

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

February 12, 2024

Things at the state house can be pretty busy. So busy, in fact, that Friday morning I woke up and realized that the Super Bowl was going to be this weekend! Truth told, it has been a hot minute since I have experienced tailgating in the rain, ruined a month of tooth-whitening with a single team-colored cupcake, and wondered about the potential of an uncomfortable on-camera celebrity proposal. I've been so busy with my head in the hopper that I almost missed it!

So that afternoon, after a medium-long-slog through the House version of the [Amended FY 2024 budget](#) (see our Voices' angled summary below!), I decided to warm up my celebration muscles by having my own little "Political Party." I painted my face red and blue with the words "Ad Hoc Committee" billboarded across my forehead. I made a skirt of red-white-and-blue bunting and trimmed it with some of that fat velvety rope that they have outside the House and Senate Chambers to separate the elected folks from us every-day goofballs. I wore the requisite navy blazer, pockets stuffed with amendments, committee subs, half a cheese sandwich and gum wrappers, and donned my Friday-dress-up-gym-shoes in an unsuccessful attempt to counter the prior day's blister on my heel. The whole outfit landed somewhere between Haute Couture and Halloween, which, for me, was a win. I tailgated with legislation-inspired snacks – namely [cornbread \(HB 1048\)](#) and [sugarcane syrup \(HB 1034\)](#), with [Georgia wine \(SR 511\)](#) and peanuts (no bill link, I just like them.). I invited pals from all parties and all chambers. They came loaded up with Parliamentary Inquiries, Morning Orders, Points of Personal Privilege, and Motions to Reconsider. On occasion, someone would ring a

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bell, thereby inspiring others to push a button (yea or nay) to score a point. Whatever bunch of words got the most green points won. It was...well...almost pretty okay, which means “above average” for Legislative Day 18. Honestly, I am kind of hoping that the Super Bowl is a little less frenetic.

Anyway, if you want to par-tay with the rest of us, scroll on down and get your inner-DJ to play those action alerts!

See ya' on the Jumbotron! Booya!

~Polly



Budget Information

Amended Fiscal Year 2024

Total: \$37.51 billion

Yellow denotes Changes the House Made to the Governor's Recommendations

Statewide

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

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. (Governor Recommended = \$419,000 Added)

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). (Governor Recommended = \$218,000 Added)

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.
- \$2 Million 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.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health

- \$10.42 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. (and adjust funds to reflect projected expenditures based on actual utilization of core adult mental health services)

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)
- \$2.5 Million Added for one-time 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 federally qualified health center start-up grant in Cobb County.

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.

Medicaid - Low Income

- **\$181.19 Million Reduced** for Medicaid based on projected utilization. (Governor Recommended = \$152.99 Million Reduced)
- Replace \$20,134,839 in state general funds with hospital provider fees.

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

- Utilize existing funds (\$100,000) for statewide healthcare specialty assessments to evaluate gaps in healthcare services.(G:Yes)(H:Utilize existing funds (\$100,000) and increase funds to study needs in licensure or sub-specialties of licensure and evaluate gaps in healthcare staffing in Neurology, Psychiatry, Rheumatology, 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.

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.
- **\$65.29 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.
- **\$9.8 Million Added** for safety, security, and technology initiatives. (Governor Recommended = \$5.6 Million Added)
- **\$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.
- **\$8.97 Million Added** to expand the Summer Transition Program with income eligibility requirements. (Governor Recommended = \$6.14 Million Added)
- **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***Communities in Schools***

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

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. (Gov rec = \$1.88 Million Adjusted)

Quality Basic Education Program

- **\$102.51 Million Added** for a midterm adjustment based on enrollment growth. (Gov rec. = \$102.54 Million Added)
- **\$3.73 Million Added** for a midterm adjustment to the State Commission Charter School supplement for training and experience. (Governor Recommended = \$4.16 Million Added)
- **\$27.77 Million in formula funds Added** for the State Commission Charter School supplement. (Governor Recommended = \$28.51 Million in formula funds Added)

- **\$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. (Governor Recommended = \$14.85 Million Restored)**
- **\$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.

