March 20, 2023

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Weekly Welcome

This is about the time of year when the luster of the Gold Dome starts to tarnish, as bills are gutted, killed, and sometimes, simply lost in the sands of time. It is also the time of year when I start to think of things that could mitigate the fatigue and anxiety that are prone to accompany Legislative Days 36-40. Believe it or not, I actually keep a little list of such things, scrawled in teeny-tiny handwriting around bills on the House General Calendar from Day 35. I have chosen to share my “list” with you in hopes that someone somewhere might be able to Doordash, Uber, Instacart, Amazon, bicycle, airdrop (a la Hunger Games), or pony-express some of these items to help me and my war-weary colleagues make it to the last gavels of 2023. My little wish list is as follows:

1. Midnight Oil – for the waning hours of Days 39 and 40. 11PM Oil plus a huge can of Jolt Cola (“All the Sugar and Twice the Caffeine!”) is an acceptable substitute.
2. A Crystal Ball – Like General Assembly Vimeo but futured-up.
3. Poison Pills – Take one at lunchtime to counter even more poisonous legislation. NOT to be used in conjunction with HB 520 (Mental Health), HB 404 (Safe Housing), and certainly not with SB 61 (Family Care Act).
4. Shoes Made Out of Pillows – Think “Minnie Mouse Slippers”.
5. Red and Blue Tree Skirt – To cover the ugly stand of the inevitable 2023 Christmas Tree Bill.
6. Laz-y Boys in Room 450 CAP – meaning “reliners”, not “lawmakers”.
7. Mustard – Always goes great with sausage.
8. Personal Trainer with a screwdriver – So we can prepare for the “body-building” exercise that is the Frankenstein Bill*. (You can find both in your local “Human Resources” department!)
10. Cats – Because, well, why not?

Anyway, if you happen to pass by any of these items and are feeling generous, be sure to pick up enough for all 900 or so of us that will be hanging at the Cap for the next week and a half. We are all in the same boat (but pulling a slew of wakeboards (HB 121)).

Looking forward to those slippers!

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*A “Frankenstein Bill” is a piece of legislation that is amended after Crossover Day with language from multiple bills that “died” earlier in the session. This is done to try to ensure the passage of an array of policies, which otherwise are even less likely to pass.
Legislative Update
As of 03/18/2023

Justice, Public Safety, and School Discipline

HB 142 (Mainor-56th)  Bill Link
Provides for the establishment of unified campus police forces through agreements entered into by colleges and universities, whereby a campus policeman employed by any of the colleges or universities participating in the united police force agreement who is P.O.S.T. certified shall have the same law enforcement powers, including the power of arrest, as a law enforcement officer of any local government with police jurisdiction over such campuses.
Status: PASSED HOUSE, PASSED SENATE Needs agreement from the House to the Senate Changes.

HB 227 (Leverett-123rd)  Bill Link
Clarifies that the offense of criminal damage to property in the first degree can be committed through electronic means against critical infrastructure or any vital public service. The penalty for this crime is increased to imprisonment between two to 20 years. The bill revises the misdemeanor crime of interfering with property of public utility companies, municipalities, or political subdivisions owning critical infrastructure by prohibiting a person from altering or interfering with critical infrastructure. The definition for "critical infrastructure" in O.C.G.A. 16-11-220 is amended to include other vital public services.
Status: PASSED HOUSE Assigned to Senate Judiciary Committee.

HB 231 (Gullett-19th)  Bill Link
Creates the Prosecuting Attorneys Oversight Commission, which consists of an investigative panel and a hearing panel. The investigative panel is responsible for investigating alleged conduct that constitutes grounds for discipline, which is specifically outlined in the bill and includes: mental or physical incapacity; willful misconduct in office; willful and persistent failure to perform duties; conviction of a crime involving moral turpitude; conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice; allowing an assistant district attorney or assistant solicitor general to commit acts that would constitute removal; and violating the State Bar of Georgia's Rules of Professional Conduct. Complaints made to the investigative panel are required to show evidence that constitutes the grounds for discipline. If the complaint makes an allegation on the basis of a charging decision, plea offer, or one of the other specific issues in the bill, then the complaint must also show that it was likely that the decision was made based on one of the specific criteria such as: undue bias; an undisclosed conflict of interest; or a stated, written policy that demonstrates a district attorney or solicitor general categorically refuses to prosecute certain offenses.
Status: PASSED HOUSE Assigned to Senate Judiciary Committee.

HB 462 (Ballinger-23rd)  Bill Link
"Raise the Age Act" - The bill increases the jurisdiction of the juvenile court to include children who are 17 years old and revises various references in the Code to reflect this change. The bill establishes an implementation committee, which consists of 12 members and is responsible for conferring with appropriate agencies and interested parties regarding standards and practices of other jurisdictions, the most recent national standards, and the interested parties' views. A superior court will maintain jurisdiction of those who are 17 years old at the time of the alleged crime when those individuals are alleged to have committed criminal gang activity or an offense that would be a felony, if tried as an adult, for a second or subsequent time. Parts I and IV of the bill become effective upon the governor's signature. Parts II and III of the bill become effective January 1, 2025, subject to appropriations. If the co-chairpersons of the implementation committee determine that money was not appropriated for that year, the determination will be made during the following years until January 1, 2030. If those funds are appropriated in one of the following years, it will become effective on January 1 of that fiscal year.
Status: PASSED HOUSE Assigned to Senate Judiciary Committee.
HB 500 (Silcox-53rd) Bill Link
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 Assigned to Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill will be heard in committee today (MONDAY).

HB 505 (Cheokas-151st) Bill Link
Makes the offense of riot a felony offense punishable by imprisonment for a minimum of one year up to a maximum of 20 years. (Note that current code defines the offense of "riot" as "any two or more persons who shall do an unlawful act of violence or any other act in a violent and tumultuous manner"). Status: PASSED HOUSE Assigned to Senate Judiciary Committee.

SB 11 (Albers-56th) Bill Link
Provides for concurrent jurisdiction by the Georgia Bureau of Investigation in cases involving the identification, investigation, arrest, and prosecution of an individual or groups of individuals for violation of state laws concerning domestic, cyber, biological, chemical, and nuclear terrorism. Status: PASSED SENATE Assigned to House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee.

SB 12 (Albers-56th) Bill Link
Provides for sentencing to minimum terms of imprisonment for persons convicted of possession of firearms by convicted felons and first offender probationers when the offense for which such person is on probation, or has been previously convicted is a forcible felony, or a domestic violence felony, or an act of family violence. Among other things, the bill also provides that a plea of guilty or nolo contendere to a criminal gang activity offense shall stop the defendant in any related civil proceeding as to matters proved in the criminal proceeding. Status: PASSED SENATE Assigned to House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. The bill will be heard in committee TUESDAY.

