressing circumstances. This ensures that family reunification efforts are conducted in a manner that prioritizes the well-being and safety of the child and avoids potentially harmful or coercive practices.

STATUS: House Juvenile Justice Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HR 1214 (Reese-140th) Creates the House Study Committee on the Affordability and Accessibility of Georgia's Legitimation Process.

STATUS: House Juvenile Justice Committee. The bill did not cross over.

- HR 1255** (Bell-75th) Creates the House Study Committee on Combating Human Trafficking in Major Transportation Areas.
- STATUS: House Transportation Committee.*
- SB 378** (Harbin-16th) Increases sentences for persons convicted of trafficking a minor or a developmentally disabled person for sexual servitude.
- STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill did not cross over.*
- SB 428** (Tillery-19th) States that in cases involving personal injury or death resulting from a foster child's use of a motor vehicle, the damages awarded against the foster parent, based solely on the family-purpose car doctrine or the negligent entrustment doctrine, cannot exceed the applicable policy limits of the foster parent's motor vehicle liability insurance coverage. This applies if the insurance coverage complies with the minimum requirements under Chapter 34 of Title 33, known as the 'Georgia Motor Vehicle Accident Reparations Act,' at the time of the incident leading to the legal action.
- STATUS: Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill did not cross over.*
- SB 466** (Hatchett-50th) Provide for limitations of defense that a sexually exploitive visual medium is digitally altered for the offense of sexual exploitation of children.
- STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill did not cross over.*
- SB 498** (Jackson-41st) Creates the Georgia Interagency Council for the Homeless.
- STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Government Oversight Committee. The bill did not cross over.*
- SB 514** (Still-48th) Provides for a required human trafficking training program for hotels.
- STATUS: Senate Public Safety Committee. The bill did not cross over.*
- SB 545** (Harbison-15th) Provides for judicial discretion in determining the right of a surviving parent to custody of a child when such surviving parent is criminally charged with the murder or voluntary manslaughter of the other parent.
- STATUS: Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill did not cross over.*



Health & Behavioral Health

THE FOLLOWING BILLS CROSSED OVER

HB 82 (Jackson-128th) Relating to tax credits for rural physicians, the bill subsequently creates a tax credit of up to \$5,000 for rural healthcare professionals, defined as physicians and dentists operating in a rural county. The tax credit may be claimed for up to five years for eligible professionals, provided that the healthcare professional continues operating in a rural county. The aggregate amount of the tax credit is limited to \$2 million per year.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by Substitute in the Senate Finance Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

HB 181 (Townsend-179th) Adds the compound 7-hydroxymitragynine to the definition of "kratom." The bill limits the methods that kratom can be ingested and requires that the sale of kratom be only behind the counter in stores. Anyone violating this section is guilty of a misdemeanor. The bill requires all kratom products to be derived from the natural kratom plant. A kratom processor cannot sell or distribute a kratom product that is adulterated or contains certain compounds or substances within it. An entity that manufactures, distributes, sells, or delivers kratom must maintain a registered agent in the state. A processor who knowingly or recklessly commits an act in violation will be guilty of a high and aggravated misdemeanor as a first offense and a felony on a second or subsequent offense, with a penalty of imprisonment between one to 15 years; a maximum fine of \$100,000; or both. A processor who negligently commits an act in violation of O.C.G.A. 16-13-122 will be guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to a maximum fine of \$1,000. A person who suffers injury or damages as a result of a violation of this Code section can also bring a civil action for actual damages, which are presumed to be at least \$250, together with court costs.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

HB 362 (Mathiak-74th) Requires benefit providers to provide a written account of payments and reimbursements for services to treating providers upon 30 days of a request being made.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Insurance and Labor Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

HB 441

(Dempsey-13th) Defines terms such as "authorizing dentist," "dental hygienist," and "teledentistry," providing clarity on their roles and responsibilities within the context of remote dental care. Provides that licensed dentists intending to practice teledentistry must adhere to stringent requirements including establishing formal referral relationships with in-state dentists and notifying the board of their intent to practice teledentistry. Dentists must also ensure informed consent from patients, emphasizing the limitations of remote care compared to traditional in-person examinations. The code also delineates the role of dental hygienists in teledentistry. Dental hygienists must be licensed and in good standing, meeting specific requirements to perform dental hygiene functions permitted under general supervision. The bill also mandates that health insurance plans cover teledentistry services as directed by Department of Insurance regulations. Insurers are prohibited from excluding such services or imposing additional costs based solely on their mode of delivery. Enforcement of these regulations falls under the jurisdiction of the Commissioner of Insurance, who is empowered to ensure compliance by health insurers with the provisions related to teledentistry coverage. Furthermore, the code empowers the Board to promulgate rules and regulations necessary for the effective implementation of teledentistry practices, providing guidance and standardization for practitioners statewide, including dental hygienists.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Yet to be assigned to Senate Committee.

HB 546

(Jasperse-11th) Amends the definition of "pharmacy care" within the 'Georgia Pharmacy Practice Act' to allow for adaption of a prescription drug order. The bill allows a pharmacist to adapt a prescription drug order, under certain circumstances, by changing the quantity of medication prescribed, changing the dosage form of the prescription, and completing missing information on a prescription drug order. Adaptions must be documented and done with patient consent.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Health and Human Services Committee.

HB 557

(Stephens-164th) The bill authorizes advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants to prescribe hydrocodone, oxycodone, or their compounds in emergency situations, provided they maintain good standing with the relevant medical board and possess at least one year of post-licensure clinical experience. Patients receiving such prescriptions must be at least 18 years old, with the initial prescription limited to a five-day supply. Authorization for this practice must be incorporated into the provider's nurse protocol agreement or physician assistant's job description. Additionally, the bill permits licensed chiropractors, advanced practice registered nurses, and physician assistants to provide affidavits for individuals with disabilities to obtain temporary, permanent, or special permanent parking permits. It includes provisions safeguarding healthcare professionals seeking mental health or wellness services, ensuring their participation is not reported to licensing boards unless they are deemed unfit to practice or pose a danger. Evaluators of the program will enjoy immunity from civil liability under certain circumstances, and their findings will not be admissible in civil actions. Furthermore, the bill prohibits hospitals or hospital systems from imposing or enforcing restrictive covenants against staff in cases of permanent closure or acquisition resulting in reduced compensation.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. Awaits transmission to the governor for his consideration.

[HB 576](#)

(Gullett-19th) Prohibits an individual's vaccine status from being used to determine priority status on an organ transplant waiting list.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Health and Human Services Committee.

[HB 663](#)

(Hatchett-155th) States that minors admitted to hospitals or long-term care facilities have the right to have a designated essential caregiver present at all times. This caregiver can be a parent, guardian, or another individual designated by the patient or resident, ensuring support for the patient's personal needs and overall well-being. Similarly, adults admitted to these facilities also have the right to a designated essential caregiver. These caregivers are required to comply with all facility policies, rules of conduct, and safety protocols, including wearing personal protective equipment provided by the facility. However, the article specifies that designated essential caregivers may not have access to certain restricted areas within the facility, such as operating rooms or isolation units, and their presence may be limited to specific areas where the patient or resident is receiving care. Facilities have the authority to suspend or terminate the access of designated essential caregivers under various circumstances, including noncompliance with facility policies, failure to comply with safety protocols, or presenting a health or safety risk to others. Additionally, hospitals and long-term care facilities have the discretion to establish visitation policies that limit or restrict visitor access under certain conditions, such as when visitors may interfere with patient care or pose a safety risk. The article emphasizes that the rights specified within it cannot be terminated, suspended, or waived by the facility, and patients cannot be required to waive these rights. Furthermore, facilities are required to post informational materials developed by the Department of Public Health regarding these rights on their websites.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Yet to be assigned to Senate Committee.

[HB 793](#)

(Barton-5th) Allows an applicant for a license in social work who is enrolled in the last semester of their master's degree program for social work to sit for the master's social work licensing examination.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee.

[HB 872](#)

(Hawkins-27th) Allows for dental students to be eligible for the service cancelable loan program when they agree to practice in rural counties with a population of 50,000 or less.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Health and Human Services Committee.

[HB 874](#)

(Hawkins-27th) Requires all public schools to always have a functional automated external defibrillator (AED) on site at all times during school hours and during any school-related function. Each school will ensure that the following requirements are met: designate an internal response team; ensure that all internal response team members and any other expected users receive training; ensure that emergency medical services are aware of the AED's location; ensure the AED is maintained/tested appropriately; ensure involvement of a

licensed physician for training, notifications, and maintenance; establish a written emergency action plan; and conduct a minimum of two emergency action practice drills each school year.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Education and Youth Committee.

[HB 924](#) (Ballinger-23rd) Prohibits insurance companies from requiring the practice of "white bagging" by in-network providers for certain specialty medications. "White bagging" is the practice of requiring that these drugs be purchased through third-party pharmacies.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Yet to be assigned to Senate Committee.

[HB 991](#) (Blackmon-146th) Extends the sunset provision on the Hospital Medicaid Financing Program from 2025 to 2030.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Health and Human Services Committee.

[HB 1028](#) (LaHood-171st) Clarifies certain rules/regulations relating to the Department of Public Health including adding certain conditions to the definition of sexually transmitted diseases, adding opioid antagonists and post-exposure prophylaxis drugs to the commissioner's standing order, and removing certain outdated code sections.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Health and Human Services Committee.

[HB 1035](#) (Cooper-45th) Allows for the sale and supply of opioid antagonists in vending machines. Additionally, persons and harm reduction organizations that dispense, supply, and administer opioid antagonists are immune from liability when acting in good faith.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Health and Human Services Committee.

[HB 1077](#) (Cooper-45th) Creates a student loan repayment program for behavioral health providers. Eligible providers include but are not limited to licensed psychiatrists, addiction medicine specialists, psychologists, social workers, professional counselors, and marriage/family therapists. Repayment can be received for up to six years, and annual amounts range from \$10,000 to \$50,000 depending on the share of Medicaid patients seen. Total repayment may not exceed \$220,000. The Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce is also required to sponsor clinical behavioral health training programs at eligible institutions.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee.

[HB 1104](#) (Crawford-84th) Requires athletic associations to post on their website guidelines and relevant materials informing and educating students, parents/guardians, school personnel, and coaches about screening for mental health risks and available resources. Coaches will annually view approved educational videos, if available, and review guidelines/materials related to mental health risks in student athletes.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Yet to be assigned to Senate Committee.