Testing

- **\$980,924 Added** to administer statewide standardized testing in accordance with federal assessment requirements. **.(H: Increase funds for AP STEM exams due to increased utilization.) (Governor Recommended = \$292,000 Added)**

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.

Dept. of Human Services

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).

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 (\$910,530) for Medicaid Redetermination notice mailings.

Federal Eligibility Benefit Services

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

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)

- \$104,000 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. (Governor Recommended = \$75,000 Added)
- \$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. (Governor Recommended = \$75,000 Added)
- \$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.

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. House note: (H:Yes; Consolidate Georgia POST Resiliency Program with Georgia Public Safety Training Center.) (Governor Recommended = \$161,750 Added)
- \$0 Added for system maintenance support and onboarding for an online gang and human trafficking training system. (Governor Recommended = \$35,000 Added)
- \$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 Transfer funds from the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council to the Georgia Public Safety Training Center for School Resource Officer and De-escalation training.
- \$220,857 Added for annual CPR training for dispatchers.

Office of Highway Safety: Georgia Driver's Education Commission

- \$357,076 Reduce funds for driver's education and training in accordance with FY 2023 Joshua's Law Collections. (Governor Recommended = \$1.426 Million Reduced)

University System of Georgia Board of Regents

- \$66 Million Restored FY 2024 formula funds for Teaching.
- \$2 Million 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.

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.

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

- **\$19.5 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

- **\$450.86 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.



Justice, Public Safety, & School Discipline

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.

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 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 polices/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: Recommended Do Pass by the House Juvenile Justice Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee

[HB 882](#) (Bruce-61st) Prohibits the release or posting of a booking photograph unless and until the individual depicted therein is convicted.

STATUS: House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. The bill will be heard in Subcommittee TODAY (Monday).

[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

[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: Recommended Do Pass by House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. The bill now rests in the House Rules 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.

STATUS: House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee

[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

[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

[HB 996](#) (Vance-133rd) Provide jailers who have been certified by the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council as having successfully completed the course of training required by Chapter 8 of Title 35, the 'Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Act,' with arrest powers.

STATUS: House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee

[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

[HB 1201](#) (Gaines-120th) Provides for the vacating of sentences of victims of trafficking sentenced under Article 3 of Chapter 8 of Title 42, relating to first offenders.

STATUS: House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee

[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

[HR 1042](#) (Leverett-123rd) Creates the Joint Study Committee on Judicial System Compensation.

STATUS: House Judiciary Committee

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

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Public Safety Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules 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 relived 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 232](#) (Kennedy-18th) Provides for probate court fees and to provide for funding of the State Children's Trust Fund, among other things.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules 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: Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill will be heard in Committee TODAY (Monday).

[SB 453](#) (Payne-54th) Transfers probation and intake services of the Juvenile Court of Gordon County to the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice.

STATUS: Senate State and Local Government Operations Committee

[SR 570](#) (Robertson-29th) Creates the Senate Supporting Safety and Welfare of All Individuals in Department of Corrections Facilities Study Committee.

STATUS: Senate Public Safety Committee

Child Welfare & Protection

[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: House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee

[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

[HB 910](#) (Jasperse-11th) Creates a civil remedy for damages against commercial entities that distribute material harmful to minors without performing age verification.

STATUS: House Judiciary Committee

HB 993 (Powell-33rd) Provides for the offense of grooming a minor for indecent purposes, and defines 'grooming' as actions or behaviors used by an adult to establish an emotional connection with a minor to gain such minor's trust, for the eventual objective of sexual abuse, manipulation, or exploitation. Such actions and behaviors may include, but are not limited to, contact made online, in person, or by other means of communication.

STATUS: House Juvenile Justice 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: Recommended Do Pass by the House Juvenile Justice Committee. The bill will be on the House Floor for a vote TODAY (Monday).

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

HB 1090 (Newton-127th) Expands the tax credit for contributions to foster child support organizations to allow such organizations to include as qualified expenditures wraparound and mentorship services for justice involved youth. The bill also expands the wraparound services that are qualified expenditures; allows for such tax credits to be used by certain insurance companies against certain tax liability; and removes the prohibition of allowing such a tax credit for qualified contributions that were utilized as a deduction or exemption from taxable income.