SB 44 (Hatchett-50th) Bill Link
Clarifies that it is unlawful for a person to indirectly through another person: cause, encourage, solicit, recruit, or coerce another to become a member of a criminal street gang; to participate in a criminal street gang; or to participate in criminal gang activity. The bill defines "dangerous weapon", "firearm", "hazardous object", and "leader". Under Section II, the default penalty for violating O.C.G.A. 16-15-4 is a felony with increased imprisonment of between five and 20 years, to be served consecutively with other sentences, and with a mandatory minimum of five years. If a person recruits others to join a criminal street gang and the violation involves a person who is under 17 years old or a person who has a disability, then that person is subject to imprisonment of between 10 years and 20 years for a first offense, which must be served consecutively and with a mandatory minimum of 10 years. Upon a second or subsequent offense, the penalty is imprisonment of between 15 years and 25 years, which must be served consecutively and with a mandatory minimum of 15 years. A mandatory minimum sentence imposed under this offense is unable to be departed from by a court. A court can only depart from a mandatory minimum sentence if a district attorney or the attorney general agree and the convicted person provides substantial assistance in the identification, arrest, or conviction, of other members of the criminal street gang. The individual must also meet five different requirements to be eligible, and if a judge departs from the mandatory minimum, then they must specify on the record the circumstances for the reduction. This decision is appealed by the state. The bill adds an extra condition to when a judge can issue a bond on a person's own recognizance, or unsecured judicial release. To be eligible, the release must be noted on the release order. The person must not be charged with a bail restricted offense. The person must not have been convicted of an offense of bail jumping within the past five years. The person must not have had a bench warrant issued for their arrest based on a failure to appear within the past five years, unless the warrant was recalled or the offense was a nonserious traffic offense. A person can contest their ineligibility for unsecured judicial release on the basis that their criminal history record is inaccurate, incomplete, or misleading. If it is contested, the prosecutor bears the burden of establishing the person's ineligibility. A judge can also issue an unsecured judicial release for pretrial release or diversion if it is noted on the release order and the person is not charged with a bail restricted offense. A judge is only required to consider the accused's criminal history record that is available at that time. Status: PASSED SENATE Recommended Do Pass by the House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. The bill will be on the House floor for a vote today (MONDAY).
SB 92 (Robertson-29th) Bill Link
Creates the Prosecuting Attorneys Oversight Commission.
Status: PASSED SENATE Assigned to House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee.

SB 110 (Walker-20th) Bill Link
Creates a Back the Blue Fund of which the revenue commissioner will be the custodian and administer to sheriffs' offices through the Georgia Sheriff's Association for the purpose of increasing pay and enhancing officers' benefits. An option will be provided to contribute $3 to the fund upon issuance or renewal of a motor vehicle car tag.
Status: PASSED SENATE Recommended Do Pass by the House Insurance Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

SB 218 (Rhett-33rd) Bill Link
Allows for the issuance of identification cards to persons who complete a term of incarceration. The bill requires the Department of Corrections to provide identifying information to the Department of Driver Services for the card. The bill requires that when a person is released from confinement from the Department of Corrections, the department releases to the individual, with their consent, documents pertaining to the program history including whether the person completed training requested by the Board of Pardons and Paroles; whether they completed programs recommended by the Department of Corrections; whether they obtained a state-approved high school equivalency diploma or other educational degree; and the person's institutional work record.

HR 348 (Silcox-53rd) Bill Link
Creates the House Study Committee on Excessive Vehicle Noise and Related Crimes.
Status: House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee
Protection and Safety

SR 282  (Kirkpatrick-32nd)  Bill Link
Creates the Senate Study Committee on Foster Care and Adoption.
Status: Senate Rules Committee

HB 121  (Anderson-10th)  Bill Link
Defines the terms “wakeboarding” and “wake surfing”, and places restrictions on these activities. Except in certain circumstances, no person is to engage in either of these two defined activities between sunset and sunrise, on a body of water less than 50 acres in size, on a portion of a body of water with a width of less than 400 feet, within 200 feet of a shoreline or structure located on the water, or without wearing a personal flotation device approved by the U.S. Coast Guard. These restrictions do not apply to activities in which the commissioner has granted a marine event permit.
Status: PASSED HOUSE  Assigned to Senate Transportation Committee.

HB 144  (Lewis-Ward-115th)  Bill Link
Updates the rights of a ward in a guardianship by clarifying that a ward can communicate freely and privately with people other than the guardian through visitation, telephone calls, email, or personal mail. If a guardian violates the right of the ward to communicate, visit, or interact with others, in O.C.G.A. 29-4-22(b), then a ward or interested party can petition the court with evidence alleging that the guardian violated that right. If the court finds the guardian violated the ward’s right, then a court can impose a maximum fine of $1,000 for each violation. After two violations have been reported and ruled on by a court, the court can impose temporary suspension of the guardianship and appoint another guardian until the violations are resolved.
Status: PASSED HOUSE  Assigned to Senate Children and Families Committee.

HB 188  (Sainz-180th)  Bill Link
Changes the name of the Sexual Offender Registration Review Board to the Sexual Offender Risk Review Board (SORRB). The bill defines the term "sexual felony" to be a felony conviction of the following crimes: aggravated assault; kidnapping that involves a victim under the age of 14, except by a parent; sex trafficking; rape; aggravated sodomy; statutory rape; child molestation; aggravated child molestation; enticing a child for indecent purposes; improper sexual contact by employee or agent in the first or second degree or improper sexual contact by a foster parent in the first or second degree, unless the punishment was not subject to O.C.G.A. 17-10-6.2; incest; aggravated sexual battery; and sexual exploitation. Any person who was previously convicted of a sexual felony who is convicted of aggravated assault with the intent to rape; kidnapping; human trafficking for sexual servitude; rape; aggravated sodomy; statutory rape; aggravated child molestation; enticing a child for indecent purposes; improper sexual contact by an employee, agent, or foster parent in the first or second degree; incest; sexual exploitation of children; or aggravated sexual battery is subject to imprisonment for life or a split sentence that is a term of imprisonment followed by probation for life that includes electronic monitoring as a condition of probation. The bill also removes the crime for removing or inhibiting an electronic monitoring device who is required to wear it under O.C.G.A. 42-1-14, as a response in part to the Supreme Court of Georgia case Park v. State. The bill changes the name of SORRB and requires that a defendant who was sentenced to probation submit to SORRB within 60 days of being sentenced for a risk assessment rather than the current requirement of 10 days. Among other provisions, the bill also adds the crime of electronically furnishing obscene material to minors to the list of crimes defined as a "dangerous sexual offense" under O.C.G.A. 42-1-12(a)(10)(B.4) and clarifies the procedure for when a sexual offender moves from another state or territory to Georgia, the risk assessment process for sexually dangerous predators, and the timelines for when risk assessment evaluations need to be made by SORRB.
Status: PASSED HOUSE  Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Public Safety Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.
HB 291 (Scoggins-14th) Bill Link
Petitions for the appointment, modification, or termination, of a guardian, emergency guardian of an adult, conservator, or emergency conservator, and can be supported by an affidavit of an advanced practice registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, or registered professional nurse; a physician assistant; or a licensed clinical social worker, licensed master's social worker, licensed marriage and family therapist, or professional counselor. If a proposed ward is a patient in a federal medical facility and certain licensed parties are not available, affidavits of new licensees may be used for petitions for the appointment of a guardian or emergency guardian. If a petition is not dismissed, the court may appoint an evaluator who is an advanced practice registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, or registered professional nurse; a physician assistant; or a licensed clinical social worker, licensed master's social worker, licensed marriage and family therapist, or professional counselor.
Status: PASSED HOUSE Assigned to Senate Children and Families Committee.