- [HB 1170](#) (Hawkins-27th) Requires that government buildings, courthouses, and schools with automated external defibrillators provide opioid antagonists to assist in the event of an opioid overdose.
- STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Health and Human Services Committee.*
- [HB 1183](#) (Dempsey-13th) Requires local school systems to provide certain information to parents and guardians of students in grades six through 12 on Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes whenever other health information is provided.
- STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Education and Youth Committee.*
- [HB 1260](#) (Gaines-120th) Requires the Commissioner of Agriculture to establish and maintain a directory of nicotine vapor products authorized for sale in this state; and prohibits the sale of any nicotine vapor product not listed in the directory. The bill also provides for compliance checks, civil penalties and enforcement and rules and regulations. The bill also requires the Commissioner to provide an annual report to the General Assembly.
- STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Yet to be assigned to Senate Committee.*
- [HB 1314](#) (Romman-97th) Designates emergency medical services, including ambulance service, as an essential service.
- STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Yet to be assigned to Senate Committee.*
- [HB 1322](#) (Cannon-172nd) Regulates consumable hemp products; and requires such products be packaged in certain containers. The bill also puts restrictions on advertisements of such products, on the location of retail establishments that sell such products.
- STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Yet to be assigned to Senate Committee.*

HB 1339

(Parrish-158th) Modifies and updates statutes relating to the state's certificate of need (CON) processes. The Department of Community Health (DCH) is required to review and update the state health plan every five years. The time period to submit a letter of intent is reduced from 30 to 25 days before application submission. The 120-day period for DCH to review the application begins upon receipt of the application and within 30 days of receipt, an applicant will be provided an opportunity to meet and review with DCH. Opposition is required to be submitted within 30 days of the receipt of the application. Additionally, expenditure thresholds for the construction, remodeling, and installation of capital projects are removed. HB 1339 expands several provisions relating to CON exemptions. The allowable period for a closed hospital to be repurposed without a CON is extended from 12 to 24 months. The expansion of hospital bed capacity is increased to 10 beds or 20 percent within a three-year period when the occupancy rate exceeds 60 percent for the previous 12 months is exempt. The maximum distance for certain healthcare facilities to relocate without a CON is extended from a three-mile radius to a five mile radius of the original location. Psychiatric or substance abuse inpatient programs or beds for Medicaid and uninsured patients are now exempt when an agreement is reached with a nearby hospital. New or expanded rural hospital-based obstetric services are exempt. Acute care facilities in rural counties are exempt under certain circumstances. Transfers of existing beds and services are exempt when they occur within the same hospital system and are within a 10-mile radius of the original campus, provided the exemption has not been used in the prior 24 months. Noncompliance is addressed in Section 6 of HB 1339. Failure to meet one or more requirements for exemption will result in a monetary penalty. Repeated failure to pay fines or produce data leads to the revocation of exemption. Penalties associated with delayed or unsubmitted reports are increased from \$500 to \$2,000 per day up to 30 days and from \$1,000 to \$5,000 per day for every day after 30 days. DCH and the General Assembly's Office of Legislative Counsel will review and make recommendations to update and rewrite Title 31, Chapter 6 and other such provisions relating to CON in consultation with relevant stakeholders. Recommendations will be made to the General Assembly by December 1, 2024. The DCH commissioner will approve proportional donations to an individual rural hospital if the contribution exceeds the yearly maximum contribution amount. The maximum limit on the rural hospital tax credit is increased from \$75 million to \$100 million per taxable year and the sunset is extended from December 31, 2024 to December 31, 2029. HB 1339 creates the Comprehensive Health Coverage Commission, which will advise the General Assembly, governor, and DCH on matters related to the quality of and access to healthcare by low income and uninsured populations, including reimbursement, funding, quality improvement, and service delivery enhancement opportunities. The commission will consist of nine members including a chairperson appointed by the governor, four non-legislative members appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives, and four non-legislative members appointed by the president of the Senate. The commission's initial report will be submitted no later than December 1, 2024 and the commission will be abolished on December 31, 2026.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee.

[HB 1344](#) (Dempsey-13th) Revises provisions related to the Behavioral Health Coordinating Council. The commissioners of the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, Department of Early Care and Learning, Department of Community Health, Department of Public Health, Department of Human Services, Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Corrections, Department of Community Supervision, Department of Community Affairs, Technical College System of Georgia, Department of Labor, and the State School Superintendent will be authorized to attend or send a delegate to attend meetings. The Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers, and Marriage and Family Therapists can waive experience requirements for licensure applicants from other jurisdictions when their license is in good standing for at least two years.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Yet to be assigned to Senate Committee.

[HB 1409](#) (Leverett-123rd) Pertains to the legal liability of inpatient mental health providers in the delivery of care to individuals under the age of 21 and are in Department of Human Services (DHS) or determined by DHS to be in need of mental health care. Mental health care providers will not be held liable unless there is clear and convincing evidence of gross negligence. In such cases, the jury will be instructed to consider the patient's medical history, previous provider-patient relationships, and circumstances surrounding delivery of services.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Yet to be assigned to Senate Committee.

[SB 76](#) (Merritt-9th) Requires state health benefit plans to cover insulin medication at an amount not to exceed \$35.00 per 30 day supply or \$105.00 per 90 day supply.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Health Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

[SB 293](#) (Watson-1st) Clarifies that the Commissioner appoints a District Health Director (DHD) to serve as the CEO of each local health department in a district, and the county board of health vote to approve the selection of a DHD is by majority vote; and allows the DHD to be a non-physician, as long as a physician serves as the chief medical officer to oversee the clinical programs of the health department. DHDs that are physicians, may serve as both the DHD and CMO. The bill also explains that the Commissioner can select an interim DHD if there is vacancy, without county board of health approval until a permanent DHD is appointed and approved by a vote of the county boards of health.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Public Health Committee.

[SB 373](#) (Walker-20th) Provides for the issuance of expedited licenses by endorsement for marriage and family therapists.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Regulated Industries Committee.

[SB 377](#) (Tillery-19th) Defines and clarifies qualified residential treatment programs as a type of licensed child-caring institution.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Public Health Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

SB 395 (Dixon-45th) Authorizes schools to maintain a stock supply of opioid antagonists and trained school personnel to administer opioid antagonists and carry opioid antagonists on their person.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Yet to be assigned to a House committee.

SB 455 (Strickland-17th) Relating to recovery of medical assistance from third party liable for sickness, injury, disease, or disability, so as to revise certain provisions to comply with federal law and to bar liable third-party payers from refusing payment solely because a health care item or service did not receive prior authorization. The bill also requires a third-party payer to respond to a state inquiry regarding a health care claim within 60 days.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Health Committee.

SB 460 (Dixon-45th) Revises provisions relating to the number of advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants that a physician can authorize and supervise at any one time.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Yet to be assigned to a House committee.

SB 480 (Hodges-3rd) Provides for student loan repayment for mental health and substance use professionals serving in certain capacities; and authorizes the board to approve applications; to provide for eligibility requirements.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Yet to be assigned to a House committee.

SB 495 (Watson-1st) Relating to the Low THC Oil Patient Registry, so as to provide for the term of validity of a registration card.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Yet to be assigned to a House committee.

THE FOLLOWING BILLS DID NOT CROSS OVER

HB 174 (Bentley-150th) Requires the Department of Education to provide information regarding recommended vaccination for meningococcal meningitis, human papillomavirus virus (HPV), and tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (TDAP) to parents and guardians of students entering the sixth grade.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Public Health Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 363 (LaHood-175th) Increases the aggregate amount of rural hospital organization tax credits allowed from \$75 million to \$80 million. The limit for a member of a limited liability company, a shareholder of a Subchapter 'S' corporation, or a partner in a partnership is increased from \$10,000 to \$25,000. The sunset provision for the credit is changed to

December 31, 2029. The bill also amends O.C.G.A. 31-8-9.1 to add "rural freestanding emergency department" to the definition of eligible "rural hospital organization".

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Ways and Means Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 856](#) (Au-50th) Establishes a program to provide urgent insulin assistance to eligible individuals, capping the copay at \$35 and outlines the roles of pharmacies and manufacturers.

STATUS: House Public Health Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 857](#) (Au-50th) Makes insulin accessible to an eligible individual who needs an affordable supply of insulin for up to one year, with the option to renew annually. The bill also to allows the pharmacy to collect a co-payment not to exceed \$75.00 for insulin dispensed through this program.

STATUS: House Public Health Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 861](#) (Schofield-63rd) Requires ingredients to be listed on packages containing menstrual products.

STATUS: House Agriculture and Consumer Affairs Committee

[HB 897](#) (Ridley-22nd) Repeals the authority of the Department of Public Health and all county boards of health to require persons to submit to vaccinations against or other measures to prevent contagious or infectious diseases.

STATUS: House Public Health Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 913](#) (Barnes-86th) Establishes of a grant program for the purpose of creating emergency psychiatric assessment, treatment, and healing (EmPATH) units in hospitals.

STATUS: House Public Health Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 963](#) (Scott-76th) Subject to appropriations, the State Board of Education shall establish and implement the K-5 Social and Emotional Health Pilot Program to determine the impact of dedicated school mental health professionals in kindergarten through fifth grade that have high-poverty, high-need students. The pilot program shall be implemented within pilot schools and administered by the department.

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 1005](#) (Lim-98th) Requires that every health benefit policy to provide coverage for rabies immune globulin and vaccinations administered after potential exposure to rabies.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Insurance Committee. The bill did not cross over.

- [HB 1006](#) (Lim-98th) Requires local school systems or public schools issuing identification cards to include certain information regarding suicide prevention resources.
- STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.*
- [HB 1029](#) (Mathiak-74th) Requires the newborn screening system to include Duchenne muscular dystrophy.
- STATUS: House Public Health Committee. The bill did not cross over.*
- [HB 1050](#) (Mathiak-74th) Modifies the licensing requirements for social workers and marriage and family therapists, as well as increases the required quarter hours for an approved supervised internship to 90 hours in order to be licensed as a professional counselor.
- STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Regulated Industries Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.*
- [HB 1064](#) (Schofield-63rd) "Trauma Informed School Counselors Act" in Georgia amends the "Quality Basic Education Act" to ensure funding for school counselors. It establishes program weights to pay for at least one school counselor for every 450 students. Additionally, starting in Fiscal Year 2027, it introduces a new category of "trauma informed school counselors" with program weights to support their salaries for every 150 students. The Act mandates the creation of a trauma informed counseling endorsement by December 31, 2024, and outlines topics that must be covered in the associated training program. The Professional Standards Commission will assess the fidelity of training and implementation for those receiving the endorsement.
- STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.*
- [HB 1065](#) (Scott-76th) Establishes the "Temporary Youth Behavioral Health Services Program" within the Department of Public Health in Georgia. The program aims to enhance access to behavioral health care providers for individuals under the age of 18, including those up to 22 years old receiving special education services. Key provisions include defining terms such as "behavioral health care provider," "client," "portal," "telehealth," and "treatment." The department is tasked with developing the program's framework, including provider application processes, reimbursement rates, and a statewide public awareness campaign targeting organizations interacting with youth at the local level. The program is designed to offer behavioral health services through telehealth and in-person sessions.
- STATUS: House Public Health Committee. The bill did not cross over.*
- [HB 1107](#) (Mainor-56th) Requires notice of admission and daily updates from a mental health facility to the parent or legal guardian of an involuntary minor patient under 12 years of age.
- STATUS: House Public Health Committee. The bill did not cross over.*

- [HB 1179](#) (Cooper-45th) Provides that step therapy protocols may not be required for medications prescribed for the treatment of serious mental illness under health benefit plans or Medicaid.
- STATUS: House Public Health Committee. The bill did not cross over.*
- [HB 1252](#) (Scott-76th) Prohibits smoking and vaping inside any motor vehicle when a person who is under 18 years of age is present.
- STATUS: House Public Health Committee. The bill did not cross over.*
- [HB 1340](#) (Hilton-48th) Provides for credentialing of qualified behavior analysts and qualified autism services practitioner-supervisors.
- STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Health Committee. The bill did not cross over.*
- [HB 1343](#) (Lim-98th) Provides Medicaid coverage for tobacco cessation treatments.
- STATUS: House Public Health Committee. The bill did not cross over.*
- [HB 1377](#) (Holcomb-81st) Repeals the prohibition on expenditure or use of state resources to advocate for or intend to influence citizens in support of Medicaid expansion under the federal Affordable Care Act.
- STATUS: House Health Committee. The bill did not cross over.*
- [HB 1424](#) (Lim-98th) Provides that a person shall have the right to obtain contraceptives and to engage or refuse to engage in the use of contraception. A health care provider shall have the right to provide access to contraceptives and contraception related information.
- STATUS: House Health Committee. The bill did not cross over.*
- [HB 1437](#) (Scoggins-14th) Requires insurance coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of pediatric autoimmune neuropsychiatric disorders associated with streptococcal infection (PANDAS) and pediatric acute onset neuropsychiatric syndrome (PANS) in accordance with nationally recognized clinical practice guidelines.
- STATUS: House Hopper, but will not cross over.*
- [HR 1283](#) (Powell-33rd) Creates the House Study Committee on Safety and Consumer Protection of Nicotine Vapor Products.
- STATUS: House Regulated Industries Committee. The bill did not cross over.*