STATUS: House Ways and Means Committee

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

STATUS: House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee

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

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: House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee

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: House Judiciary Committee

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

- 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: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules 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: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Children and Families Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules 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 rests in Senate Rules 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: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Children and Families Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

SB 401 (Kirkpatrick-32nd) Provides for annual reporting to the General Assembly of certain de-identified data from juvenile court clerks relating to foster children who are in need of services or delinquent; removes the service of summons by publication requirement at the adjudication phase in dependency proceedings; and provides that the petition to terminate parental rights be immediately filed and docketed without delay when presented to the juvenile court clerk.

STATUS: Senate Children and Families Committee

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

SB 454 (Strickland-17th) Provides for guidelines for child support award calculations.

STATUS: Senate Judiciary Committee

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: Senate Judiciary Committee



Health & Behavioral Health

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 174 (Bentley-150th) 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.

STATUS: House Public Health 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 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 rests in House Rules 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: House Health Committee. The bill will be heard in Committee TODAY (Monday).

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: Recommended Do Pass by the House Health Committee. The bill will be on the House Floor for a vote TODAY (Monday).

HB 793 (Barton-5th) Authorizes applicants for a license in social work enrolled in a master's degree program to take the master's social work licensing examination in their final semester of the program.

STATUS: House Regulated Industries Committee. The bill will be heard in Committee TODAY (Monday).

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

[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 allows the pharmacy to collect a co-payment not to exceed \$75.00 for insulin dispensed through this program.

STATUS: House Public Health Committee

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

STATUS: House Agriculture and Consumer Affairs 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: Recommended Do Pass by the House Public Health Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

[HB 874](#) (Hawkins-27th) Requires all public schools to always have a functional automated external defibrillator (AED) on site 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: Recommended Do Pass by the House Health Committee. The bill rests in House Rules 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

[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

[HB 924](#) (Ballinger-23rd) Prohibits insurers from discriminating against certain healthcare facilities and providers in connection with the procurement, delivery, and administration of provider-administered drugs.

STATUS: House Insurance Committee

[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

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

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Appropriations Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

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

STATUS: House Insurance Committee

[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

[HB 1028](#) (LaHood-171st) Repeals the requirement of screening of public school children for scoliosis; and revises the state health officer's authorization to issue standing orders. The bill also repeals provisions relating to the Georgia Diabetes Control Grant Program, and to a pilot program for preexposure prophylaxis drug assistance or services. It also repeals provisions relating to control of mass gatherings; and allows the Department of Public Health to inspect jail facilities as necessary.

STATUS: House Public Health Committee

[HB](#)
[1029](#)

(Mathiak-74th) Requires the newborn screening system to include Duchenne muscular dystrophy.

STATUS: House Public Health 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](#)
[1050](#)

(Mathiak-74th) Changes certain education requirements for licensure as a professional counselor or associate professional counselor, and states that only graduates from programs accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs can apply for licensure. It expands diagnostic scope of LPCs to include neuropsychological functioning or conditions and removes psychiatrists and psychologists from the definition of those who may be considered "supervisors" for the purposes of internships and licensure. The bill also states that the confidential relations and communications between a client and a LPC, a licensed associate professional counselor, a master's social worker, a licensed clinical social worker, a licensed marriage and family therapist, or a licensed associate marriage and family therapist are placed upon the same basis as those provided by law between attorney and client.

STATUS: House Regulated Industries 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

[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

[HB
1077](#)

(Cooper-45th) Establishes 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: Recommended Do Pass by the House Public Health Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

[HB
1104](#)

(Crawford-84th) Mandates the State Board of Education to develop a comprehensive preparticipation physical examination form for students participating in sports tryouts, practices, and interscholastic extracurricular sports competitions. The form, approved by the State Board of Education, may include mental health screenings, and requires the Department of Education to develop guidelines for screening student athletes for mental health risks, with an emphasis on educational materials and informational meetings for students, parents, school personnel, and coaches. Coaches are mandated to view an approved educational video annually. The legislation also specifies that the new provisions do not create liability for school entities related to the removal or non-removal of a student athlete based on mental health risks, except for healthcare providers in a volunteer capacity.