HB 327 (Cameron-1st) Bill Link
Includes grandparent and grandchild of the whole blood or of the half blood or step-grandchild in the list of relatives who are able to be charged with incest.
Status: PASSED HOUSE Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

HB 402 (Hilton-48th) Bill Link
“Edna Mae McGovern Act” - Requires each public school to provide parents or students over 18 years of age with information on water safety education. At the beginning of each school year, the school will provide information to promote safety in, on, and around bodies of water. This may include information on local water safety courses and swim lessons.
Status: PASSED HOUSE PASSED SENATE

HB 404 (Carpenter-4th) Bill Link
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 460 (Ballinger-23rd) Bill Link
Provides a right to counsel for a child who is the subject of a legitimation petition and a child who is party to a hearing to determine whether continuation or termination of a temporary guardianship is in the best interests of a child. Custodians or guardians who are subject to a sworn complaint or affidavit and any other respondent to a dependency proceeding have the right to an attorney at all stages of the dependency proceedings. A child receiving extended care youth services from the Division of Family and Children Services is provided a right to counsel for all stages of dependency proceedings. The bill requires that affidavits or sworn complaints only be used when a child is taken into custody under exceptional circumstances. A trial court can appoint an attorney for a child at all stages of proceedings for extended care youth services. The child will be provided notice of their right to an attorney and be given the opportunity to: use, waive the right, obtain an attorney of their choice, or obtain the court-appointed attorney in the court’s discretion.
Status: PASSED HOUSE PASSED SENATE

HB 508 (Ballinger-23rd) Bill Link
Requires the clerk of a superior court to issue a summons and deliver it for service to the party whom the order is against within 24 hours of the issuance of an ex parte order for temporary relief for a petitioner or minor from stalking.
Status: PASSED HOUSE Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.
HB 509 (Ballinger-23rd) Bill Link
Expands the crime of burglary in the first and second degrees to include when a person enters the house, or other specified building or structure, of another person with the intent to commit an act of family violence.
Status: PASSED HOUSE Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Children and Families Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

SB 36 (Robertson-29th) Bill Link
Increases penalties for pimping and pandering.
Status: PASSED SENATE Assigned to House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. The bill will be heard in committee TUESDAY.

SB 42 (Williams-25th) Bill Link
Revises the penalty for businesses violating the requirement that businesses post signage making people aware of the human trafficking hotline. A law enforcement officer is required to notify a business of its noncompliance, and the owner is required to comply within 30 days of receipt of the notice. Currently, the punishment is discretionary, although the bill changes it to mandatory. Further, the fine is revised from being a maximum fine of $500 to instead be between $500 and $1,000. Upon a second or subsequent offense, it is still a high and aggravated misdemeanor, but the bill clarifies that the fine is between $1,000 and $5,000. Currently, that fine is listed as a maximum of $5,000 without a minimum.
Status: PASSED SENATE Recommended Do Pass by the House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. The bill will be on the House floor for a vote today (MONDAY).

SB 61 (Strickland-17th) Bill Link
Makes permanent the provision that requires employers who offer sick leave to employees to allow an employee to use that sick leave for the care of an immediate family member.

SB 64 (Robertson-64th) Bill Link
Allows an adult who had been adopted to request and receive a copy of their original Georgia birth certificate following payment of a fee. The copy will indicate it is not a certified copy. A parent, sibling, or descendant of a deceased person may receive a copy of the decedent's birth certificate under the same procedure.
Status: PASSED SENATE Recommended Do Pass by the House Judiciary Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee. POSTPONED IN THE HOUSE.

SB 107 (Burns-23rd) Bill Link
"Izzy's Law" - Requires the Department of Public Health to develop a model safety plan for private swim instructors to utilize by January 1, 2024. The plan will include minimum standards for student-to-instructor ratios, secondary supervision recommendations, parent or legal guardian attendance, and use of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certification. All private swim instructors are required to have an aquatic safety plan by April 1, 2024. Any instructor in violation is subject to a misdemeanor charge and a minimum fine of $200 for the first and second violation, and a $1,000 maximum fine for third and subsequent violations.

SB 131 (Tillery-19th) Bill Link
Requires a guardianship petition hearing to be conducted in accordance with O.C.G.A. 29-2-18. Section 2 adds requirements to the process of serving individuals related to a child who was adjudicated as a dependent child and any other parties who appear to the court as proper or necessary to the proceeding. Section 3 makes a conviction of a parent for murder or voluntary manslaughter of the other parent a mandatory basis for removing a child from the parent who was convicted. Section 4 allows the court to exercise its discretion when determining the custody of a child when one parent was indicted for the offense of murder or voluntary manslaughter of the other parent.
Status: PASSED SENATE Recommended Do Pass by the House Juvenile Justice Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.
SB 133  (Strickland-17th)  Bill Link
Creates a uniform process for juvenile courts to follow in placing a child in the custody of DFCS for Children in Need of Services cases as well as delinquency cases.
Status: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Juvenile Justice Committee. The bill will be heard in committee today (MONDAY).

SB 134  (Cowser-46th)  Bill Link
Adds proceedings involving termination of parental rights to the list of proceedings in which minors are not required to be sworn in prior to offering testimony. In all dependency adjudications involving juveniles and involving injury or disease, a written medical report will be admissible into evidence without any hearsay objection, as long as applicable notice is provided to the adverse party at least five days prior to the adjudication hearing. Any objection, on a ground other than hearsay, must be made within three days of being provided the report. In all hearings involving termination of parental rights and involving injury or disease, a written medical report will be admissible into evidence without any hearsay objection as long as applicable notice is provided to the adverse party at least 15 days prior to the adjudication hearing. Any objection, on a ground other than hearsay, must be made within seven days of being provided the report.
Status: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. Awaits consideration by the governor.