- [SB 336](#) (Kirkpatrick-32nd) Allows the heads of the certain state agencies to be represented by a delegate or agent at any meeting of the Behavioral Health Coordinating Council or subcommittee meeting. Such representative will be counted toward a quorum, have all voting privileges as the member's delegate, and shall not be considered an absence of the member. Additionally, relating to licensing provisions relative to professional counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists, the bill authorizes the licensure board to waive all or a portion of the experience requirements for any applicant licensed under the laws of another jurisdiction who has maintained full licensure in good standing in such jurisdiction for a minimum of two years.
- STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee. The bill did not cross over.*
- [SB 350](#) (Kirkpatrick-32nd) Prohibits the sale of consumable hemp products to, and the purchase or possession of consumable hemp products by individuals under the age of 21 years.
- STATUS: Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill did not cross over.*
- [SB 419](#) (Walker-20th) Allows certified registered nurse anesthetist to administer anesthesia pursuant to an order by a duly licensed physician, dentist, or podiatrist.
- STATUS: Senate Health and Human Services Committee. The bill did not cross over.*
- [SB 441](#) (Merritt-9th) Requires prescribers to discuss with patients, their parent, or guardian the risks of addiction, dependence, and fatal overdose associated with opioid use and all available alternative treatments; and to document the notification in the patient's file. The bill also requires prescribers to provide information regarding the safe disposal, if available, to patients, their parent, or guardian; and excludes prescribers providing prescription for a patient who is currently in active treatment for cancer, receiving hospice care from a licensed hospice or palliative care facility, or is a resident of a long-term care facility, or to any medications that are being prescribed for use in the treatment of substance abuse or opioid dependence.
- STATUS: Senate Health and Human Services Committee. The bill did not cross over.*
- [SB 445](#) (Sims-12th) Requires the Department of Education to provide to parents and guardians of students entering the sixth grade information regarding recommended adolescent vaccinations in print and electronic form. Vaccines include meningococcal meningitis disease, human papillomavirus (HPV), and tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (TDAP).
- STATUS: Senate Education and Youth Committee. The bill did not cross over.*
- [SB 481](#) (Hodges-3rd) Relating to the Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce, so as to provide for the establishment of the Georgia Health Care Professionals Data System; and for collaboration with state licensing boards.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[SB 487](#)

(Lucas-26th) Provides for a Medicaid waiver expansion to cover eligible adults below 95 percent of the federal poverty level, integrate behavioral health and housing services with Medicaid accountable care organizations, and establish reporting requirements to the General Assembly.

STATUS: Senate Health and Human Services Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[SB 519](#)

(Watson-1st) Prohibits prescribing or administering certain hormone replacement therapies and puberty blocking medications for certain purposes to minors; and prohibits prescribing or administering certain hormone replacement therapies and puberty blocking medications for the treatment of gender dysphoria for certain purposes.

STATUS: Senate Children and Families Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[SB 524](#)

(Anavitarte-31st) Provides for the certification of community health workers; and for the establishment of the Georgia Community Health Worker Certification Committee. The bill also provides for Medicaid reimbursement and insurance coverage.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[SB 537](#)

(Merritt-9th) Increases the rate of the tax on consumable vapor products; to provide that the proceeds derived from such increase are intended to be appropriated for healthcare purposes.

STATUS: Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[SB 539](#)

(Merritt-9th) Increases the rate of the tax on each pack of cigarettes; to provide that the proceeds derived from such increase are intended to be appropriated for healthcare purposes.

STATUS: Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[SB 564](#)

(Parent-42nd) Provides that a person shall have the right to obtain contraceptives and to engage or refuse to engage in the use of contraception. A health care provider shall have the right to provide access to contraceptives and contraception related information.

STATUS: Senate Health and Human Services Committee. The bill did not cross over.

Maternal & Infant Care

THE FOLLOWING BILLS CROSSED OVER

HB 1037 (Daniel-117th) Creates the Georgia Commission on Maternal and Infant Health to make policy recommendations regarding perinatal care programs and develop quality metrics. The commission will consist of 14 members with six appointed by the governor, three by the lieutenant governor, and three by the speaker of the House of Representatives. The commissioner of the Department of Public Health and chief executive officer of the Georgia Research Alliance will also serve as members. A report of findings and recommendations is due on July 1, 2026 and the commission will be repealed.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Health and Human Services Committee.

THE FOLLOWING BILLS DID NOT CROSS OVER

HB 1030 (Crowe-118th) Authorizes ambulance services to accept physical custody of a newborn and authorizes the placement of newborn safety devices in a medical facility, fire station, police station, or ambulance service if the device is located in an area that is conspicuous and visible to employees, agents, or staff members of such facility or station and such facility or station is staffed by an emergency medical services provider on a 24 hour, seven days per week basis.

STATUS: House Public Health Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1038 (Daniel-117th) Creates the offense of "reproductive battery, stating that a "physician commits the offense of reproductive battery if he or she intentionally transfers or implants into the body of a recipient human reproductive material from a donor knowing the recipient has not consented to the use of the human reproductive material from such donor." The bill also provides that consent to an anonymous donor is not a defense, sets out a statute of limitations and defines penalties, including the revocation of a physician's license.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1081 (Taylor-173rd) "Georgia Preeclampsia Biomarker Testing Act of 2024" Requires private insurers and Georgia Medicaid to provide coverage for testing that allows pregnant women to be screened for preeclampsia through biomarker testing.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Public Health Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1154 (Cannon-172nd) Mandates Medicaid coverage when pediatricians offer and perform maternal screening for perinatal mood and anxiety disorders.

STATUS: House Public Health Committee. The bill did not cross over.

- HB 1155** (Cannon-172nd) "Newborn Baby and Mother Protection Act" - Requires minimum health policy coverage, prohibited actions by insurance providers, and required notice to mother, so as to mandate coverage when pediatricians offer and provide mothers with screening for perinatal mood and anxiety disorders.
- STATUS: House Public Health Committee. The bill did not cross over.*
- HB 1176** (Kelley-16th) Provide for coverage by private insurance, the State Health Benefits Plan, and the state Medicaid program of infant formula when a woman is medically unable to breastfeed.
- STATUS: House Public Health Committee. The bill did not cross over.*
- HB 1215** (Cannon-172nd) "Georgia Dignity in Pregnancy and Childbirth Act" - Requires perinatal facilities in this state to implement evidence-based implicit bias programs for its healthcare professionals, and for the compilation and tracking of data on severe maternal morbidity and pregnancy related deaths.
- STATUS: House Public Health Committee. The bill did not cross over.*
- HB 1216** (Cannon-172nd) Provides for a pilot program to provide coverage under the Medicaid program for doula care for pregnant Medicaid recipients.
- STATUS: House Public Health Committee. The bill did not cross over.*
- HB 1301** (Mathiak-74th) Requires the newborn screening system to include Duchenne muscular dystrophy.
- STATUS: House Health Committee. The bill did not cross over.*
- HB 1302** (Bennett-94th) Provides for mandatory maternal mental health screening for perinatal mood and anxiety disorders for Medicaid recipients at specific points during and after pregnancy, and for additional screening as deemed necessary by healthcare providers. The bill also requires mandatory education regarding postpartum depression to women after childbirth; and authorizes the department to submit necessary amendment or waiver requests to implement such screening as part of the state Medicaid program.
- STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Health Committee. The bill did not cross over.*
- HR 1231** (Newton-127th) Creates the House Study Committee on Maternal, Prenatal, and Pediatric Care Access and Funding.
- STATUS: House Health Committee. The bill did not cross over.*
- SB 283** (Strickland-17th) Provides for reasonable accommodations to job applicants and employees for circumstances related to pregnancy, childbirth, and related conditions.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill did not cross over.

SB 372 (Islam-Parkes-7th) Exempts tax on the sale or use of equipment, furniture, clothing, vitamins, toys, bedding, and other goods designed and customarily used for child-rearing from prenatal through age three.

STATUS: Senate Finance Committee. The bill did not cross over.

SB 544 (Harbison-15th) Provides that arrested women submit to pregnancy testing protocols under certain circumstances and revises provisions relating to the treatment of pregnant and postpartum female inmates. The bill also enacts a provision regarding delayed sentencing for pregnant or postpartum female inmates; and provides for the reporting of certain information.

STATUS: Senate Public Safety Committee. The bill did not cross over.

SB 546 (James-35th) Provides for the licensure and regulation of community midwives.

STATUS: Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee. The bill did not cross over.

SB 565 (Parent-42nd) Provides that a human egg or human embryo is not considered an unborn child, a minor child, or a person for any purpose under law.

STATUS: Senate Health and Human Services Committee. The bill did not cross over.



Early Childhood Education & Out-of-School Time

THE FOLLOWING BILLS CROSSED OVER

SB 360 (Hickman-4th) Provide that capital outlay funds may be used for educational facilities for voluntary pre-kindergarten programs provided by the school system; and that student projection counts may include pre-kindergarten.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Education Committee.

SB 386 (Dixon-45th) Provides for the regulation and taxation of sports betting in this state and increases funding to the state's Pre-K programs.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Higher Education Committee.

SR 471 (Albers-56th) Creates the Senate Study Committee on Access to Affordable Child Care (including for school-age children).

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. This is a Senate Study Committee and therefore does not need House approval.

[SR 587](#) (Dixon-45th) Recognizes February 14, 2024, as Afterschool Day at the state capitol.

STATUS: SENATE ADOPTED.

THE FOLLOWING BILLS DID NOT CROSS OVER

[HB 941](#) (Erwin-32nd) Allows capital outlay funds to be used for educational facilities for Georgia's Pre-K Program provided by the school system. The bill also allows that student projection counts may include pre-kindergarten.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 1393](#) (Bell-75th) Provides for a minimum salary schedule for Georgia's Pre-K Program lead teachers, subject to appropriations.

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[SR 1230](#) (Campbell-35th) Amends the Constitution so as to authorize the General Assembly to provide by law for the creation of a Children First Trust Fund; providing for the appropriation of moneys into such fund, including a one-time appropriation from the Revenue Shortfall Reserve; and providing that returns on such investments shall be used for financial assistance for child care services.

STATUS: House Rules Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[SB 550](#) (Mallow-2nd) Provides for a minimum salary schedule for Georgia's Pre-K Program lead teachers, subject to appropriations.

STATUS: Senate Education and Youth Committee. The bill did not cross over.

K-12 Education

THE FOLLOWING BILLS CROSSED OVER

[HB 282](#) (Mainor-56th) Clarifies that the career course that the State Board of Education must prescribe for grades six through 12 must be a career readiness course, focusing on instruction and training experiences. The bill requires the Department of Education to assemble and develop resources and materials regarding career readiness and employability, and to make those resources available to state public schools. The minimum course of study must be ready for implementation by July 1, 2024.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Education and Youth Committee.

HB 318

(Hilton-48th) The legislative update encompasses several significant changes. Firstly, it involves the reestablishment of the Office of Charter School Compliance and the establishment of the Office of District Flexibility. These offices aim to streamline the administration and oversight of charter schools within the state's education system. Secondly, the bill mandates that administrative fees withheld by the state or local school systems for charter school administration must be exclusively utilized for that purpose. Up to three percent of charter school funding can be retained by local boards of education for administrative services, with any unused funds required to be remitted to the charter school annually. The Department of Education is also authorized to retain up to 3% for the administration of state-chartered special schools, with any remaining funds to be returned to the respective schools. Moreover, the legislation revises the eligibility criteria for project-specific capital outlay grants for low-wealth school systems, taking into account factors such as revenue rankings and the age of educational facilities. Additionally, it empowers the State Board of Education to establish rules and regulations to implement the provisions outlined in the bill. Lastly, the update includes changes to the definitions of energy cost savings measures and contracts, reflecting adjustments in terminology and scope within the energy efficiency sector.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. House agreed to Senate changes so the bill awaits transmission to the Governor for his consideration.

HB 579

(Barrett-24th) Relating to the 'Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Act' to allow students who previously qualified for the scholarship to remain eligible throughout the students' education. HB 579 requires the Department of Education to electronically deposit payments into the accounts of participating schools.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Education and Youth Committee.