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill will be heard in Subcommittee TODAY (Monday).

[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

[HB
1170](#)

(Hawkins-27th) Requires that certain state government buildings, courthouses, and university buildings maintain and make accessible opioid antagonists. The bill also provides for the identification, development, and dissemination of educational materials and for the development of a model policy for training individuals on emergency opioid antagonist administration by the department; and that certain government entities shall establish and implement an internal policy; to provide for immunity.

STATUS: House Public Health Committee

[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

[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: House Public Health 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. Assigned to House Health Committee. The bill will be heard in Committee TODAY (Monday).

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: Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee

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

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) Provides for the licensing of qualified residential treatment programs (QRTPs).

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Public Health 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: Senate Education and Youth Committee

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

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

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

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 90 days.

STATUS: Senate Health and Human Services Committee

SB 460 (Dixon-45th) Relating to physicians, acupuncture, physician assistants, cancer and glaucoma treatment, respiratory care, clinical perfusionists, and orthotics and prosthetics practice, so as to revise 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: Senate Health and Human Services Committee



Maternal & Infant Care

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

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: Recommended Do Pass by the House Public Health Committee. The bill will be on the House Floor for a vote TODAY (Monday).

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: House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. The bill will be heard in Subcommittee TODAY (Monday).

HB 1081 (Taylor-173rd) "Georgia Preeclampsia Biomarker Testing Act of 2024" adds a new Code section to Chapter 12 of Title 31, requiring pregnant women to be screened for preeclampsia using biomarker testing at their first prenatal visit and potentially at other points in pregnancy as deemed necessary. The testing is to be conducted by the attending physician or healthcare provider according to nationally recognized clinical practice guidelines. The Department is authorized to establish rules and regulations for administering these requirements. Additionally, amendments to Chapter 24 of Title 33 and Code Section 49-4-159.3 extend insurance coverage for biomarker testing, with the former specifying coverage for preeclampsia biomarker testing and the latter mandating Medicaid coverage for biomarker testing for Medicaid recipients. The effective date for insurance coverage provisions is on or after July 1, 2023, and for Medicaid coverage on or after July 1, 2024.

STATUS: House Public Health Committee

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

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

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

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

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

SB 283 (Strickland-17th) Provides for reasonable accommodations to job applicants and employees for circumstances related to pregnancy, childbirth, and related conditions.

STATUS: Senate Judiciary Committee

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



Early Childhood Education & Out-of-School Time

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 rests in House Rules Committee.

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: Senate Education and Youth 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: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Children and Families Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

K-12 Education

HB 127 (Mainor-56th) Requires the State Board of Education to establish rules and regulations for local school system outreach efforts regarding the English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) programs, and to engage in such community outreach efforts. The bill also provides for standards for foreign language interpreters providing services to students in educational settings and requires local school systems to provide certain notices concerning interpretation services.

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill will be heard in Subcommittee TODAY (Monday).

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: Recommended Do Pass by the House Industry and Labor Committee. The bill rests in House Rules 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) Revises the prior school year requirement for the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Act and revises provisions for expedited completion of a student's first Individualized Education Program as well as the requirement that students who previously qualified for the scholarship have an Individualized Education Program or Section 504 plan.

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill will be heard in Subcommittee TODAY (Monday).

HB 822 (Carpenter-4th) Provides that the prescribed course of study in sex education and HIV prevention instruction is age appropriate and medically accurate; to include the subject of consent in such course of study.

STATUS: House Education Committee

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

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

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

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

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

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. Assigned to Senate Higher Education 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: Recommended Do Pass by the House Education Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

HB 995 (Bonner-73rd) Mandates local school systems to offer an optional nationally recognized multiple-aptitude battery assessment for students in grades 11 and 12, aimed at predicting future academic and occupational success in the military. Under this requirement, the assessment must be provided to students during school hours at least once per school year, providing them with an opportunity to engage with the assessment and potentially glean insights into their future career paths and educational pursuits.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Education Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

HB 1027 (Ballard-147th) Provides that beginning in the 2026-2027 school year at least a half-credit computer science course shall be a high school graduation requirement; and that such course shall not include virtual or remote instruction, unless the only feasible opportunity for such student to complete such graduation requirement is through virtual or remote instruction.

