As many of you know, one of my favorite things to do is to think about competing concepts of Time. On any given day I can be found in the shower, on Dekalb Avenue (or in one of its potholes!) or in a 4:45 pm budget hearing pondering the difference between “Legislative Days” and regular days, comparing how many sessions I’ve attended versus how many sessions it feels like I’ve attended, or trying to get my head around what “age” actually represents when it comes to my kids, my car, my wine, or my dog (which gets really confusing with that annoying “dog-years” thing!). Plus, I think a lot about how things change and stay the same as time passes. This idea usually causes me to imagine what would happen if lawmakers could jump into Dr. Who’s telephone box, Captain Kirk’s teleporter (“Beam-me-up-Scotty!”), or any number of Rod Serling’s Twilight Zone episodes. Would they change votes they had made? Would they update their House or Senate website headshots? (Spoiler alert: the answer to this one is usually “No.”) Would they still have eaten that chocolate-sprinkle-bacon-doughnut in the antechamber? Nine times out of ten, I finish up my Time queries remembering a particular event thrown by one of my time-construct favs, physicist Stephen Hawking. He hosted a time travel party as an experiment involving hors d’oeuvres and champagne (my kind of time travel for sure!!). I especially love what he said afterwards: "I gave a party for time-travelers, but I didn't send out the invitations until after the party. I sat there a long time, but no one came."
So how the heck does all this relate to the state house, you may wonder. Well, for starters, if you ever go to the capitol, you can almost hear the whispers of past lawmakers, the shouts of past activists, and the banging of gavels-gone-by. Sometimes you can even still get a whiff of long-departed Varsity dogs, Chick-fil-A biscuits, or peanut butter sandwiches from decades of advocacy-driven lunches. (Honestly, give me the “sounds of history” over the “smells of history” any day! 40-year-old hot dogs?! Pew!). Time travel also happens during the General Assembly with the passage of resolutions honoring people who have moved on somehow through death, retirement, or promotion, as well as with the passage of bills designed to change the trajectory of our future. But unlike Stephen Hawking’s ill-fated party, pretty much everyone who is invited to the party under the gold dome tends to show up.

And show up they have! Parties (not the hors d’oeuvre kind!) have chosen their leadership and all lawmakers now with their committee assignments (House Committees & Senate Committees), are starting to put bills in the hopper to get them assigned numbers and ultimately assigned to committees for vetting. Advocates are having lunches and Days (including Afterschool Day at the Capitol this Wednesday – register here) and General Assembly admins are learning to scurry. We have the bills that are numbered to date, but next week (note the nod to the future!) there will be a LOT more to check out. So, in the meantime while you are stuck in a friendly shower, budget hearing, or pothole of your own, be sure to “beam” down to the action alert and calendar notes after you’ve eyeballed the bills.

And until next time (-or yesterday - or later - or 2 dog-years from Thursday),

Polly

Polly McKinney
Advocacy Director
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## Legislative Update
**As of Saturday, January 21, 2023**