SB 135  (Kirkpatrick-32nd)  Bill Link
Clarifies that when genetic testing is required by court order, testing must be of a type reasonably relied upon by experts in that field and conducted by a laboratory accredited by either the AABB (formerly known as the American Association of Blood Banks) or an accrediting body designated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Results of genetic testing, including the statistical likelihood of the alleged parent's parentage, are admitted into evidence without foundational testimony or other proof of accuracy, unless a party objects in writing at least 30 days prior to a hearing at which the results may be introduced into evidence. The bill makes results of required genetic testing self-authenticating and admissible into any civil actions as long as documentation from the laboratory contains the following chain of custody information: the name and photograph of each individual whom was tested; the name of the individual who collected the test result; the place and date each result was collected; the name of the person who received the result in the laboratory; and the date the result was received.
Status: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Juvenile Justice Committee. The bill will be on the House floor for a vote today (MONDAY).

SB 196  (Watson-1st)  Bill Link
Allows the failure to wear a safety belt or safety restraints for children as admissible evidence in civil actions, and prohibits cancellation of insurance coverage for failure to wear a safety belt or safety restraints for children.
Status: FAILED SENATE.

SB 216  (Brass-28th)  Bill Link
Authorizes respite care for foster parents for longer periods of time pursuant to circumstances delineated in rules and regulations established by the Department of Human Services.
Status: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Juvenile Justice Committee. The bill will be heard in committee today (MONDAY).

SB 230  (Brass-28th)  Bill Link
Revises provisions relating to the foster parents bill of rights and include relative caregivers and fictive kin as parties to those rights.
Status: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Juvenile Justice Committee. The bill will be heard in committee today (MONDAY).

HR 209  (Carson-46th)  Bill Link
Creates the House Study Committee on Motor Vehicle Crash Fatality Rates.
Status: Recommended Do Pass by the House Motor Vehicles Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee. (Since it is a House Study Committee, it only needs approval by the House and so is still viable for passage this session.)
SR 159  (Strickland-17th)  Bill Link
Creates the Senate Study Committee on the Parenting Time Deviation in Georgia's Child Support Guidelines Statute.  Status: Senate Rules Committee
Health and Behavioral Health

SB 296  (Halpern-39th)  Bill Link
Relating to the Department of Public Health, so as to provide for the appointment of a state surgeon general.
Status: Senate Health and Human Services Committee

HB 76  (Powell-33rd)  Bill Link
Revises the requirements for an associate marriage and family therapist license to allow the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education to determine the coursework requirements and the type, and minimum amount of hours, of clinical experience applicants must have. The bill also revises the clinical experience requirements for those currently licensed as an associate marriage and family therapist, those with a qualifying master’s degree, and those with a qualifying doctorate degree. The bill adds a provision stating that any Governor-appointed seat of an executive branch board, commission, or council shall be filled by appointment of the Governor as provided by law when the seat becomes vacant upon term expiration or when declared vacant by the Governor pursuant to this Code section.
Status: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Children and Families Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

HB 82  (Jackson-128th)  Bill Link
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 the Senate Finance Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

HB 85  (Cooper-45th)  Bill Link
Requires health benefit policy coverage for biomarker testing if supported by medical and scientific evidence.
Status: PASSED HOUSE, PASSED SENATE. Awaits consideration by the governor.

HB 143  (Mathis-149th)  Bill Link
Requires the Department of Community Health to cover continuous glucose monitors through Medicaid as a pharmacy benefit. Eligibility for coverage includes a diagnosis of diabetes mellitus and patient or caregiver training. Additionally, a patient must have use of daily insulin or a history of problematic hypoglycemia to receive the benefit. An in-person or telehealth visit is required within six months prior to and every six months after initial prescription.
Status: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Health and Human Services Committee.

HB 181  (Townsend-179th)  Bill Link
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. Assigned to Senate Health and Human Services Committee. The bill will be heard in committee today (MONDAY).
HB 215 (Powell-33rd)  Bill Link
Creates licensure requirements for advanced practice registered nurses (APRN) and changes the definition of APRN to a person licensed by the Georgia Board of Nursing who is either a certified nurse midwife; certified nurse practitioner; certified registered nurse anesthetist; clinical nurse specialist or clinical nurse specialist in psychiatric/mental health; or a recognized APRN before June 30, 2006. The bill makes it a misdemeanor to practice as an APRN without a license, and adds licensed APRN and physician assistant to the list of providers eligible to execute affidavits for specialty parking tags based on a person’s disability.
Status: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Health and Human Services Committee.

HB 280 (Gambill-15th)  Bill Link
Provides exclusions to unfair trade practices and unlawful inducements by allowing insurance companies to provide products to policyholders that incentivize behavior changes to improve health.
Status: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Insurance and Labor Committee.

HB 295 (Hawkins-27th)  Bill Link
Relates to surprise billing and clarifies provisions relating to arbitration. The bill requires the designation of plans that are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the 'Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974'. The bill extends the time insurers have to submit data after an arbitration request is made from 30 to 60 days.
Status: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Insurance and Labor Committee.

HB 308 (Newton-127th)  Bill Link
Replaces the structure for tax credits provided to a physician for medical preceptor rotations from a $500 credit for each of the first three rotations and a $1,000 credit for the fourth through 10th rotation in a calendar year to $1,000 for every medical preceptor rotation up to 10 in a calendar year. The structure for an advanced practice registered nurse or physician assistant is also revised from a $375 credit for each of the first three rotations and a $750 credit for each of the fourth through 10th rotation in a calendar year to $750 for every preceptor rotation up to 10 in a calendar year. The bill adds licensed dentist as eligible for the same tax credit as a physician. The tax credit is capped at $3 million per year.
Status: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Finance Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

HB 343 (Newton-127th)  Bill Link
Requires prescription drug coinsurance or deductible amounts to be calculated at the point of sale based on a price reduced by an amount equal to at least 50% of all rebates received or to be received for the dispensing or administration of the prescription drug. The bill requires pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) to report annually to the Department of Insurance the aggregate amounts received for rebates; administrative fees; insurer administrative service fees; rebates and administrative fees that did not pass through to health plans or insurers; retained rebate percentages; rebates and administrative fees used to decrease premiums; and the expected and actual premium impacts. Any health plan administered by the state is exempt from this bill, including the State Health Benefit Plan and Medicaid health plans, as well as self-funded employer-sponsored health insurance plans regulated under the ‘Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974’ (ERISA).
Status: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Health and Human Services Committee.

HB 362 (Mathiak-74th)  Bill Link
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. Assigned to Senate Insurance and Labor Committee.

HB 383 (Reeves-99th)  Bill Link
Defines the term "healthcare worker" as any employee or independent contractor of a hospital or other healthcare facility. Increased penalties are added when someone commits aggravated assault against a healthcare worker or an emergency health worker located on a hospital campus. The penalty is imprisonment between three to 20 years. The bill increases penalties for committing aggravated battery against a healthcare worker or an emergency health worker located on a hospital campus. The penalty is imprisonment between three to 20 years. A new chapter in the Code is
created that defines "hospital", "hospital campus", and "hospital peace officer". The provisions allow a hospital guard to have arrest powers while on a hospital campus, and hospital security who are certified by the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council (POST) can be authorized by a hospital to carry a firearm or weapon. Each hospital that employs law enforcement are required to report to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) and local law enforcement incidents of criminal gang activity that occurs on or adjacent to the hospital campus. The bill requires records not protected under a state disclosure law to be available for public inspection.