STATUS: House Education Committee

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: House Education Committee

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

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

HB 1122 (Hilton-48th) Provides for one superintendent for each state charter school; and for funding for local and state charter school principals. The bill increases opportunities for students to attend and be enrolled in the public schools where their parents or guardians are employed, including charter schools, regardless of school attendance zone or school system residency, and limits the application of certain state charter school conflict of interest

provisions to executive-level employees, rather than all employees, of local boards of education or local school systems.

STATUS: House Education Committee

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: House Education Committee

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

HB 1167 (Townsend-179th) Removes a provision prioritizing low-performing schools applicable to the award of grants to public schools by a nonprofit corporation incorporated by the Georgia Foundation for Public Education for such purpose.

STATUS: House Ways and Means Committee. The bill will be heard in Subcommittee TODAY (Monday).

HB 1186 (Hilton-48th) Clarifies that ratings are a single numerical score based on indicators of quality of learning for each public school as relates to indicators of quality of learning in individual schools and school systems, comparison to state standards, rating schools and school systems. The bill also provides uniform definitions of "dropout" and "below grade level".

STATUS: House Education Committee

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

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

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. The bill also caps tuition that can be charged to a student by an enrolling local unit of administration that exclusively provides virtual instruction to such student.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Education & Youth Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules 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: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Education & Youth Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules 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 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: Senate Education and Youth Committee

SB 379 (Harbin-16th) Authorizes local school systems and public schools to employ or accept as a volunteer school chaplain, and provides that school chaplains shall provide support, services, and programs for students as assigned.

STATUS: Senate Education and Youth 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 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: Senate Education and Youth Committee

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: Senate Education and Youth Committee

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

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: Senate Education and Youth Committee

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: Senate Education and Youth 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.

STATUS: Senate Education and Youth 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: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Education and Youth Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

SR 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



Higher Education

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 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

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. Assigned to Senate Higher Education 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: House Higher Education Committee

[HB 1158](#) (Jackson-68th) Regarding alimony and child support, so as to authorize post-majority child support when such child is enrolled in and attending an institution of postsecondary education.

STATUS: House Judiciary Committee

[HB 1195](#) (Kendrick-95th) Provides for a tax credit for workforce-ready graduates employed in high-tech full-time jobs in rural counties in this state.

STATUS: House Ways and Means Committee

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

STATUS: Recommended DO Pass by the Senate Veterans, Military and Homeland Security Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules 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: Senate Higher Education Committee

[SB 469](#) (Esteves-6th) Relating to the Georgia Higher Education Savings Plan, so as to increase the maximum amount of contributions allowed per beneficiary of savings trust accounts for higher education expenses from \$235,000 to \$450,000.

STATUS: Senate Higher Education Committee

[SB 476](#) (Esteves-6th) Provides for in-state tuition for certain noncitizen students.

STATUS: Senate Higher Education Committee



Environmental Safety

HB 971 (Newton-127th) Provides for a tax credit (\$300 tax credit per lifetime maximum) for certain eligible expenses incurred for firearm safe handling instructional courses and firearm secure storage devices; to provide for an aggregate annual cap of \$5 Million.

STATUS: House Ways and Means Committee. The bill will be heard in Subcommittee TODAY (Monday).

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

STATUS: House Motor Vehicles Committee

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

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: House Motor Vehicles Committee

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

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

STATUS: Senate Education and Youth 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: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Public Safety Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules 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.

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 will be heard in Committee this WEDNESDAY.

Shelter & Nutrition

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. Assigned to Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill will be heard in Committee TODAY (Monday).

[HB 965](#) (Scott-76th) Provides for 60 days' notice of rental increase by landlord to tenant.

STATUS: House Judiciary Committee

[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: House Judiciary Committee. The bill will be heard in Committee this TUESDAY.

[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. Awaits assignment to Senate Committee.