### Health and Behavioral Health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bill</th>
<th>Sponsor</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Bill Link</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HB 4</td>
<td>(Scott-76th)</td>
<td>House Prefiled</td>
<td><a href="https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/634">Bill Link</a></td>
<td>Requires the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities to create, operate, and maintain an electronic inpatient psychiatric bed registry.</td>
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<td>HB 5</td>
<td>(Scott-76th)</td>
<td>House Prefiled</td>
<td><a href="https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/634">Bill Link</a></td>
<td>Requires the University System of Georgia and the Technical College System of Georgia to make menstrual hygiene products available at no cost to students in certain facilities or portions of facilities of institutions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>HB 6</td>
<td>(Scott-76th)</td>
<td>House Prefiled</td>
<td><a href="https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/634">Bill Link</a></td>
<td>Provides for the submission of a waiver request by the Department of Human Services to permit the recipients of certain public assistance benefits to use such benefits for the purpose of purchasing diapers or menstrual hygiene products if the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service makes such waiver available to states.</td>
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<tr>
<td>HB 7</td>
<td>(Scott-76th)</td>
<td>House Prefiled</td>
<td><a href="https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/634">Bill Link</a></td>
<td>Establishes a school-linked behavioral health grant program to provide early identification of and intervention for students with mental health or substance use disorder needs and to build the capacity of K-12 schools to support students with mental health or substance use disorder needs in the classroom.</td>
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<tr>
<td>HB 9</td>
<td>(Scott-76th)</td>
<td>House Prefiled</td>
<td><a href="https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/634">Bill Link</a></td>
<td>Statutorily requires DBHDD to create, operate, and maintain the Georgia Crisis and Access Line, collect certain data, and requires any state-operated registry of available inpatient psychiatric beds, crisis residential beds, or substance use disorder beds to report data for purposes of the access line.</td>
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<td>HB 16</td>
<td>(Thomas-65th)</td>
<td>House Hopper</td>
<td><a href="https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/635">Bill Link</a></td>
<td>Extends the sunset provision relating to the use of sick leave for the care of immediate family members to July 1, 2026.</td>
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<td>HB 37</td>
<td>(Beverly-143rd)</td>
<td>House Industry and Labor Committee</td>
<td><a href="https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/635">Bill Link</a></td>
<td>Requires the Department of Community Health to mitigate the potential loss of Medicaid coverage caused by the discontinuation of the continuous enrollment condition of the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act by providing, continuing, and expanding services; and to improve training, processes, technology, and communication to that end.</td>
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<tr>
<td>HB 38</td>
<td>(Beverly-143rd)</td>
<td>House Hopper</td>
<td><a href="https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/635">Bill Link</a></td>
<td>Expands Medicaid to cover eligibility up to a maximum of 138 percent of the federal poverty level.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bill Number</td>
<td>Sponsor</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>SB 1</td>
<td>(Dolezal-27th)</td>
<td>Makes permanent (by removing the sunset provision) the prohibition on state and local governments from requiring proof of COVID vaccination for government services.</td>
<td>Senate Health and Human Services Committee</td>
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<td>HB 1</td>
<td>(Kendrick-95th)</td>
<td>Provides for the compensation of pregnant women who but for a fetal heartbeat law could choose to terminate the pregnancy but are compelled to carry the pregnancy to term and give birth to a child.</td>
<td>House Public Health Committee</td>
<td></td>
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<td>HB 3</td>
<td>(Scott-76th)</td>
<td>Provides for grants by the State Board of Education to local units of administration to support students living in poverty.</td>
<td>House Hopper</td>
<td></td>
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<td>HB 8</td>
<td>(Scott-76th)</td>
<td>Requires school attendance policies regarding excused absences take into consideration mental and behavioral health.</td>
<td>House Prefiled</td>
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<td>HB 14</td>
<td>(Kendrick-95th)</td>
<td>Requires the Department of Labor to establish criteria for the certification of workforce readiness programs and the certification of workforce-ready graduates. The bill allows that on and after January 1, 2024, an employer that employs a workforce-ready graduate in a full-time job for at least 40 weeks during a 12-month period shall be eligible for an income tax credit in the amount of $9,600.00 for each workforce-ready graduate.</td>
<td>House Ways and Means Committee</td>
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<td>SB 4</td>
<td>(Davenport-44th)</td>
<td>Enacts the &quot;Blind Persons' Braille Literacy Rights and Education Act&quot;. Among other things, the bill requires an evaluation of a blind or visually impaired student to determine such student's need for Braille instruction and requires Braille instruction in the individualized education program of a blind or visually impaired student as appropriate.</td>
<td>Senate Hopper</td>
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<td>HB 15</td>
<td>(Kendrick-95th)</td>
<td>Requires the state to establish a task force to evaluate and monitor the broadband equity of state-funded broadband network projects.</td>
<td>House Technology and Infrastructure Innovation Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>HB 24</td>
<td>(Thomas-65th)</td>
<td>Provides for the placement of a digital monument within the state capitol building or upon the capitol grounds to memorialize the Georgians who have died from COVID-19.</td>
<td>House Hopper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HB 25 (Thomas-65th)  Bill Link
Allows each toy manufacturer that increases its expenditures incurred in this state for materials or labor used directly in the manufacture of wooden toys for children by at least 30 percent from its preceding taxable year to claim a tax credit in the amount of 20 percent of the increase in such expenditures.
Status: House Hopper

HB 26 (Thomas-65th)  Bill Link
Requires the Department of Community affairs to include certain indoor air quality provisions in applicable state minimum standard codes, to require the installation of indoor air quality equipment and utilization of best practices in new construction permitted on or after July 1, 2024. These provisions include (but are not limited to) HVAC systems that can utilize a MERV 13 filter, adequate humidity control to maintain the humidity near or below 50 percent at room temperature, and fresh air ventilation through HVAC systems.
Status: House Hopper

HB 30 (Carson-46th)  Bill Link
Defines the term 'antisemitism' to have the same meaning as provided for in the working definition of antisemitism adopted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) on May 26, 2016. The bill also requires state agencies and departments to consider such definition when determining whether an alleged act was motivated by discriminatory antisemitic intent.
Status: House Hopper