HB 970

(Dickey-145th) The bill expands the eligibility criteria for the Realizing Educational Achievement Can Happen (REACH) scholarship program to include victims of human trafficking. Under HB 970, REACH participating school systems are empowered to designate REACH scholars annually, pending available appropriations. It mandates that participating school systems allocate \$1,000 and have the authority to provide an additional \$9,000 for each REACH scholar enrolled in their system.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Higher Education Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

HB 987

(Cannon-172nd) The term "qualified local school system" is amended to reduce the minimum required millage rate or effective millage rate from 14 to 10 mills beginning July 1, 2024. School systems that receive equalization must meet these requirements or risk a 25 percent midterm adjustment of the initial equalization grant amount.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Education and Youth Committee.

HB 995

(Bonner-73rd) Requires local school systems to provide an optional nationally recognized multiple-aptitude battery assessment to predict future academic and occupational success in the military to students in grades 11 and 12. This assessment will be provided to students during school hours at least once a school year.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Veterans Military and Homeland Security Committee. The bill will be heard in committee this TUESDAY.

HB 1122

(Hilton-48th) Provides for funding requirements for superintendents and principals for local and state charter schools and allows part-time employees who work at least 20 hours per week to have their children attend the charter school. The bill also clarifies conflicts of interest around who can serve on state and charter boards. (Thanks to GSBA for help with the summary!)

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Yet to be assigned to Senate Committee.

SB 105

(Walker-20th) Revises the minimum and maximum allowable benefit multiplier for current and future retiree retirement benefits payable upon normal, early, or delayed retirement in the Public School Employees Retirement System.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Retirement Committee.

SB 147

(Still-48th) "Boundless Opportunities for Georgia Students Act" - Permits student transfers between local school systems without contracts between the local school system where the student resides and the local school system where the student seeks to enroll.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Education Committee.

SB 202

(Rahman-5th) Provides for the GaDOE to establish and study a pilot program of outdoor learning spaces on elementary and secondary school property in order to determine whether and how to implement best practices and design standards for outdoor learning spaces.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Yet to be assigned to a House committee.

SB 208

(Dolezal-27th) Allows each local board of education of a high growth school system to, by resolution, impose, levy, and collect educational development impact fees within any area of such school system with a total increase in student enrollment of 20% or more during the immediately preceding ten-year period.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Yet to be assigned to a House committee.

SB 233

(Dolezal-27th) Creates the 'Georgia Promise Scholarship Act', which would provide \$6,500 per student to families for qualified education-related expenses outside of the public school system. Qualified education expenses include tuition at a participating school, tutoring, and purchase of curriculum, professional services, transportation, and other expenses authorized by the State Board of Education. Funds will go into an account controlled by a parent to be used for qualified education expenses. In order to allow parents and taxpayers to measure the achievements of this program, students participating must take nationally norm-referenced tests that measure student academic progress in math and language arts annually. The bill stipulates reporting requirements participating schools must provide annually to the Georgia Student Finance Commission and the Department of Education. The commission must annually report to the General Assembly on the previous fiscal year's promise scholarship recipients and their respective schools.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Education Committee.

SB 405

(Dixon-45th) Lowers the age of eligibility from 18 to 16 for certain students to be enrolled in a completion special school.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Education Committee.

SB 440

(Brass-28th) "Accelerated Career Diploma Program" - Creates a 3-year pilot program with grants from the Georgia Student Finance Commission. Included in the variety of requirements for participation is a half-credit course in financial literacy.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Education Committee.

SB 464

(Dixon-45th) Establishes the School Supplies for Teachers Program, subject to appropriation by the General Assembly and the availability of other funds for such purpose. The bill also provides for identification of a universal reading screener for use by public schools.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Yet to be assigned to a House committee.

SR 189

(Dolezal-27th) Constitutional Amendment for enabling legislation (SB 208) that provides that the General Assembly may by general law authorize local boards of education to impose, levy, and collect development impact fees and use the proceeds to pay for a share of the cost of additional educational facilities.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Yet to be assigned to a House committee.

THE FOLLOWING BILLS DID NOT CROSS OVER

HB 127

(Mainor-56th) Directs the State Board of Education to develop rules and regulations for local school systems to follow when interpreters are needed for limited English-proficient students and their parents during Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings. HB 127 further requires community outreach efforts by local school systems to provide parents with information regarding the English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) program.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 585

(Jones-25th) Allows local boards of education of high-growth school systems to impose, levy, and collect educational development impact fees. The bill has an effective date of January 1, 2025, which is dependent on passage of a constitutional amendment to authorize educational development impact fees.

STATUS: House Governmental Affairs Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 822

(Carpenter-4th) In relation to sex education courses, to ensure the prescribed course of study is age-appropriate and medically accurate. The language of this Code section relating to acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) is replaced with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) throughout. Parents or any legal guardian of a student maintain the right to review course materials and opt-out participation in the sex education course. Sex education curricula and course instruction must emphasize sexual abstinence.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 891

(Thomas-65th) Creates a tax credit of up to \$2,000 per year per student for certain social extracurricular expenses for home school students. Such expenses shall be limited to tuition or fees for participation or attendance in this state at any in-person children's sports league; children's group instructional class for ballet, dance, or martial arts; or instructional camp for groups of children.

STATUS: House Ways and Means Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 899

(Davis-87th) Provides for QBE funding assistance to eligible public schools to reduce school violence and improve school safety and security.

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 900

(Davis-87th) Establishes the Refugee and International Students Equalization (RISE) program to provide for funding and wraparound services for eligible students; defines "international student"; and establishes a program weight and teacher-student ratio for the RISE program in the QBE funding formula.

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 914

(Barnes-86th) Authorizes local boards of education and other public school governing bodies to offer driver education as an elective course; to provide for funding from local funds, student fees subject to waiver, and state funding subject to appropriations.

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 936

(Bonner-73rd) Requires multiple occupancy restrooms and changing areas in public schools to be designated for exclusive use by males or females. The bill also states that a public school or local school system that sponsors or supervises an overnight trip involving public school students shall ensure that a public school student attending the overnight trip either shares sleeping quarters with a member or, if necessary, multiple members, of the same sex; or is provided single-occupancy sleeping quarters. A public school student attending an overnight trip may share sleeping quarters with a member of the opposite sex if the member of the opposite sex is a member of such student's immediate family.

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1027

(Ballard-147th) Implements a new graduation requirement. Beginning in the 2030- 2031 school year, students must have earned a full-credit computer science course in grades eight through 12 in order to graduate. The computer science course shall be in-person, virtual, or through remote instruction. The computer science course can replace a math, science, CTAE, or elective credit, with some limitations, in order to satisfy this graduation requirement.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1036

(Daniel-117th) Requires a course of instruction in pregnancy, health, and human development for students in grades nine through 12 and that such course of instruction be included in the course of instruction regarding health and physical education. The bill also requires the State Board of Education to consult with the Department of Public Health to develop the course.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1045

(Clark-100th) Requires each school in this state that receives state funding for education to give notice and receive written consent prior to providing students in kindergarten through grade 12 with sexual orientation or gender identity instruction, and prohibits school nurses, counselors, teachers, administrators, and other school personnel from knowingly encouraging or coercing a student under the age of 18 years to withhold from his or her parent or legal guardian that his or her perception of his or her gender is inconsistent with his or her sex or from knowingly withholding from the parent or legal guardian of a student under the age of 18 years information related to his or her perception that his or her gender is inconsistent with his or her sex.

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1082

(Mainor-56th) States that no local board of education, public school administrator, or other school personnel, acting in an official capacity, can prohibit public school students from voluntarily praying or engaging in privately initiated religious speech and activities as long as it doesn't disrupt classwork or infringe on the rights of others. However, reasonable rules of order can be imposed to maintain order. The provision also prohibits promoting or favoring any religion or compelling students to participate in or refrain from religious activities. Public school personnel, while on duty, are allowed to engage in privately initiated religious speech and activities on the same terms as other private conversations, but they must not compel or persuade students to join in such activities.

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1131

(Townsend-179th) Provides for evidence-based suicide awareness and training programs, youth violence prevention training programs, and student violence prevention clubs in elementary and secondary education. The bill also requires local policies for anonymous reporting of a dangerous, violent, threatening, harmful, or potentially harmful activity which occurs or is threatened to occur on school property or which relates to students or school personnel.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1133

(Mainor-56th) Requires training programs for local boards of education to include certain provisions, and for annual completion of such training programs.

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1167 (Townsend-179th) Relating to grants awarded to public schools by the Georgia Foundation for Public Education to improve student achievement, and removes a provision requiring that priority be given to schools in the lowest five percent of performance. The bill amends O.C.G.A 48-7-29.21, relating to tax credits for qualified education donations for awarding grants to public schools, to increase the maximum amount of tax credit available from \$1,000 to \$2,500 for individuals, from \$2,500 to \$5,000 for a joint return, and from \$10,000 to \$25,000 for a member of a limited liability company, shareholder of a Subchapter 'S' corporation, or partner in a partnership. The aggregate amount of tax credits allowed is increased from \$5 million to \$10 million. HB 1167 removes a provision that prohibits a taxpayer from directing a donation to a school or program that the taxpayer's child or children attend.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Ways and Means Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1186 (Hilton-48th) Requires the Office of Student Achievement to calculate a single score between 0-100 for each public school and school system annually. The score must be posted on the websites of each school, school system, the Office of Student Achievement, and the Department of Education within 30 days of completing the calculations for the score.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1194 (Dubnik-29th) Requires the State Board of Education to provide for procedures for student transfers between local school systems; and that only the receiving local school system shall have the authority to grant or refuse permission for such transfers.

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1198 (Bazemore-69th) Establishes a three-year pilot immersive writing program for eligible public elementary schools and provides for grant funds for eligible public schools to develop and implement immersive writing programs for students in grades two through four.

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1221 (Smith-18th) Relating to a student attending a school in a system other than the system of the student's residence. Beginning July 1, 2026, if a student attends a school outside of the student's local school system, the new school system cannot charge more than the local share of funding for tuition to transfer students. If a transfer student is eligible for free or reduced-price lunch the new school system cannot charge tuition.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1226

(Hilton-48th) Provides for public school students to be permitted to attend courses in religious moral instruction provided by a person or organization independently of a public school, subject to certain conditions. The bill also provides for students to receive academic credit for such courses, requires local education agencies to adopt certain policies, and prohibits students who participate in such courses from being counted as absent from school.

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1262

(Mainor-56th) Provides for a cause of action by aggrieved students against local education agencies for breach of the duty to provide for an adequate public education.

STATUS: House Judiciary Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1276

(Cox-28th) Provides for high school student athletes and prospective student athletes to receive name, image, or likeness compensation.

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1290

(Bazemore-69th) Requires that any course of study in sex education and HIV/AIDS prevention instruction is age appropriate and provides instruction on consent and intimate partner violence and abuse; establishes new requirements on the prescribed course for human trafficking awareness; and requires the course on awareness and prevention of sex abuse and assault be taught through the twelfth grade.

STATUS: House Public Health Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1328

(Glaize-67th) Adds a program for students living in poverty to the table of quality basic education instructional programs with weights and student-teacher ratios.

STATUS: House Education Committee

HB 1350

(Reese-140th) Stipulates that student performers participating in productions during school days shall not be marked absent, provided their absence is certified by a parent or guardian and a designated coordinator using a form issued by the Department of Labor. It also mandates that instruction and related services for student performers must align with state educational standards, with specific requirements for performances lasting three or more consecutive school days. Additionally, it establishes procedures for communication between studio teachers, school personnel, and parents or guardians regarding the student performer's education. The Department of Labor is tasked with developing necessary forms and policies in consultation with the Department of Education to ensure compliance with the code.

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 1351](#) (Glaize-67th) Provides for grants by the State Board of Education to local units of administration to support students living in poverty; and provides that a minimum required portion of grant funds must be used by local units of administration for direct program expenditures for the benefit of the students living in poverty.

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 1375](#) (Neal-79th) Exempts the sale or use of materials used in construction of capital outlay projects for educational purposes that were approved and funded through a constitutionally authorized education special purpose local option sales tax.