[HB 1048](#) (Carpenter-4th) Designates cornbread as the official state bread.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Awaits assignment to Senate Committee.

[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

[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.

[HB 1073](#) *STATUS: House Judiciary Committee*
(Washburn-144th) Repeals additional hearing and notice provisions regarding halfway houses, drug rehabilitation centers, or other facilities for treatment of drug dependency.

STATUS: House Governmental Affairs Committee

[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

[HB 1156](#) (Jackson-68th) Repeals Code Section 44-7-19, relating to restrictions on rent regulation by local governments.

STATUS: House Governmental Affairs Committee

[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

[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: House State Planning and Community Affairs Committee



Miscellaneous

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 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: Recommended to the House Industry and Labor Committee.

[HB 738](#) (Hilton-48th) Creates the Task Force on Workforce and Safety Net Integration, which is composed of nine members, within the Department of Labor. The task force must 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 shall serve without compensation, and the task force will stand abolished on December 31, 2025.

STATUS: Recommitted to the House Industry and Labor Committee.

[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

[HB 880](#) (Ballard-147th) Allows military spouses to use an existing license in good standing from another state to obtain employment in Georgia.

STATUS: House Regulated Industries Committee. The bill will be heard in Committee this TUESDAY.

[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

[HB 890](#) (Thomas-65th) Provides for protections against discrimination by artificial intelligence and automated decision tools.

STATUS: House Technology and Infrastructure Innovation Committee

[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

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 rests in House Rules Committee.

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

HB 964 (Scott-76th) Provides for ethics and inclusivity training for firefighters, paramedics, and cardiac technicians.

STATUS: House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee

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

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

- 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. The bill clarifies that individuals employed full time by local education agencies are eligible employees for paid parental leave.
- STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Public Health Committee. The bill rests in House Rules 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 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*
- 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. Awaits assignment to Senate Committee.*
- HB 1096** (Washburn-144th) Establishes on behalf of professional licensing boards under the jurisdiction of the office of the Secretary of State a continuing education tracking solution to monitor compliance of licensees with applicable continuing education requirements.
- STATUS: House Regulated Industries Committee*
- HB 1113** (Reeves-99th) "Personal Privacy Protection Act" - Defines terms such as "nonprofit organization," "person," and "personal information." It prohibits public agencies from requiring individuals or nonprofit organizations to provide personal information, releasing such information publicly, or requesting lists of supported nonprofit organizations from contractors or grantees. The Act specifies exceptions to these prohibitions, such as court-issued warrants, litigation-related disclosures, and voluntary releases by individuals or nonprofit organizations. Personal information is not subject to open records regulations, with specific exemptions outlined. Violations of the Act can result in civil actions for damages, and willful violations may lead to treble damages and attorney's fees. The Act also addresses the potential misdemeanor charges for public agency employees who knowingly violate its provisions. Additionally, it amends Code Section 50-18-72 to include a new provision stating that certain information, including

data and records, is exempt from public disclosure under Code Section 50-18-160.

STATUS: House Governmental Affairs Committee

HB 1127 (Pirkle-169th) 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: House Agriculture and Consumer Affairs Committee

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

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

- 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*
- 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: House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee*
- 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*
- 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: House Regulated Industries Committee*
- HB 1208** (Schofield-63rd) Prohibits discrimination based on natural, protective, or cultural hairstyles.
- STATUS: House Industry and Labor Committee*
- 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.*
- SB 198** (Harrell-40th) Creates the Georgians with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Innovation Commission.
- STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.*