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

**HB 414** (Blackmon-146th)  
Creates a grant program within the Department of Veterans Service to provide behavioral health services to military service members, veterans, and their families.

Status: **PASSED HOUSE.** Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Veterans, Military and Homeland Security Committee. The bill will be on the Senate floor for a vote today (MONDAY).

**HB 416** (Silcox-53rd)  
Allows for qualified pharmacy technicians to administer any COVID-19 vaccine and any vaccine on the adult immunization schedule to individuals 18 years of age or older. The supervising pharmacist will have discretion over delegating the authority to administer vaccines and must be readily available to the pharmacy technician when a vaccine is being administered.

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

**HB 440** (Stoner-40th)  
Authorizes public and private schools to stock a supply of undesignated ready-to-use glucagon and permits prescribers to provide such medication to schools. (Glucagon is a hormone that your pancreas makes to help regulate your blood glucose (sugar) levels.)

Status: **PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE.** Awaits consideration by the governor.

**HB 520** (Jones-25th)  
Authorizes the Department of Community Health (DCH) to collaborate with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) to study the psychiatric treatment residential facilities referral processes with the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) and Department of Human Services (DHS). The bill prohibits health benefit plans from implementing step therapy protocol for medications prescribed to treat severe mental illness. DBHDD is authorized to work with certain other agencies to create guidance for standardized terminology such as the definition of serious mental illness. Definitions for homeless individuals, recidivism, and other terms may also be developed. DBHDD will also work with individuals to provide county-based coordinators to work with criminal justice and behavioral health providers to reduce jail admission of those in a mental health crisis that do not pose a public safety risk. A state-wide public-private partnership will be established by DBHDD to serve as a clearinghouse for best practices, information, and resources to support "familiar faces". These are individuals with serious mental illness that have frequent contact with criminal justice, homeless, and behavioral health systems. Subject to appropriations, DBHDD will develop a pilot program to assist jails in implementing behavioral health screening programs and protocols and create a grant program to create or expand jail in-reach and reentry programs which will focus on "familiar faces" and connect individuals with community resources. A comprehensive study on the public behavioral health workforce will be conducted by DBHDD to understand recruitment and retention issues, and target solutions to help with shortages. The bill adds certain members to the Behavioral Health Reform and Innovation Commission (BHRIC). BHRIC, with DBHDD, is required to develop a common definition of "serious mental illness" and include "familiar faces" to initiative coordination. BHRIC is tasked with creating a multi-year plan to expand the use of forensic peer mentors. BHRIC is required to establish a task force to build a continuum of care. The task force will comprehensively study access to inpatient behavioral health beds, and make recommendations on needed capacity building, youth specific care, and autism spectrum-related care. The task force will also formally review competency evaluation and restoration challenges, and forensic laws and regulations that affect those interacting with the behavioral health and criminal justice systems. This task force will study increased capacity of child and adolescent
substance misuse intensive outpatient treatment programs. BHIRC will convene a task force to review the effect of behavioral health on homeless populations across the state. A physician's certificate or affidavit is required to be attached to a court order for involuntary treatment. (Personally identifying information will be removed from such document.) OHSC is required to study behavioral health provider licensing requirements to identify barriers to entry or licensure. Professional boards to be included in the study are Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers, and Marriage and Family Therapists; State Board of Examiners of Psychologists; and the Georgia Board of Nursing. The study will update licensing application and renewal systems, create pathways for foreign-trained practitioners, and update practicum and supervision requirements. The Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers, and Marriage and Family Therapists is authorized to waive experience requirements for applicants licensed under another state that have maintained good standing in that jurisdiction for at least two years. The Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers, and Marriage and Family Therapists and the Georgia Board of Nursing are authorized to manage a professional health program for impaired health care professionals across the state. The Governor's Office of Planning and Budget (OPB) will hire a director as the executive head of the Georgia Data Analytic Center (GDAC). GDAC will serve as the central repository for Georgia from which data can be released to requesting agencies. The director will have the authority to review data sharing disputes between executive state agencies when a data request made by one agency is denied by another with the reasoning that it would violate state or federal law. If the director determines such a request does not break the law, the agency is compelled to cooperate with such request. DCH will ensure that the Medicaid program includes reimbursement for psychological diagnostic assessments and treatment and family therapy services; reimbursement for licensed professional counselors, licensed marriage and family therapists, and certified peer specialists; psychiatric hospitals as eligible for inpatient care for those under the age of 21 years enrolled in fee-for-service Medicaid; updates of reimbursement rates for the assessment and treatment of autism spectrum disorder in collaboration with relevant agencies and organizations; and therapeutic foster care for those under the age of 21 years. Necessary requests for Medicaid state plan amendments or waivers will be made to the United States Department of Health and Human Services by December 1, 2023. DCH is also required to take necessary steps to ensure the receipt of relevant federal funds to provide services, such as housing and employment supports and case management, for recipients and their caregivers if they are under the age of 19 years. The Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce is required to work with state licensing boards to establish the Georgia Health Care Professionals Data System to collect and share de-identified descriptive data about licensed health care professionals in Georgia. Such information will be stored in a publicly accessible repository on the board's website. Information will include demographics and geographical distribution of licensed health care professionals across the state. Licensing boards must provide such data upon request or up to two times annually as required. Information provided by licensing boards will include age, race, gender, ethnicity, language spoken at home, practice location, and license type.

Status: PASSED HOUSE

HB 557 (Stephens-164th) Bill Link
Authorizes advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants to prescribe Schedule II controlled substances in emergency situations under certain circumstances. These circumstances include good standing with the applicable medical board and at least one year of post-licensure clinical experience. The patient receiving the prescription must be at least 18 years old unless the medication is used to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and the supervising physician is a pediatrician, family practice physician, internal medicine physician, or psychiatrist. The bill only allows for an initial prescription that does not exceed a five-day supply. Authorization must be included in the provider's nurse protocol agreement and physician assistant's job description.

Status: PASSED HOUSE

Assigned to Senate Health and Human Services Committee.

SB 1 (Dolezal-27th) Bill Link
Removes the sunset on the prohibition that prevents state and local governments from requiring proof of COVID-19 vaccination as a condition of providing services, accessing a facility, issuing licenses or permits, performing duties, and other matters.

Status: PASSED SENATE

Recommended Do Pass by the House Public Health Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

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SB 20 (Kirkpatrick-32nd)  Bill Link
"Surprise Billing Consumer Protection Act" - Requires insurers to contract with and maintain a sufficient and appropriate number of participating network providers. Additionally, insurers are prohibited from denying preauthorization of services that were rendered by an in-network provider because the referring provider is out-of-network. The bill gives the insurance commissioner authority to review network adequacy.
Status: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Insurance Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

SB 47 (Hufstetler-52nd)  Bill Link
Adds the smoking of electronic smoking or vaping devices to the Georgia Smokefree Air Act of 2005.