STATUS: House Ways and Means Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 1381](#) (Evans-89th) Establishes standards for literacy coaches under the Professional Standards Commission.

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 1384](#) (Cox-28th) Increases from three to five the number of accumulated sick leave days teachers and other school personnel may take each school year for personal or professional reasons.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 1387](#) (Adesanya-43rd) Provides for coursework and educational programs and activities on the history of Black Americans through the history of the United States and their contributions to American society.

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 1396](#) (Bell-75th) Requires public schools to implement an English and Spanish dual language immersion program for students in kindergarten through grade five.

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HR 1114](#) (Mainor-56th) Amends the Constitution so as to provide that sales tax for educational purposes may be used and expended for the benefit of public charter schools located within local school systems.

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HR 1165](#) (Smith-18th) Amends the Constitution so as to provide that the qualifications, duties, and salary of the school superintendent shall be established by the board of education as provided by general law and authorizes the General Assembly to provide by law that local school superintendents shall be elected by voters as an alternative to being appointed by local boards of education, if approved by local referendum.

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.

SB 88

(Summers-13th) Requires that parents at private schools opt-in before students attend classes "addressing issues of gender identity, queer theory, gender ideology, or gender transition." The bill also requires local boards to set policies providing guidelines for staff and students.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Education & Youth Committee. The bill did not cross over.

SB 365

(Dolezal-27th) Provide for notification to parents and legal guardians of public school students of the right to receive email notification each time their child obtains school library materials. The bill also expands the definition of "public record" relating to inspection of students' records by parents.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Education and Youth Committee. The bill did not cross over.

SB 379

(Harbin-16th) Authorizes a local school system or public school to employ or accept as a volunteer a school chaplain to provide ancillary support, services, and programs for students as assigned by the local school superintendent or the local board of education or other public school governing body. The bill also states that "A school chaplain employed or accepted as a volunteer under this subsection is not required to be a certificated professional personnel or otherwise subject to any rule or regulation of the Professional Standards Commission."

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Government Oversight Committee. The bill did not cross over.

SB 423

(Halpern-39th) Mandates that, by July 1, 2025, each public high school in Georgia with interscholastic athletics must have at least one automated external defibrillator (AED) on-site, following a cardiac emergency response plan. It also requires public school safety plans to include a cardiac emergency response plan (CERP) for responding to incidents of sudden cardiac arrest, with specified guidelines and annual reviews. Schools can request state funding for safety improvements.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Education and Youth Committee. The bill did not cross over.

SB 432

(Harrell-40th) Starting from the 2024-2025 school year, elementary schools are required to schedule an average of 30 minutes per school day for recess for students in kindergarten through grade five. Schools with grades six through eight must schedule an average of 20 minutes per school day for recess. Recess cannot be withheld for disciplinary or academic reasons for students in kindergarten through grade eight. By August 1, 2024, each local board of education must establish a written policy ensuring recess and addressing personnel authorization, safety measures, and support for academic learning during recess. By September 1, 2024, each local board of education must provide the State Board of Education with a copy of the recess policy. This Code section prioritizes the physical health and safety of students and is not subject to waivers for strategic waivers school systems or local flexibility options.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Education and Youth Committee. The bill did not cross over.

SB 438

(Summers-13th) Defines "gender" as a person's biological sex determined by reproductive biology and genetics at birth, as stated on the official birth certificate. "Gender identity" is defined as a person's self-perceived or claimed gender. The legislation prohibits schools from allowing a person whose gender is male but identifies as female to participate in female-designated interscholastic athletics. It also restricts the use of multiple occupancy restrooms or changing areas designated for the opposite gender in the context of interscholastic athletics. Students or parents aggrieved by violations have the right to file grievances, appeal decisions to the local board of education, and seek private legal action for injunctive or declaratory relief. The provision explicitly notes that it does not override requirements or protections under the federal Americans with Disabilities Act. The bill also repeals a grant of discretionary authority to athletic association executive oversight committees by deleting "prohibit students whose gender is male from participating in athletic events that are designated for students whose gender is female, then the athletic association may adopt a policy to that effect; provided, however, that such policy shall be applied to all of the athletic association's participating public high schools;" from current law.

STATUS: Senate Education and Youth Committee. The bill did not cross over.

SB 459

(Dixon-45th) Requires the State Board of Education to develop a comprehensive civics education program for students in kindergarten through grade 12, and requires the Department of Education, in consultation with the Georgia Commission on Civics Education, to curate oral history resources to be known as "Portraits in Patriotism" as part of such civics education program and develop civics education program workshops for public school personnel.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Education and Youth Committee. The bill did not cross over.

SB 501

(Harbin-16th) Authorizes public elementary and secondary schools to display the Ten Commandments and provides for the display of the Ten Commandments in each public elementary and secondary school classroom in this state, subject to appropriation by the General Assembly or other available funding. The bill also authorizes the expenditure of public funds for the purchase of such displays.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Government Oversight Committee. The bill did not cross over.

SB 527

(Islam-Parkes-7th) Exempts sales of clothing and school related supplies for limited periods of time.

STATUS: Senate Finance Committee. The bill did not cross over.

SB 530

(Anavitarte-31st) Provide for the placement of certificated professional personnel on the state minimum salary schedule under the "Quality Basic Education Act."

STATUS: Senate Education and Youth Committee. The bill did not cross over.

SB 532

(Dixon-45th) Prohibits sex education for public school students in this state before fifth grade; to require the State Board of Education to approve age- and grade-appropriate content standards for sex education curricula; to provide for definitions; to provide for construction; to revise the "Parents Bill of Rights" to provide for parents to revocably opt-in to sex education for their children.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Education and Youth Committee. The bill did not cross over.

SB 555

(Williams-25th) Exempts sales of clothing and school related supplies during the second week of August each year.

STATUS: Senate Finance Committee. The bill did not cross over.

SB 556

(Halpern-39th) Establishes a three-year pilot robotics program for eligible public schools.

STATUS: Senate Education and Youth Committee. The bill did not cross over.

SB 575

(Hickman-4th) Constitutional Amendment providing that sales tax for educational purposes may be used and shall be expended for the procurement of materials, supplies, and instructional supports to be used for educational purposes in the classroom; and that such purchases shall comprise not more than 15% of the local school system's total expenditure of proceeds of the tax.

STATUS: Senate Finance Committee. The bill did not cross over.

SB 692

(Williams-25th) Creates the Senate Transporting Students Safely Study Committee.

STATUS: Senate Education and Youth Committee. The bill did not cross over.



Higher Education

THE FOLLOWING BILLS CROSSED OVER

HB 56

(Petrea-166th) Expands eligibility for the Public Safety Memorial Grant to include spouses of law enforcement officers, firefighters, or prison guards who have died in the line of duty.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Yet to be assigned to Senate Committee.

HB 130

(Gambill-15th) Establishes a student loan repayment program for eligible full-time peace officers. The total repayment amount must not exceed \$20,000 or the total student debt amount, whichever is less. Payments will be paid in annual installments for a period not exceeding five years. The Georgia Student Finance Authority is authorized to establish rules and regulations to implement the program, and the program is contingent upon appropriation of funds by the General Assembly.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. House agreed to Senate changes so the bill awaits transmission to the Governor for his consideration.

HB 982

(Gambill-15th) Authorizes the State Workforce Development Board to develop and approve a high-demand career list.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Higher Education Committee.

HB 985

(Martin-49th) Abolishes the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation and transfers any obligations, liabilities, or assets to the Georgia Student Finance Authority.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Higher Education Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

HB 1124

(Martin-49th) Extends the sunset provision of the Needs-based scholarship from 2025 to 2027 and changes the eligibility requirements from 80% to 70% of the credit requirements toward the credential of his or her program of study, if such program is a four-year program; or 45% of the credit requirements toward the credential of his or her program of study, if such program is a two-year program.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Higher Education Committee.

[HB 1231](#) (Holcomb-81st) Allows students who are concurrently seeking a baccalaureate degree and a first professional degree, and students who meet achievement standards and commence a graduate program at an eligible institution within 18 months of earning a baccalaureate degree, to use the full number of hours of HOPE scholarship eligibility.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Yet to be assigned to Senate Committee.

[SB 385](#) (Williams-25th) Revises legislative intent language regarding postsecondary study beyond the second year level at the Georgia Military College.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Higher Education Committee.

[SB 399](#) (Echols-49th) Encourages and state expectations for the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia and local boards of education to enter into and amend existing agreements with the State Board of the Technical College System of Georgia for awarding postsecondary course credits that are transferrable between the university system and the technical college system.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Higher Education Committee.

[SB 469](#) (Esteves-6th) Relating to the Georgia Higher Education Savings Plan, so as to increase the maximum amount of contributions to a reasonable maximum amount as determined by the board based on current and anticipated education expenses.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Yet to be assigned to a House committee.

[SB 497](#) (Hickman-4th) Redesignates the High-demand Career Initiatives Program as the High Demand Apprenticeship Program. The bill also has provisions relating to accessing HOPE scholarship funds for dual enrolled students and termination, so as to make a conforming change.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Higher Education Committee.

THE FOLLOWING BILLS DID NOT CROSS OVER

[HB 148](#) (Hugley-141st) Establishes grant funds to be paid by public schools to student teachers who successfully complete their student teaching requirements and requires the State Board of Education to establish rules and regulations to implement the program.

STATUS: House Higher Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 853](#) (Bell-75th) Repeals the "Drug-free Postsecondary Education Act of 1990," thereby removing provisions that make students convicted of certain drug offenses ineligible for loans, scholarships, and grants. Notably, the bill provides that students shall not be deemed ineligible for HOPE scholarships or grants based solely on certain convictions.

STATUS: House Higher Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 1158](#)

(Jackson-68th) Regarding alimony and child support, so as to authorize postmajority child support when such child is enrolled in and attending an institution of postsecondary education.

STATUS: House Judiciary Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 1195](#)

(Kendrick-95th) Provides an income tax credit to a workforce-ready graduate employed in a high-tech full-time job after January 1, 2025. The graduate must be employed for 40 weeks of a 12-month period to receive a credit of \$4,000 per year of employment, up to \$12,000 in total. A "workforce-ready graduate" is defined as an individual with a degree in engineering, computer science, information science, or data science. A "high-tech full-time job" is defined as located in a rural county with a small business, as defined by O.C.G.A. 50-5-121, provides 30 hours or more of work a week, pays at or above the average hourly wage of the county with the lowest hourly wage in the state, and relates to one of the following job titles: data scientist; software developer; information security analyst; web developer; computer sales engineer; information technology manager; computer research scientist; network and systems administrator; or computer support specialist.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Ways and Means Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 1224](#)

(Fleming-114th) Establishes two categories of approved schools for Tuition Equalization Grant (TEG) eligibility, approved nonproprietary schools and approved proprietary schools. The bill requires an award amount of 150 percent of the regular TEG award for eligible students enrolled in a program of study included on the list of high-demand careers published by the Office of Workforce Development. The bill establishes the TEG Program for High-Demand Career Fields (TEG-HD) to provide grants in the amount of 150 percent of the regular TEG award to eligible students enrolled in designated high demand programs of study at eligible institutions.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Higher Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[SB 476](#)

(Esteves-6th) Provides for in-state tuition for certain noncitizen students.

STATUS: Senate Higher Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[SB 509](#)

(Dixon-45th) Prohibits public postsecondary institutions from inquiring about an applicant's criminal history, with exceptions for specified felony offenses. However, once admitted, institutions are permitted to request and utilize criminal history record information for counseling, decision-making regarding campus life participation, and financial aid purposes, considering factors like the nature of the offense, time passed since, the student's age at the time, and evidence of rehabilitation. Violations of these regulations may result in the withholding of state funding. Additionally, the legislation outlines circumstances under which criminal history record information is inadmissible in

civil proceedings involving the institution, its employees, or agents, emphasizing relevance to the case, restrictions or sealing of records, or lack of conviction.