- SB 235** (Halpern-39th) Creates the HBCU Innovation and Economic Prosperity Planning Districts Commission.
- STATUS: Senate Economic Development and Tourism Committee. The bill will be heard in Committee this TUESDAY.*
- 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: Senate Government Oversight Committee*
- 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: Senate Education and Youth Committee*
- SB 414** (Kennedy-18th) "Personal Privacy Protection Act" - Key provisions include the definition of terms such as "nonprofit organization," "person," and "personal information." The Act restricts public agencies from compelling personal information from individuals or nonprofit organizations, disclosing such information publicly, or requesting lists of nonprofit organizations from contractors or grantees. Exceptions include lawful warrants, discovery in litigation, and disclosures made voluntarily or required by statute. The Act provides for enforcement through civil actions and outlines penalties for willful violations, including treble damages and attorney's fees. It also criminalizes knowing violations by public agency employees. The amendments aim to safeguard personal privacy and limit the collection and disclosure of personal information by public agencies.
- STATUS: Senate Judiciary 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: Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities 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: Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee*
- 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*
- SB 476** (Albers-56th) Creates the Senate Study Committee on Artificial Intelligence.
- STATUS: Senate Science and Technology Committee*
- SB 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: Senate Economic Development and Tourism Committee*
- SB 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: Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee*

Advocacy Asks

Pick an ask!

- [Safe at Home Tenant Protection](#)
- [Out-of-School Time Funds and Liaison](#)
- [School-Based Mental Health](#)

[Ask #1: Safe at Home Tenant Protection](#)

[The Ask](#)

Members of the Georgia Senate Judiciary Committee to **VOTE YES on House Bill 404 WITHOUT AMENDMENTS**, the "Safe at Home Act," when it comes before them in committee TODAY (Monday).

[What Does HB 404 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 DO NOT AMEND House Bill 404, the "Safe at Home Act", in Senate Judiciary Committee this week – and then vote DO PASS on the bill when it comes before you in committee. 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. Bill Cowser](#), 404-463-1366
[Sen. Steve Gooch](#), 404-656-9221
[Sen. Bo Hatchett](#), 404-656-7454
[Sen. Mike Hodges](#), 404-656-9644
[Sen. Harold Jones](#), 404-656-0036
[Sen. John Kennedy](#), 404-656-6578

[Sen. Elena Parent](#), 404-656-5109
[Sen. Michael Rnett](#), 404-463-3931
[Sen. Ed Setzler](#), 404-656-7857
[Sen. Brian Strickland](#), 404-463-6598
[Sen. Ben Watson](#), 404-656-7880

Ask #2: Out-of-School Time Funds and Liaison

The Ask

Ask members of the House Appropriations Education Subcommittee to:

1. Fund afterschool and summer enrichment programs by re-upping the Georgia Dept. of Education’s BOOST grant funding in the FY25 budget (suggested funding \$20 million a year); and,
2. Create an Out-of-School Time liaison position, preferably in the GaDOE to coordinate OST policy across the three state agencies that handle OST programs: GaDOE, Dept. of Human Services, and Dept. of Early Care and Learning.

What's BOOST?

For the last three years, GaDOE, in partnership with GSAN, used a total of \$85 Million in COVID relief funding to create the Building Opportunities in Out-of-School Time (BOOST) grant program, which has funded evidence-based afterschool and summer learning programs. The federal funds for the program are about to expire, but the BOOST outcomes for kids have been amazing! *Therefore, in order to keep the progress for kids going*, Georgia needs to target dollars into more grants, which we are calling “BOOST 2.0”.

The Why

The BOOST 2.0 Grant Program, (housed at the Georgia Department of Education) will build off the existing infrastructure and partnerships of BOOST. This will:

- Create a statewide framework that expands access to and assures quality of afterschool and summer learning opportunities.
- Prioritize funding support to OST programs that serve vulnerable youth, such as those who are economically disadvantaged, have a disability, and English language learners.
- Use existing state infrastructure to provide training and technical assistance to OST providers fiscal administration, quality measurement, program effectiveness, and provider leadership.
- Leverage program evaluation and evidence collection strategies embedded within the BOOST grant to determine how to best serve current and prospective afterschool and summer learning providers in the future.

An Interagency Liaison can coordinate afterschool and summer programming between the Georgia DECAL, DHS/DFCS, and GaDOE. If such a liaison is placed in Georgia Department of Education (Office of Whole Child Supports), efficiencies and communications can be maximized in

- Alignment and coordination of OST services provided to youth and families;
- Development of reliable protocols for interagency communication regarding implementation of similar youth enrichment programs;
- Streamlining of grant application and administration to help both large and small organizations; and
- Streamlining of training, technical assistance, and professional learning provided to organizations funded and/or licensed by the agencies.