SB 76 (Merritt-9th)  Bill Link
Requires state health benefit plans to cover insulin medication at an amount not to exceed $35.00 per 30-day supply.
Status: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Health Committee. The bill will be heard in committee TUESDAY.

SB 99 (Dolezal-27th)  Bill Link
Provides an exemption from certificate of need for acute care hospitals established in rural counties that meet certain criteria.
Status: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Health Committee. The bill will be heard in committee today (MONDAY).

SB 109 (Echols-49th)  Bill Link
Requires the Department of Community Health to include continuous glucose monitors as a pharmacy benefit for Medicaid recipients.
Status: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Public Health Committee. The bill will be heard in committee today (MONDAY).

SB 140 (Summers-13th)  Bill Link
Prohibits the use of sex reassignment surgeries and hormone replacement therapies on minors in a licensed institution for the treatment of gender dysphoria. Exceptions include treatment of sex development disorders, androgen insensitivity syndrome, and other medical conditions. Additionally, minors who began hormone replacement therapies before July 1, 2023 are exempt. Licensed physicians in violation will be held administratively responsible by the medical board.
Status: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE.

SB 164 (Hufstetler-52nd)  Bill Link
Creates licensure requirements for advanced practice registered nurses and changes the definition of "advanced practice registered nurse" (APRN) to only a person licensed by the Georgia Board of Nursing who is either a certified nurse midwife, certified nurse practitioner, certified registered nurse anesthetist, clinical nurse specialist or clinical nurse specialist in psychiatric/mental health, or a recognized APRN before June 30, 2006. The bill makes it a misdemeanor to practice as an APRN without a license. The bill adds anesthesiologist assistant to the Georgia Composite Medical Board in an advisory-only capacity to the board and to the board-appointed Physician Assistants Advisory Committee. Section 6 of SB 164 is the 'Anesthesiologist Assistant Act', which creates the licensure of anesthesiologist assistants through the Georgia Composite Medical Board and provides for licensure and renewal requirements. This bill allows for anesthesiologist assistants to perform duties and responsibilities as delegated by the supervising anesthesiologist and requires the supervising anesthesiologist or an alternate supervising anesthesiologist to be immediately available to intervene if needed during the delivery of care. The bill allows for a supervising anesthesiologist to delegate to an anesthesiologist assistant the authority to order controlled substances, dangerous drugs, medical treatments, and diagnostic studies. The bill states that the board can issue a previously revoked license under certain conditions after rehabilitation and makes it a misdemeanor to practice as an anesthesiologist assistant without a license. Authority is granted for an anesthesiologist assistant to provide care for up to 48 hours during a state of emergency or public health emergency.
Committee.

**SB 177 (Jones II-22nd) Bill Link**
"Food Insecurity Eradication Act“ - Creates the Georgia Food Security Advisory Council.
Status: PASSED SENATE Assigned to House Agriculture and Consumer Affairs Committee.

**SB 223 (Watson-1st) Bill Link**
Requires all sponsors of cancer clinical trials to provide potential patient subjects with information on whether reimbursement will be available for travel and ancillary costs for patient-subjects and those who accompany the patient-subject for support. The bill states reimbursements are provided to eliminate financial barriers to enrollment and will not be considered an undue inducement or coercive. All information provided will be reviewed by the relevant federal institution.
Status: PASSED SENATE Recommended Do Pass by the House Health Committee. The bill will be on the House floor for a vote today (MONDAY).

**SB 246 (Hodges-3rd) Bill Link**
Authorizes the Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce to provide for the repayment of up to $100,000 in student loans for eligible recipients serving as faculty members in eligible postsecondary nursing programs in this state.
Status: PASSED SENATE Recommended Do Pass by the House Higher Education Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

**HR 43 (Au-50th) Bill Link**
Creates the Costs and Effects of Smoking Joint Study Committee.
Status: House Health Committee

**HR 185 (Bennett-94th) Bill Link**
Creates the House Healthy Food Retail Study Committee to investigate the lack of access to fresh, healthy food in certain rural and urban areas.
Status: House Agriculture and Consumer Affairs Committee

**HR 232 (Hutchinson-106th) Bill Link**
Creates the House Study Committee on Evaluating, Simplifying, and Eliminating Duplication of Regulatory Requirements for Mental Health and Social Services Providers.
Status: House Public Health Committee

**HR 279 (Glaize-67th) Bill Link**
Creates the Joint Head and Heart Student Health Study Committee.
Status: House Public Health Committee

**SR 279 (Dolezal-27th) Bill Link**
Creates the Senate Study Committee on Certificate of Need Reform.
Status: Senate Rules Committee
Maternal Care and Child Care

HB 129  (Hong-103rd)  Bill Link
Expands Temporary Assistance for Needy Families eligibility criteria to pregnant women and repeals a provision relating to elimination of increment in benefits. Status: PASSED HOUSE, PASSED SENATE.

HB 298  (Daniel-117th)  Bill Link
Excuses or defers from jury service a natural or adoptive parent who has a child six months of age or younger and has custody of that child, with the excusal or deferment granted upon the parent executing an affidavit. Status: PASSED HOUSE, Assigned to Senate Judiciary Committee.

SB 46  (Hufstetler-52nd)  Bill Link
Requires that a pregnant woman be tested for HIV and syphilis by their prenatal provider at their first prenatal visit, at 28-32 weeks gestation, and at delivery. The patient will have the option to opt out of such testing. Status: PASSED SENATE, PASSED HOUSE, Awaits consideration by the governor.

SB 106  (Walker-20th)  Bill Link
Provides for a three-year pilot program to provide coverage for remote maternal health clinical services under the Medicaid program. Status: PASSED SENATE, Assigned to House Public Health Committee. The bill will be heard in committee today (MONDAY).
Education

HR 490 (Olaleye-59th)  Bill Link
Creates the House Study Committee on Education Funding Mechanisms.
Status: House Education Committee

HB 51 (Pirkle-169th)  Bill Link
Authorizes local boards of education to utilize alternative means of transportation other than school buses to transport students to school and school-related activities where appropriate.
Status: PASSED HOUSE  Assigned to Senate Education and Youth Committee.

HB 81 (Corbett-174th)  Bill Link
Revises the eligibility criteria are that a local school system must be currently, or in the most recent three years, ranked in the bottom 25% of school systems in sales revenue per full-time equivalent (FTE) student count and value of property per FTE student count. For local school systems in which the amount of special purpose local option sales tax revenues is ranked in the bottom 25% of eligible local school systems receiving such sales tax revenues, that system may submit a request to the Department of Education for consideration. The system must commit five years of such revenues to the project. Educational facilities must be more than 35 years old to be consolidated. Once a local school system has received a capital outlay grant and its need is met as determined by the department, it is not eligible to receive another grant for a period of 10 years.
Status: PASSED HOUSE  Assigned to Senate Education and Youth Committee.