STATUS: Senate Higher Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[SB 511](#)

(Harbin-16th) Relating to the university system, so as to require quarterly reports regarding certain funding received from individuals or entities related to China.

STATUS: Senate Higher Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[SB 526](#)

(Hickman-4th) Establishes the Georgia Good Faith Grant Program, which aims to provide needs-based grants to eligible students pursuing postsecondary education in Georgia. Key terms and definitions are provided, including those for the commission overseeing the program, the cost of attendance, eligible institutions, grant students, matching grants, program grants, student aid index, and Title IV regulations. Eligibility criteria for students seeking program grants are detailed, including completion of accredited secondary education, GPA requirements, enrollment status, completion of financial aid applications, demonstrated financial need, and residency classification. The text also specifies the renewal conditions for grants and the calculation of demonstrated financial need. Additionally, it outlines the disbursement process and the requirement for private colleges or universities to provide matching grants to eligible students. The commission is tasked with developing rules and regulations to ensure that grants are awarded to students demonstrating the most need.

STATUS: Senate Higher Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[SR 602](#)

(Beach-21st) Amends the Constitution of the State of Georgia so as to authorize the General Assembly to by general law restrict, regulate, or prohibit the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia from approving any increase in tuition or student fees of more than 3 percent greater than the amount of such tuition or student fee for the preceding academic year.

STATUS: Senate Economic Development and Tourism Committee. The bill did not cross over.



Environmental Safety

THE FOLLOWING BILLS CROSSED OVER

HB 348 (Collins-71st) Requires warning signs for traffic safety enforcement devices and school zone speed limit reduction to display flashing yellow lights while the speed reduction is in effect. The speed limit may be enforced 30 minutes prior to and 30 minutes after the school starts; 30 minutes prior to and 30 minutes after the school dismisses unless the school campus is bisected by a highway; and when the driver is 10 miles per hour over the speed limit. When a citation is issued, the driver will receive an assigned hearing date that must be within 60 days of issuance of the citation. If a penalty is unpaid 30 days after a final notice has been mailed, the vehicle's registration cannot be renewed until the penalty and late fees have been collected. The bill requires an assigned hearing date to be issued with a citation for improperly overtaking a school bus. Registration of the vehicle cannot be renewed until the penalty and late fees are collected. Most provisions of the old HB 301 were included in this bill as well. These increase penalties for overtaking a school bus.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Public Safety Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

HB 971 (Newton-127th) Allows a taxpayer to claim a tax credit of up to \$300 for eligible expenses related to firearm safe handling instructional courses and firearm secure storage devices. The tax credit will have an annual aggregate cap of \$3 million, and an individual taxpayer may only receive credits totaling \$300 in their lifetime from this program. Any unused tax credit cannot be carried forward.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Finance Committee.

SB 340 (Kirkpatrick-32nd) Exempts sales of firearm safes and firearm safety devices from sales and use taxes.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Ways and Means Committee

SB 351 (Anavitarte-31st) Requires local boards of education to adopt, implement, and enforce social media policies; and authorizes the Attorney General and the Department of Education to consult with and assist local boards of education in the development and implementation of such policies. Additionally, the bill requires social medial platforms to provide certain information to parents upon request; and gives enforcement authority to the Attorney General. The bill alters various provisions of the cyberbullying code.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Education Committee.

SB 402 (Ginn-47th) Allows those with intermediate driver's licenses (Class D licenses) to drive Class C vehicles (i.e., vehicles designed to carry sixteen or more passengers (including the driver), or used to transport hazardous materials in quantities that require a placard) on roads and streets but not on highways. The bill also allows such driver to have one non-family passenger in the Class C vehicle.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Motor Vehicles Committee.

SB 406 (Dixon-45th) Establishes a grant program to fund the creation of school mapping data for inclusion in the state-wide first responder building mapping information system and provides for standards for school mapping data.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee.

THE FOLLOWING BILLS DID NOT CROSS OVER

HB 1097 (Vance-133rd) Removes the availability of online courses without an instructor for purposes of driver education training.

STATUS: House Motor Vehicles Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1111 (Crawford-84th) Provides for the storage of a firearm within a motor vehicle or vessel and for exceptions to the standards for the carrying of weapons within school safety zones, at school functions, or on a bus or other transportation furnished by a school.

STATUS: House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1126 (Pirkle-169th) Repeals all law relative to enforcement of speeding in school zones through the use of automated traffic enforcement safety devices and prohibits a local governing body or law enforcement agency from entering into or renewing a contract that provides for enforcement of laws relative to speeding in school zones through the use of automated traffic enforcement safety devices.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Motor Vehicles Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1284 (Daniel-117th) Provides suggested standards for the establishment of school bus routes; enhances the penalties for meeting or overtaking a school bus; and provides for notification to insurance carriers upon issuance of a second or subsequent civil monetary penalty for such violations.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Motor Vehicles Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1295 (Pirkle-169th) Allows evidence related to the failure of someone to wear a safety belt or child safety restraint to be admissible in civil actions concerning failure to mitigate damages, assumption of risk, apportionment of fault, negligence, comparative negligence, contributory negligence, or causation.

STATUS: Recommended DO NOT PASS by the House Judiciary Committee and therefore did not progress.

HB 1296 (Hilton-48th) Provides for social media age verification, for parental permission and supervision, and for restrictions on minor's social media account activity. The bill also provides for the Consumer Protection Division of the Department of Law to investigate complaints, and for civil remedies.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Judiciary Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1310 (Moore-91st) Requires persons doing business in this state shall not expose individuals to chemicals known to cause cancer or reproductive toxicity without first giving clear and reasonable warning nor discharge such chemicals into drinking water; and that the Governor shall publish lists of such chemicals. The bill also authorizes the Attorney General and, under specified conditions, district attorneys and other persons to seek injunctions and civil penalties. The bill establishes the Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Fund.

STATUS: House Health Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1365 (Horner-3rd) Creates a civil remedy for damages against commercial entities that allow minors to access a social media platform without performing reasonable age verification methods; and provides for reasonable age verification requirements for commercial entities. The bill also provides that age verification information shall not be retained by commercial entities.

STATUS: House Judiciary Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HR 1163 (Moore-91st) Amends the Constitution of the State of Georgia so as to provide that revenue derived from the regulation of safe drinking water and toxic enforcement may be dedicated for certain purposes and not deposited into the general fund; and authorizes the General Assembly to create the Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Fund.

STATUS: House Natural Resources and Environment Committee.

SB 408 (Brass-28th) Removes the Board of Natural Resources' authority to require the regulation of fluoridation of potable public water supplies in incorporated communities.

STATUS: Senate Natural Resources and the Environment Committee. The bill did not cross over.

SB 492

(Williams-25th) States that when establishing routes for school buses, a public school system shall ensure that any stop at which a student is required to enter or exit the school bus is located upon the same side of the roadway as the door to the bus.

STATUS: Senate Education and Youth Committee. The bill did not cross over.

SB 510

(Harbin-16th) Provides that all occupants of a passenger vehicle, whether in a front seat or back seat, shall be restrained by a seat safety belt; and provides for an exception for children under eight who are properly restrained.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Public Safety Committee. The bill did not cross over.



Shelter & Nutrition

THE FOLLOWING BILLS CROSSED OVER

HB 404

(Carpenter-4th) Requires that rental properties are fit for human habitation. The bill includes cooling as a utility that cannot be shut off prior to an eviction action. Landlords are prohibited from requiring a security deposit that exceeds two months' rent. A tenant, when they fail to pay charges owed to landlord, is afforded a three-business day written notice period prior to an eviction proceeding being filed. The eviction notice will be posted conspicuously on the property door in a sealed envelope and delivered via any methods agreed to in the rental agreement.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee. (Note that the effective date was amended in committee, so should the bill pass the Senate, it will need agreement from the House)

HB 1017

(Seabaugh-34th) Includes when a person enters a land or premises for purposes of residing on such land or premises in the definition of criminal trespass.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Yet to be assigned to Senate Committee.

HB 1034

(Franklin-160th) Designates the fourth Friday in November of each year as "National Sugarcane Syrup Day", because, frankly, why not?

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Economic Development and Tourism Committee

HB 1048

(Carpenter-4th) Designates cornbread as the official state bread.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Economic Development and Tourism Committee

[HB 1073](#)

(Washburn-144th) Repeals hearing and notice provisions relating to zoning decisions for halfway houses, drug rehabilitation centers, or drug dependency treatment centers.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate State and Local Governmental Operations Committee.

[HB 1182](#)

(Crowe-118th) Changes Georgia's Housing Tax Credit (HTC) program so that it would only be an 80% reduction in taxes except for certain "targeted community projects" which would remain eligible for the 100% match. (Georgia HTC program allows private for-profit and nonprofit organizations to receive a dollar-for-dollar reduction in their federal taxes in return for financing the rehabilitation or construction of low and very low-income rental units.) Targeted community projects are affordable housing projects that: are located in a rural area; reserve or prioritize a majority of units for seniors or provides a preference for veterans or first responders; are located near public transportation hubs; are rehabilitating or renovating existing housing (rather than new construction); or are owned by a public housing authority. (Thanks to GHF and Elizabeth Appley for help with this summary!)

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Finance Committee.

[HB 1203](#)

(Kelley-16th) Entitles a landlord to use an off-duty sheriff, sheriff's deputy, marshal, or Peace Officer Standards & Training Council (POST) certified officer with jurisdiction to execute a writ of possession at the landlord's sole cost and expense when an on-duty official is unable to execute the writ within 14 days of the landlord's application or request for execution. The landlord will have access to a list of authorized off-duty personnel, and provide written notice to the sheriff, constable, or marshal of the time of execution of the writ at last five calendar days in advance of the execution.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Judiciary Committee.

[HB 1410](#)

(Efstration-104th) Updates provisions of the State Housing Trust Fund. Defines a "homeless person" in detail, including those living in public places not meant for long-term accommodation, residing in temporary shelters, or facing imminent housing loss due to eviction, lack of resources, or other circumstances; "qualified sponsor", and "stable housing accountability program". These programs, certified by the commission, are designed to provide homeless individuals with voluntary, immediate, and stable housing, while also outlining specific conditions for residency, ongoing assistance for securing permanent housing, and adherence to accountability measures such as sobriety, job training, and participation in counseling. The application process for these programs involves assessing various factors, including the projected number of homeless persons to be assisted, the sponsor's ability to leverage resources, the geographic distribution of existing programs, and the quality of assistance offered to residents. The bill underscores the importance of allocating funds exclusively for stable housing accountability programs and mandates a performance audit conducted by the state auditor. This audit aims to evaluate spending on homeless programs, scrutinize contract awards, assess program metrics, and ensure accountability and effectiveness in addressing homelessness. The audit findings are to be reported to key state officials by a specified deadline, facilitating transparency and accountability in homeless program expenditure and management.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Yet to be assigned to Senate Committee.

THE FOLLOWING BILLS DID NOT CROSS OVER

[HB 965](#)

(Scott-76th) Provides for 60 days' notice of rental increase by landlord to tenant.

STATUS: House Judiciary Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 1055](#)

(Neal-79th) "Georgia Eviction Records Restriction Act" - Provides that certain records of dispossession actions during the COVID-19 public health emergency may be sealed from the public if the dispossession action was a result of any of the following: extraordinary financial and economic hardships beyond such person's control; COVID-19 related illness; loss of employment; or inability to obtain certain public benefits that were allocated for renters (If public benefits were obtained, such person shall demonstrate that such public benefits were used for their intended purpose).

STATUS: House Judiciary Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 1059](#)

(Scott-76th) "Georgia Tenant Protection and Mediation Act." Focuses on landlord and tenant relations. The key points include procedures for landlords to demand possession of rented or leased properties, with provisions for cases involving disabled adults and low-income individuals. The act introduces a residential eviction diversion program, allowing mediation between landlords and tenants to resolve lease violations. Landlords are required to participate in mediation, and failure to comply may be used as a defense by tenants.

STATUS: House Judiciary Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 1139](#)

(Gilliard-162nd) Provides for free meals to public school students enrolled in after-school education programs or summer school education programs.