HB 32 (Douglas-78th)  Bill Link
Provides that no high school which receives funding under Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20, the "Quality Basic Education Act," shall participate in or sponsor interscholastic sports events conducted by any athletic association that does not utilize instant replay for high school football championship games.
Status: House Hopper

HR 10 (Thomas-65th)  Bill Link
Creates the House Study Committee on Public Water Systems Serving Disadvantaged Communities.
Status: House Hopper

SB 3 (Albers-56th)  Bill Link
"Reducing Barriers to State Employment Act of 2023" Requires every state department, agency, board, bureau, office, commission, public corporation, and authority to regularly assess the educational, experiential, and training requirements necessary for each position of employment within the entity and identify positions where the educational, experiential, and training requirements could be reduced from their present level, and when practicable, reduce the number of positions for which a four-year college degree is required as a condition of employment.
Status: Senate Government Oversight Committee

SR 6 (Gooch-51st)  Bill Link
Agreed upon adjournment resolution (schedule) for the General Assembly through Sine Die (the last day of the 2023 legislative session).
Status: ADOPTED by both chambers
2 MINUTE ADVOCACY ASK

Be a Voice for Children

The Ask: Ask members of the House Appropriations Human Resources Subcommittee to preserve those items in the amended FY 2023 and FY 2024 Budgets which will make it easier to determine Medicaid and PeachCare eligibility for children. (The bulk of these fall within the Department of Human Services.)

The Why:

- Starting April 1st, 2023, Georgia, like other states, will be required to check each Medicaid or PeachCare for Kids® health insurance enrollee to see if they are still eligible to receive such coverage. This is called a “redetermination process.” Redetermination of ALL current Medicaid and PeachCare enrollees is expected to take a number of months.

- The state will need more workers and streamlined methods to make Redetermination go smoothly, accurately and efficiently.

- The Governor’s Proposal for the Amended Fiscal Year 2023 contains a number of items in the Department of Human Services budget which will be helpful for the Redetermination Process:

  Amended Fiscal Year 2023
  - $1.97 Million Added for technology improvements and security upgrades to the Integrated Eligibility System in preparation for the Public Health Emergency (PHE) expiration
  - $662,433 Added for 80 additional Medicaid eligibility caseworkers to process Medicaid redetermination cases due to the Public Health Emergency (PHE) expiration
  - $5.77 Million Added for a management consultant to oversee and ensure quality assurance for Medicaid redeterminations due to the Public Health Emergency (PHE) expiration

  Fiscal Year 2024
  - $3.24 Million Added for 300 additional Medicaid eligibility caseworkers to process Medicaid redetermination cases 3,244,889 due to the Public Health Emergency (PHE) expiration

Other Notes of Interest

- While redetermination is happening, people will not be taken off Medicaid UNLESS and UNTIL it is proven that they are no longer eligible for Medicaid. In the meantime, all people who are on Medicaid or PeachCare will remain so while their redetermination is happening.
• During this time, Medicaid and PeachCare for Kids® members may be asked to provide more information or complete certain steps. (FYI, If you, your family member, your friend or your client is on Medicaid or PeachCare, please note that it is very important to respond to the redetermination requests that will be sent via US Postal Service mail or to via email.)

The Message: Dear Representative,

Due to federal policy changes concerning the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency status, starting April 1st 2023, Georgia will be required to check who is still eligible to receive Medicaid or PeachCare for Kids® coverage. The state will need to make these redeterminations for every one of the 2.7 million members – the majority of whom are children - currently enrolled in either of these programs. The state will need more workers and streamlined methods to make redetermination go smoothly, accurately and efficiently. Therefore, I am respectfully requesting that you please preserve or enhance any funds recommended in the AFY 23 or FY24 budgets for eligibility system enhancements and necessary staff. Thank you for your attention to this situation and for your service to the children and families of our great state.

The Contact Info: 
Click Here to Contact the House Appropriations Human Resources Subcommittee Members

CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

Also, don’t forget to mark your calendar for these events:

Jan 25 (Wednesday) Afterschool Day at the Capitol
Click Here to Register

Beyond School Bells Luncheon: The Power of Afterschool and Summer Learning
Click Here to Register

Feb 15 (Wednesday) Reception in Celebration of Children (5-7PM)
Click Here to Register
Click Here for Sponsorship Opportunities

Jan 31 (Tuesday) Mental Health Day at the Capitol
Click Here to Register

Tuesday’s starting Jan 24 Talk Justice Tuesdays
Click Here to Register

Feb 22 (Wednesday) Georgia ACT Housing Day at the Capitol
Click Here to Register