[For more on OST Funding and Programs in GA, check out our Brief!](#)

The Message:

Dear Representative _____,

I have two requests related to afterschool and summer enrichment funding. First, please include money in the FY25 budget to continue the afterschool and summer enrichment funding known as BOOST (Building Opportunities in Out-of-School Time) grants. Also,

please include funding for an interagency out-of-school-time liaison at the GaDOE to coordinate the OST policies across the three state agencies that house programs and dollars related to out-of-school time programming (GaDOE, DHS, and DECAL). The federal COVID relief dollars that created BOOST are running out and BOOST has been key to student success in academic recovery, mental health, and child wellbeing. These programs are **crucial in helping working parents work without concerns about the safety and nurturing of their school-aged children**. PLUS, afterschool and summer enrichment activities **improve literacy and learning, youth mental health and behaviors, and vital career-ready skills**.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests and thank you for all you do every day on behalf of Georgia's children and families.

Who to Contact:

House Appropriations Education Subcommittee Members:

[Rep. Matt Dubnik](#), 404-463-2246

[Rep. Leesa Hagan](#), 404-656-0325

[Rep. Kimberly Alexander](#), 404-656-7859

[Rep. Robert Dickey](#), 404-656-5099

[Rep. Chris Erwin](#), 404-656-0188

[Rep. Edna Jackson](#), 404-656-0265

[Rep. Jan Jones](#), 404-656-5072

[Rep. Todd Jones](#), 404-656-9210

[Rep. Will Wade](#), 404-651-7737

House Appropriations Chairman [Matt Hatchett](#), (404) 463-2247

Ask #3: School-Based Mental Health

The Ask

Ask members of the House Appropriations Committee to fund the Georgia Apex Program at \$10 Million in the FY 2025 Budget (under the Dept. of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities).

What is Apex?

The successful Georgia Apex Program (Apex), funded by the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD), builds capacity and increases access to mental health services for school-aged youth, Pre-Kindergarten to 12th grade, throughout the state.

- Apex works as a satellite to existing providers (such as the local community service board), and takes traditional public and private insurance to cover costs, but still needs funds to start programs in new schools.
- Since its inception in 2015, the Georgia Apex Program has grown on average 19% per year in engaged schools and 40% in services provided. Yet over 66% of children in Georgia who have had a major depressive episode have not received mental health care.

To understand child and adolescent behavioral health needs, check out these additional factsheets:

- [School Based Mental Health Programs](#)
- [Crisis in Child and Adolescent Behavioral Health](#)

The Message:

Dear Representative _____,

Please appropriate \$10 Million to expand school based mental health, namely the Georgia Apex Program, to more schools so that we can start to serve the estimated 66% of children in Georgia who have had a major depressive episode have not received mental health care. Georgia Apex Program provides school-based access to mental health services for children Pre-K through 12th grade across the state. Last year alone, the program served more than 730 schools. The program, however, is in high demand. While Apex services are billed through public and private health insurance, start-up funds are needed to expand the program further to meet the demand. Thank you for your attention to this situation and for your service to the children and families of our great state.

Who to Contact:

[Rep. Karen Bennett](#), 404-656-0202
[Rep. Debbie Buckner](#), 404-656-0116
[Rep. Lee Hawkins](#), 404-656-7855
[Rep. Carolyn Hughley](#), 404-656-0109
[Rep. John LaHood](#), 404-656-5105
[Rep. Mark Newton](#), 404-463-7855

[Rep. Larry Parrish](#), 404-463-2246
[Rep. Jesse Petrea](#), 404-656-5912
[Rep. Devan Seabaugh](#), 404-656-0152
[Rep. Ron Stephens](#), 404-656-5115
[Rep. Darlene Taylor](#), 404-463-2248
[Rep. Dale Washburn](#), 404-656-0152

Upcoming Events

Tuesdays, Beginning January 16 Talk Justice Tuesdays
 Thursday, February 22 GEEARS Strolling Thunder
 Tuesday, February 27, 5-7pm Reception in Celebration of Children, [Learn more](#)

Other Helpful Resources

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