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 1156](#)

(Jackson-68th) Repeals Code Section 44-7-19, relating to restrictions on rent regulation by local governments.

STATUS: House Governmental Affairs Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 1157](#)

(Jackson-68th) "Fair Business Practices Act of 1975," so as provide that a violation of the statute limiting certain rent increases is an unlawful business practice; provides for rent increase limits; and for exceptions; as well as for defense in eviction actions.

STATUS: House Judiciary Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 1210](#)

(Lim-98th) Outlines the definition of "multifamily residential housing" or "multifamily complex" as any residential building, structure, or portion thereof consisting of ten or more units. It authorizes the Department to establish and maintain a state-wide multifamily residential housing database known as the Georgia Multifamily Complex Data Base, with the aim of providing information to connect residents with safe, decent, and affordable housing options. The database will include voluntarily provided information from multifamily complexes regarding rental unit availability, rent rates, qualifications for renters, amenities, surrounding area details, and ownership information. The Department is required to publish and maintain this database on its website, ensuring public accessibility and searchability. Additionally, the Department is empowered to establish rules for the database's development and management but is prohibited from including any information not voluntarily provided by the multifamily complex owners or managers.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House State Planning and Community Affairs Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 1353](#)

(Bell-75th) Repeals the prohibition on local governments regulating the amount of rent to be charged for privately owned, single-family or multiple-unit residential rental property.

STATUS: House Governmental Affairs Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[HB 1416](#)

(Adesanya-43rd) States that landlords must keep the premises in repair and are liable for substantial improvements made with their consent. Additionally, any agreement for rental of property as a dwelling includes an implied provision that the premises are fit for human habitation. If a landlord fails to respond adequately to repair requests within five days, and the repairs are their responsibility, the tenant can hire a preapproved licensed professional (named in the lease or identified by the landlord) or any licensed professional. The tenant can then deduct the repair costs (up to 50% of the next rental installment) from the rent, provided they submit receipts to the landlord. If the repair costs exceed 50% of the rental installment, deductions can be made from subsequent rental payments until the costs are recovered, again not exceeding 50% of any installment. Other provisions are changed regarding failure to pay rent and the like.

STATUS: House Judiciary Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[SB 125](#)

(James-35th) Repeals restrictions on rent regulation by local governments.

STATUS: Senate Urban Affairs Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[SB 540](#)

(Merritt-9th) Requires landlords or managers for certain apartment buildings or complexes to provide services when certain crimes have been reported or investigated on the property; to provide for an additional declared unlawful act relative to fair housing.

STATUS: Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill did not cross over.

[SR 709](#)

(James-35th) Creates the Senate Rental Housing Affordability Study Committee.

STATUS: Senate Hopper and therefore will not cross over.



Miscellaneous

THE FOLLOWING BILLS CROSSED OVER

HB 30

(Carson-46th) Provides a definition of antisemitism for purposes of state government, using the advisory definition of antisemitism adopted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) on May 26, 2016. IHRA defines antisemitism as a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews, and includes rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions, and religious facilities. An agency that enforces any criminal or noncriminal law or regulation that prohibits discrimination will consider the definition of antisemitism during that enforcement. Nothing in the bill will be construed to infringe upon First Amendment rights or an individual's right to engage in legally protected conduct or activity pertaining to U.S. foreign policy or international affairs.

STATUS: SIGNED INTO LAW 1/31/24

HB 375

(Leverett-123rd) Relating to conservatorships and guardians, defines "gross settlement" as the present value of all amounts paid or to be paid in settlement of the claim, including: cash; medical expenses; expenses of litigation; attorney's fees; and any amounts allotted to a structured settlement or other similar financial arrangement.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to the Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill will be heard in committee TODAY (MONDAY).

HB 880

(Ballard-147th) Brings Georgia into compliance with the federal 'Servicemembers Civil Relief Act' and allows the spouse of a servicemember to practice his or her occupation without a license so long as that spouse: 1) holds a current license to practice the occupation in another state; 2) is in good standing in the other state; 3) has filed an application for an expedited license by endorsement along with the military orders of the servicemember, which can both be filed prior to moving to Georgia; 4) is hired by an in-state employer that may lawfully hire the spouse to engage in the occupation; and 5) has his or her information verified by the in-state employer. If a spouse is not issued a license by endorsement within 30 days of filing the application, then he or she can continue to work for the in-state employer without being licensed. If the spouse is denied an expedited license by endorsement, then that spouse will no longer qualify to engage in the practice of the occupation. A professional licensing board is permitted to investigate any persons exempted under this bill and to revoke that person's exemption if the spouse violated any of the recognized standards of the occupation or knowingly made any misleading or deceptive representations in his or her application.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Veterans Military and Homeland Security Committee. The bill will be heard in committee this TUESDAY.

- HB 1010** (Jones-47th) Increases the number of hours of annual paid parental leave for state employees from 120 to 240 hours. Paid parental leave can be used for the birth of a child or the foster and adoption placement of a child.
- STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Children and Families Committee.*
- HB 1021** (Daniel-117th) Increases the amount of the dependent exemption from \$3,000 per dependent to \$4,000 per dependent.
- STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Finance Committee.*
- HB 1026** (Hagan-156th) Designates the Southeast Georgia Soap Box Derby as the official soap box derby of the State of Georgia.
- STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Economic Development and Tourism Committee.*
- HB 1096** (Washburn-144th) Allows the Office of the Secretary of State to institute a unified system for tracking the continuing education credits completed by licensees of the various boards under the secretary of state's purview. Beginning on January 1, 2025, a professional licensing board shall not renew a license until the applicant has complied with all applicable continuing education requirements.
- STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Yet to be assigned to Senate Committee.*
- HB 1127** (Pirkle-169th) Adds definitions in the 'Georgia Hemp Farming Act' for "consumable hemp product", "contaminants", and "full panel certificate of analysis". The bill outlaws the sale of consumable hemp products unless a processor or manufacturer has contracted a full panel certificate of analysis within the past 12 months. Random inspections of consumable hemp products may be conducted by the Department of Agriculture to ensure compliance with this Code section. HB 1127 outlaws the ability to sell hemp products directly, or indirectly through another person, to any individual under the age of 21. Proper identification must be presented to confirm that a purchaser is of required age.
- STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee.*
- HB 1165** (Mainor-56th) Replaces the chairperson of the Governor's Office of Children and Families with the commissioner of the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities on the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council.
- STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Judiciary Committee.*
- HB 1190** (Collins-71st) Authorizes the division director within the office of the Secretary of State to issue licenses in instances when the requirements for licensure have been met and the professional licensing board fails to act within 60 days of the date of the receipt of an application and the information and documents required to be submitted with such application verifying that all requirements for the issuance of such license have been met.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Yet to be assigned to Senate Committee.

SB 180 (Setzler-37th) Provides for the preservation of religious freedom relating to state government.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Yet to be assigned to a House committee.

SB 198 (Harrell-40th) Creates the Georgians with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Innovation Commission.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Yet to be assigned to a House committee.

SB 235 (Halpern-39th) Creates the HBCU Innovation and Economic Prosperity Planning Districts Commission.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Higher Education Committee.

SB 390 (Walker-20th) Prohibits the Board of Regents from using any public funds on any materials, services, or operations offered by the American Library Association or any of its affiliates. The bill also prohibits the Department of Administrative Services from accepting any bid or proposal made by the American Library Association or any of its affiliates for a state contract.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Yet to be assigned to a House committee.

SB 414 (Kennedy-18th) Delineates the definitions and regulatory framework concerning the management of personal information by both public agencies and nonprofit organizations in detail. It provides comprehensive definitions for key terms such as "nonprofit organization," which encompasses various entities exempt from federal income tax, including charitable trusts, corporations, and religious organizations. Additionally, the term "person" is broadly defined to include individuals, corporations, partnerships, and other legal entities. "Personal information" is clearly defined as any data that directly or indirectly identifies individuals as supporters, donors, volunteers, or members of nonprofit organizations. The section explicitly prohibits public agencies from coercing individuals or nonprofits into providing personal information or publicly disclosing such data. Furthermore, it forbids public agencies from requesting lists of nonprofit supporters from their contractors or grantees. Exceptions to these restrictions are outlined, including instances where personal information disclosure is mandated by law, such as court-issued warrants or lawful requests during litigation. It also allows for personal information to be disclosed if voluntarily provided to the public by individuals or nonprofit organizations. The text addresses enforcement mechanisms by allowing individuals to pursue civil actions for damages against those who maliciously violate the provisions. It specifies potential treble damages and attorney's fees for willful violations, providing a strong deterrent against misconduct. Furthermore, the section criminalizes the knowing violation of these regulations by public agency employees, establishing misdemeanor penalties for such offenses.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Yet to be assigned to a House committee.

SB 433

(Cowsert-46th) "Donor Intent Protection Act" - Amends Georgia's nonprofit corporation provisions, introducing regulations related to charitable contributions with donor-imposed restrictions. It defines terms like 'charitable organization' and 'donor' and stipulates that a charitable organization must adhere to donor-imposed restrictions, allowing legal action by the donor or their representative if violations occur. The Act enables a civil action within six years of discovering a breach, and the court can issue remedies consistent with the charitable purposes specified in the endowment agreement, excluding the return of the contribution to the donor.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Judiciary Committee.

SB 437

(Robertson-29th) Authorize the Department of Agriculture to enforce certain criminal laws in OCGA Title 16 over which the agency would have jurisdiction. The bill also regulates consumable hemp products and prohibits the sale of consumable hemp products to individuals under the age of 21 years. It requires the posting of certain signs concerning the legal age to purchase consumable hemp products.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Yet to be assigned to a House committee.

SR 579

(Cowsert-46th) Constitutional amendment authorizing the Georgia General Assembly to provide by general law for sports betting in this state; and for the regulation and allocation of revenues of such activities.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Higher Education Committee.

THE FOLLOWING BILLS DID NOT CROSS OVER

HB 501

(Silcox-53rd) Removes the age cap that applies to age discrimination claims in the state by making it apply to those age 40 years or older. The bill also allows a minor 14 years or older to be employed during school vacations for purposes of working in the care and maintenance of lawns, gardens, and shrubbery owned and leased by the employer of the minor, including the operation of equipment. The minor must be covered by an insurance plan for accident or sickness, or a workers' compensation plan. The bill preempts localities from requiring issuance of an employment certificate or a youth work permit as a condition of payment or requiring an employer to obtain an employment certificate from a minor. The commissioner of the Department of Labor is permitted to investigate the age of any minor employed, hear evidence, and require the production of relevant books and records.

STATUS: Recommitted to the House Industry and Labor Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 738

(Hilton-48th) Creates the Task Force on Workforce and Safety Net Integration, which is composed of nine members, within the Technical College System of Georgia. The task force will determine how state agencies and departments can improve workforce development programs or improve employment situations for workers, while also reviewing whether certain agencies should be merged to better accomplish those tasks. The task force is required to create an implementation strategy for an integrated delivery system and to consult with the commissioner of labor, the state school superintendent, and the commissioners of human services, community affairs, early care and learning, and public health. Members of the task force will serve without compensation, and the task force will stand abolished on December 31, 2025.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Industry and Labor Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 870

(Washburn-144th) Provides that Georgia shall at all times observe the standard time of the United States.

STATUS: House State Planning and Community Affairs Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 887

(Thomas-65th) Prohibits the use of artificial intelligence in making certain decisions regarding insurance coverage, healthcare, or public assistance.

STATUS: House Technology and Infrastructure Innovation Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 890

(Thomas-65th) Provides for protections against discrimination by artificial intelligence and automated decision tools.

STATUS: House Technology and Infrastructure Innovation Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 923

(Taylor-92nd) Provides for issuance of a special license plate for individuals with a physical, mental, or neurological condition which impedes the ability to communicate; and for notation of such condition upon a driver's license.