HB 87 (Erwin-32nd)  Bill Link
Provides for the transition of system-collaborative charter schools to completion special schools by July 1, 2023. Any system-collaborative charter school that did not transition to become an alternative charter school by July 1, 2021, will operate as a state chartered special school. If the state chartered special school does not transition to a completion special school by July 1, 2023, the school will cease operating upon expiration of its current charter with the State Board of Education. The board may not expand the current attendance zone of the school. The bill also creates the 'Completion Special Schools Act'. The board will adopt policies for the establishment, funding, and operation of completion special schools, which focus on dropout recovery/prevention or high school credit recovery for grades nine through 12. The board is authorized to provide up to $5 million in grant funding to encourage and authorize the creation of new completion special schools, subject to appropriation. The board will adopt policies for the dissolution or temporary dissolution of a completion special school upon the recommendation of the state school superintendent for failure to comply with the requirements of Article 31C.
Status: PASSED HOUSE  Assigned to Senate Education and Youth Committee. The bill will be heard in committee TUESDAY.

HB 122 (Hawkins-27th)  Bill Link
Provides for membership of the board of directors for the Georgia Higher Education Savings Plan (GHESP). The bill removes the specified maximum GHESP account balance of $235,000 and allows the board of directors to set a reasonable maximum amount. The bill authorizes the GHESP board of directors to govern the Georgia Achieving A Better Life Experience (ABLE) Program Corporation.
Status: PASSED HOUSE  Assigned to Senate Higher Education Committee.

HB 130 (Gambill-15th)  Bill Link
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  Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Higher Education Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.
HB 147 (Wade-9th)  Bill Link
“Safe Schools Act” - Requires the Professional Standards Commission (PSC) to consult with the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency (GEMA/HS), the Department of Juvenile Justice, and the Georgia Public Safety Training Center to create a school safety and anti-gang endorsement for eligible certificated professional personnel who volunteer to complete a training program approved by the PSC in multidisciplinary best practices for promoting and preserving safe schools, and for identifying and deterring youth gangs. The legislation adds GEMA/HS to those agencies to which the school must submit their school safety plan. Schools are required to conduct intruder alert drills by October 1 of each school year and report to GEMA/HS when the drill is completed. All students are required to participate, but each system may allow an option for a parent/legal guardian to elect, in writing, that the child is not participating.
Status: PASSED HOUSE, PASSED SENATE Awaits consideration by the governor.

HB 185 (Gaines-120th)  Bill Link
Provides for the establishment of Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IPSE) grants. The grants would be awarded to eligible Georgia students enrolled on or before July 1, 2028, in authorized IPSE programs at qualified postsecondary institutions in an amount equal to the current academic year undergraduate tuition at each student’s qualified institution.
Status: PASSED HOUSE Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Higher Education Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

HB 228 (Dempsey-13th)  Bill Link
Expands tuition equalization grant eligibility to include higher education institutions which offer: baccalaureate programs in nursing; have a current physical presence in Georgia for at least five years; have received accreditation from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education; and have accreditation from either the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) or a regional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. These institutions must have a four-year average passage rate of at least 85% for the National Council Licensure Examination, and admit students who have a high school diploma or equivalency or a degree from an accredited postsecondary institution. Such institutions are only considered as approved institutions for students who enroll on or before July 1, 2025.
Status: PASSED HOUSE Assigned to Senate Higher Education Committee.

HB 249 (Martin-49th)  Bill Link
Provides Georgia College Completion Grant eligibility to students who have completed 70% of a four-year program or 45% of a two-year program. The maximum award amount per eligible student is set at $3,500, with no single payment exceeding $2,500.
Status: PASSED HOUSE Assigned to Senate Higher Education Committee.

HB 301 (Ridley-6th)  Bill Link
Sets the penalty at $250 for improperly overtaking a school bus and prohibits the addition of any other fees, fines, or penalties. The bill caps the maximum fee that may be charged for electronic processing of a penalty for speeding in a school zone at $25. Any agent, law enforcement agency, or governing body that violates this provision will be fined $1,000. O.C.G.A. 40-14-11 now includes penalties collected for speeding in a school zone in the calculation for total speeding fine revenue.
Status: PASSED HOUSE Assigned to Senate Public Safety Committee.

HB 318 (Hilton-48th)  Bill Link
Reestablishes the Office of Charter School Compliance, create the Office of District Flexibility, and requires administrative fees held back by the state or local school system for the administration of charter schools to be used solely for that purpose. The Office of Charter School Compliance is reestablished under the State Charter Schools Commission and assists with the administration, review of, and creation of new local charter schools. The bill creates the Office of District Flexibility under the Department of Education to help school systems become and remain a charter system. Up to three percent may be retained by local boards of education from the charter school funding to provide administrative services for the local charter school. The local board of education must spend these funds solely and directly on administrative services performed for the local charter school. Any funds not expended should
be remitted to the local charter school each year by June 30th. The Department of Education may retain up to 3% for the administration of state chartered special schools. Any funds not used by June 30th for the administration of the state chartered special school will be remitted to the school. The State Charter School Commission must follow the same structure relating to retaining and reimbursing state charter schools for the 3% administrative fee collected.

Status: **PASSED HOUSE** Assigned to Senate Education and Youth Committee. The bill will be heard in committee TUESDAY.

**HB 319** (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 338** (Erwin-32nd)  
“Student Technology Protection Act” - amends the 'Quality Basic Education Act' by revising O.C.G.A 20-2-324 to provide that schools promote the safe and appropriate use of technology. By October 1, 2023, each local board of education and charter school governing body will adopt an acceptable use policy with the purpose of preventing and prohibiting any computer or network from accessing obscene materials. Each system will take necessary steps to implement and enforce the acceptable use policy to filter grade-appropriate content on school-owned devices.

Status: **PASSED HOUSE** Assigned to Senate Education and Youth Committee.

**HB 340** (Corbett-174th)  
Protects planning periods for teachers. Teachers who are in the classroom more than 50% of a regular school day are required to have a duty-free planning period, with some exceptions related to safety.

Status: **PASSED HOUSE** Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Education and Youth Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

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

Status: **PASSED HOUSE** Assigned to Senate Public Safety Committee.

**HB 392** (Jasperse-11th)  
Creates the Georgia Endowment for Teaching Professionals. The purpose of the endowment is to receive and distribute funds to support outstanding teaching professionals in high-demand fields within the Technical College System of Georgia.

Status: **PASSED HOUSE** Assigned to Senate Higher Education Committee.

**HB 504** (Hatchett-155th)  
Removes the value of level 1 freeport exemptions from the equalized property tax digest for the purpose of calculating local five mill share and equalization.

Status: **PASSED HOUSE** Assigned to Senate Finance Committee.