STATUS: House Motor Vehicles Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 940

(Jones-25th) Establishes it as unlawful for a retail store to decline cash as a payment method for any goods or services offered for sale. It mandates that retail establishments utilizing self-operated kiosks must have at least one option within the store where cash transactions are accepted. However, exemptions are provided for venues with 2,500 or more attendees, airports with over 500 takeoffs and landings, fully autonomous stores, and wholesale clubs, relieving them from the requirement to accept cash.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Agriculture and Consumer Affairs Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 955

(Bruce-61st) Creates the Georgia Equity and Fairness Commission for examining the impact of chattel slavery on the descendants of chattel slavery and recommending appropriate remedies therefore.

STATUS: House State Planning and Community Affairs Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 964

(Scott-76th) Provides for ethics and inclusivity training for firefighters, paramedics, and cardiac technicians.

STATUS: House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 968

(Schofield-63rd) Requires the establishment of blocked trust accounts for minors rendering artistic or creative services and for the Commissioner of Labor to investigate and determine conditions of employment of child performers prior to the commencement of such employment. The bill also provides for requirements related to blocked trust accounts for child performers, and for requirements related to such accounts for minors engaged in video content on online platforms.

STATUS: House Industry and Labor Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1002

(Camp-135th) Relating to lottery for education, so as to provide for redemption for successful play of bona fide coin operated amusement machines through gift cards at automated kiosks under certain conditions.

STATUS: House Regulated Industries Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1024

(Blackmon-146th) Repeals the limitation on the maximum percentage of net revenue allowed to be held in the Revenue Shortfall Reserve.

STATUS: House Appropriations Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1113

(Reeves-99th) Creates the 'Personal Privacy Protection Act'. The bill prohibits public agencies from collecting, publicizing, disclosing, or requesting specified personal information related to nonprofit organizations, with exceptions. The bill creates the misdemeanor crime of improper collection or disclosure of personal information.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Governmental Affairs Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1128

(Lott-131st) "Georgia Women's Bill of Rights," - Emphasizes that "sex" refers to the biological state of being male or female, based on factors such as reproductive organs, chromosomes, hormones, and genitalia at birth. The terms "female," "male," "woman," "man," "girl," and "boy" are defined accordingly. The legislation asserts that equal treatment in the context of sex doesn't imply identical treatment, and separate accommodations are not inherently unequal. The bill recognizes medically diagnosed disorders or differences in sex development and outlines legal protections for such individuals. It also specifies that laws distinguishing between sexes are subject to intermediate constitutional scrutiny. The legislation addresses distinctions in areas like athletics, living facilities, and restrooms, emphasizing that separate accommodations align with important governmental objectives of safeguarding health, safety, and privacy. Additionally, it requires local schools, public schools, and state entities collecting vital statistics to identify individuals as either male or female at birth for compliance with antidiscrimination laws and data accuracy purposes.

STATUS: House Judiciary Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1142

(Martin-49th) Removes the residency requirement for the issuance of licenses by endorsement for spouses of active or transitioning members of the armed forces, and any individual seeking licensure for a profession other than that of a firefighter, healthcare provider, or a law enforcement officer.

STATUS: House Regulated Industries Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1144

(Martin-49th) Changes certain requirements for the issuance of licenses by endorsement for spouses of active or transitioning members of the armed forces to conform to federal law; to conform certain requirements for license by endorsement for certain professions to those of spouses of active or transitioning members of the armed forces.

STATUS: House Regulated Industries Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1171

(Burchett-176th) Exempts sales of clothing and school related supplies during the last two weeks of July each year.

STATUS: House Ways and Means Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1208

(Schofield-63rd) Prohibits discrimination based on natural, protective, or cultural hairstyles.

STATUS: House Industry and Labor Committee. The bill did not cross over.

HB 1278

(Moore-91st) Designates collard greens as the official state greens, with "potlikka" as the official state dipping sauce of the official state bread.

STATUS: House Special Rules Committee. The bill did not cross over.

- [HB 1317](#) (Holcomb-81st) Repeals provisions regarding fornication and adultery.
STATUS: House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. The bill did not cross over.
- [HB 1354](#) (Mughal-105th) Exempts the sale or use of certain child rearing and adult care products.
STATUS: House Ways and Means Committee. The bill did not cross over.
- [HB 1434](#) (Mughal-105th) Creates tax credits for expense incurred by a teacher in connection with books, supplies, equipment, software, services, or other materials used in a classroom or instructional setting in a qualified school; and expenses incurred by a first responder as tuition or fees for the participation of the first responder in professional development courses related to service as a first responder, or for uniforms used by the first responder in service as a first responder.
STATUS: House Hopper, but will not cross over.
- [HB 1435](#) (Hutchinson-106th) Establishes a data base of all sports equity coordinators appointed by local school systems and requires state colleges and technical colleges to annually publish and submit a report concerning gender sports data to the USG Board of Regents and TCSG, respectively.
STATUS: House Hopper, but will not cross over.
- [HR 1083](#) (Gambill-15th) Creates the House Study Committee on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Workforce for Georgia's Growing Economy.
STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill did not cross over.
- [HR 1136](#) (Beverly-143rd) Amends the Constitution of the State of Georgia so as to authorize the Georgia General Assembly to provide by general law for sports betting, pari-mutuel betting, and casino gambling.
STATUS: House Rules Committee.
- [HR 1168](#) (Hutchinson-106th) Amends the Constitution of the State of Georgia so as to authorize the General Assembly to provide by law for the legalization and regulation of the cultivation, transportation, and sale of marijuana and marijuana-infused products; to permit individuals 21 years of age or older to possess and use limited amounts of marijuana for personal use; to provide for the imposition of tax on the sale of marijuana; to provide for dedication of fees and taxes from the sale of marijuana; to provide for resentencing and record restriction for certain marijuana convictions.
STATUS: House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. The bill did not cross over.

- [HR 1169](#) (Hutchinson-106th) Creates the House Study Committee on the Economic Advantages of Marijuana Legalization.
- STATUS: House Agriculture and Consumer Affairs Committee.*
- [HR 1256](#) (Schofield-63rd) Creates the House Study Committee on the Establishment of a Baby Bonds Program.
- STATUS: House Special Rules Committee. The bill did not cross over.*
- [SB 154](#) (Dolezal-27th) Eliminates the library exception from the sale or distribution of harmful materials to minors law.
- STATUS: Senate Education & Youth Committee. The bill did not cross over.*
- [SB 172](#) (Cowsert-46th) Authorizes and provides for the regulation and taxation of sports betting, overseen by the Georgia Lottery Corporation.
- STATUS: Recommended Do PASS by Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee. Currently TABLED in the Senate, and therefore did not cross over.*
- [SB 394](#) (Dixon-45th) "Restricting Explicit and Adult-designated Educational Resources (READER) Act" - Defines the terms "harmful to minors," "restricted materials," and "sexually explicit materials"; and requires the State Board of Education to establish standards for the designation of restricted materials by local boards of education, standards for the use and restriction of instructional materials, and standards for the use and restriction of public school library collection materials.
- STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Education and Youth Committee. The bill did not cross over.*
- [SB 458](#) (Parent-42nd) Requires the board of regents to adopt the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights.
- STATUS: Senate Government Oversight Committee. The bill did not cross over.*
- [SB 489](#) (Goodman-8th) Designates the blueberry as the official state berry.
- STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Economic Development and Tourism Committee. The bill did not cross over.*
- [SB 529](#) (Jackson-41st) Provides for certain licensure for qualifying foreign medical graduates; to provide for a nonrenewable limited provisional license under certain conditions; to provide for a renewable restricted license under certain conditions; to provide for the application for full licensure under certain conditions.
- STATUS: Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee. The bill did not cross over.*

SB 548

(Mallow-2nd) Prohibit merchants from refusing to accept cash for purchases.

STATUS: Senate Banking and Financial Institutions Committee. The bill did not cross over.

SR 476

(Albers-56th) Creates the Senate Study Committee on Artificial Intelligence.

STATUS: Senate Science and Technology Committee. The bill did not cross over.

SR 538

(Summers-13th) Constitutional Amendment that authorizes and requires that the Georgia General Assembly provide by law for sports betting and casino gambling in this state by July 2, 2025; and for the regulation and allocation of revenues of such sports betting and casino gambling.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Economic Development and Tourism Committee. The bill did not cross over.

Advocacy Ask

[Safe at Home Tenant Protection \(House Bill 404\)](#)

[The Ask](#)

Ask members of the Georgia Senate Rules Committee to send **House Bill 404**, the “Safe at Home Act,” to the floor of the Senate for a vote.

[What Does HB 565 Do?](#)

[House Bill 404](#) is an important step to help renters stay, safely, affordably, and stably housed. It helps landlords get paid without having to go to court and brings Georgia closer to what has already long been law in most states. In its current version, HB 404:

- Provides that residential rental properties must be “fit for human habitation,” that means fit for human beings to live in.
- Includes “cooling” as a utility that cannot be shut off after an eviction has been ordered by the court.
- Prohibits landlords from requiring a security deposit that exceeds two months' rent.
- If rent is past due, before they can go to court and file for an eviction the landlord must give the tenant written notice posted on the property door and delivered by other means agreed to in the lease warning the tenant they must pay the rent or leave the property or the eviction may be filed.
- Requires the landlord to wait three business days following the written notice before they can go to court and file for an eviction. The tenant may pay all past due rent, fees, etc. during that period. This is called a “right to cure”.

[Why It Matters](#)

- In FY21, 20% of foster care placements cite inadequate housing as a reason for removal of a child from the home.

- The COVID-19 pandemic has increased housing insecurity in Georgia, which directly impacts children.
 - According to the U.S. Census Household Pulse Survey, as of May 2022, approximately 21% of Georgia households with children surveyed reported little to no confidence in their next rent or mortgage payment on time.
- Black students make up a disproportionate amount of Georgia's homeless student population at nearly 52%, followed by White students at almost 30% and Hispanic students at nearly 13%.
- When kids experience housing instability, unsafe homes or homelessness, they struggle with so much more, such as:
 - Asthma
 - Good nutrition and hunger
 - School attendance, learning and high school completion
 - Fear and trauma

[What to Say](#)

Dear Senator _____,

Please send House Bill 404, the "Safe at Home Act," to the floor of the Senate for a vote. This bill ensures that landlords, in various rental agreements, will maintain habitability for tenants, sets a maximum security deposit amount and sets procedure for breach of contract. About 20% of foster care placements cite inadequate housing as a reason for removal of a child from the home. Children who experience housing instability, unsafe homes or homelessness often also struggle with asthma; school attendance, learning and completion; as well as fear and trauma resulting from the insecurity caused by where they are going to sleep at night. Thank you for your thoughtfulness on behalf of Georgia's children with regards to this bill.

[Who to Contact:](#)

| | | | |
|---|--------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| Sen. Matt Brass , Chair | 404-656-0057 | Sen. Steve Gooch | 404-656-9221 |
| Sen. Frank Ginn , Vice Chair | 404-656-4700 | Sen. Ed Harbison | 404-656-0074 |
| Sen. Bill Cowsert , Secretary | 404-463-1366 | Sen. Chuck Hufstetler | 404-656-0034 |
| Sen. John Albers | 404-463-8055 | Sen. Harold Jones | 404-656-0036 |
| Sen. Jason Anavitarte | 404-656-0085 | Sen. John Kennedy | 404-656-6578 |
| Sen. Lee Anderson | 404-656-5114 | Sen. Michael Rhett | 404-463-3931 |
| Sen. Brandon Beach | 404-463-1378 | Sen. Randy Robertson | 404-463-3931 |
| Sen. Gloria Butler | 404-656-0075 | Sen. Larry Walker | 404-656-0095 |
| Sen. Greg Dolezal | 404-656-7127 | Sen. Ben Watson | 404-656-7880 |
| Sen. Frank Ginn | 404-656-4700 | | |

Other Helpful Resources

- [Find Your Legislator](#)
- [Contact Your Legislator](#)
- [Voices' 2\(ish\) Minute Takes](#)
- [Voices' Factsheets](#)
- [Voices' Whole Child Primer, 3rd Edition](#)