**HB 538** (Ballard-147th)  
Creates the “Georgia Early Literacy Act" to implement the science of reading in Georgia. School systems will be required to teach high-quality instructional materials approved by the State Board of Education in grades kindergarten through third grade. The Department of Education must develop and provide training to kindergarten through third-grade teachers on the science of reading so teachers have the skills and knowledge to teach young students to read.
Students across the state will take a universal reading screener assessment to monitor their progress in foundational literacy skills multiple times a year.

**Status:** PASSED HOUSE

HB 607  (Pirkle-169th)  Bill Link
Changes the ACT score requirement for a Zell Miller Scholarship Scholar from 26 to a score equivalent to 1,200 on the SAT, as determined by the Georgia Student Finance Commission using nationally recognized standards.

**Status:** PASSED HOUSE

SB 4  (Davenport-44th)  Bill Link
Enacts the "Blind Persons' Braille Literacy Rights and Education Act". 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.

**Status:** PASSED SENATE

SB 32  (Anavitarte-31st)  Bill Link
"Alyssa's Law" - Provides for the care of students being treated for epilepsy or a seizure disorder. A school nurse or other school employee should be trained in the proper protocols should a student experience a seizure while at school. The parent or guardian must annually supply the school with a seizure action plan which provides specific directions about what to do in emergency situations.

**Status:** PASSED SENATE

SB 45  (Anavitarte-45)  Bill Link
Allows a parent or guardian of a student being treated for epilepsy or a seizure disorder to seek support and services for the student's seizures while the student is at school or participating in a school-related function by submitting to the local school system or school at which the student is enrolled a copy of a seizure action plan.

**Status:** PASSED SENATE

SB 50  (Burns-23rd)  Bill Link
Allows that local boards of education which operate a school with grades nine through 12 may provide instruction in lifeguarding and aquatic safety.

**Status:** PASSED SENATE

SB 86  (Brass-28th)  Bill Link
Allows eligible dual enrollment students to access HOPE grant funds for eligible career, technical, and agricultural education (CTAE) courses. The bill requires reporting of specified information relating to the dual enrollment program.

**Status:** PASSED SENATE

SB 112  (Anavitarte-31st)  Bill Link
Establishes a pilot program whereby qualifying private nonprofit entities provide instruction and other services for eligible students 21 years of age and older to attain a high school diploma.

**Status:** PASSED SENATE

SB 137  (Burns-23rd)  Bill Link
Revises the definition of approved school with regards to tuition equalization grants at private colleges and universities to include those located in this state since on or before January 1, 2021.

**Status:** PASSED SENATE
SB 169 (Payne-54th)  Bill Link
Provides for limits on the extension of hearing dates for student discipline tribunals and requires local school systems to provide appropriate grade-level instructional materials to any student subject to in-school suspension, short-term suspension, or long-term suspension pending completion of the student discipline tribunal.
Status: PASSED SENATE  Assigned to House Education Committee.

SB 170 (Albers-56th)  Bill Link
Provides for the qualification and selection of students to advise the State Board of Education and local boards of education, and provides for the Georgia Teacher of the Year to be invited to advise the State Board of Education.
Status: PASSED SENATE  Assigned to House Education Committee.

SB 204 (Dolezal-27th)  Bill Link
Requires accrediting agencies that operate in Georgia to focus on student achievement, academic success, and fiscal solvency of schools and school systems. The State Board of Education must establish evaluation criteria, procedures, and other requirements for recognized accrediting agencies.
Status: PASSED SENATE  Recommended Do Pass by the House Education Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

SB 211 (Hickman-4th)  Bill Link
Creates the Georgia Council on Literacy to conduct a comprehensive review of birth to postsecondary literacy programs for the purpose of improving literacy outcomes of Georgia students. The council is composed of 30 members, will meet at least four times per year, and will dissolve December 31, 2026.
Status: PASSED SENATE  Recommended Do Pass by the House Education Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

SB 233 (Dolezal-27th)  Bill Link
Provides for the establishment of promise scholarship accounts for private schools to be funded by the state in the amount of $6,000.00 per school year for each participating student in K-12.
Status: PASSED SENATE  Assigned to House Education Committee. The bill will be heard in subcommittee today (MONDAY).

SB 237 (Hatchett-50th)  Bill Link
Provides for student loan repayment for peace officers.
Status: PASSED SENATE  Assigned to House Higher Education Committee.

SR 175 (Brass-28th)  Bill Link
Creates the Joint Study Committee on Dual Enrollment for Highly Skilled Talent at Younger Ages.
Status: PASSED SENATE  Assigned to House Education Committee. The bill will be heard in committee TUESDAY.

HR 278 (Parsons-44th)  Bill Link
Creates the House Study Committee on Civics Education in Georgia.
Status: House Special Rules Committee

HR 281 (Olaleye-59th)  Bill Link
Creates the House Study Committee on Lottery Revenues, Reserves, and Educational Programs.
Status: House Higher Education Committee

SR 121 (Butler-55th)  Bill Link
Creates the Senate Helping Georgia Students Overcome COVID-19 Related Learning Loss Study Committee.
Status: Senate Rules Committee

SR 144 (Estevez-6th)  Bill Link
Creates the Senate Expanding Early Childhood Education Study Committee.
Status: Senate Rules Committee
SR 251  (Davenport-44th)  Bill Link
Creates the Senate Rosenwald Schools Study Committee.
Status: Senate Rules Committee
Miscellaneous

HB 719  (Neal-79th)  Bill Link
Repeals restrictions on rent regulation by local governments and requires landlords to provide at least 60 days' notice to terminate certain tenancies.
Status: House Judiciary Committee

HB 738  (Hilton-48th)  Bill Link
Relating to the Department of Labor, so as to create the Task Force on Workforce and Safety Net Integration. This task force will determine how state agencies and departments that administer workforce development programs and safety net programs can best serve Georgians and help them improve their employment situation; explore the potential benefits of merging certain state agencies or departments to better serve the citizens of Georgia; explore how to best integrate the delivery of Georgia's various workforce development programs and safety net programs; and create an implementation strategy for an integrated delivery system.
Status: House Industry and Labor Committee

SR 293  (Halpern-39th)  Bill Link
Creates the Senate Study Committee on an Equity Impact Tool for Legislation.
Status: Senate Rules Committee

HB 30  (Carson-46th)  Bill Link
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. All state agencies will consider antisemitism as evidence of discriminatory intent for any law or policy which prohibits discrimination. 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: PASSED HOUSE Assigned to Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill will be heard in committee today (MONDAY).

HB 88  (Gaines-120th)  Bill Link
Establishes protocols for review of cold case murder files by law enforcement agencies.
Status: PASSED HOUSE Assigned to Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill will be heard in committee today (MONDAY).

HB 163  (McDonald-26th)  Bill Link
Establishes a student loan repayment program for full-time medical examiners employed with the Division of Forensic Sciences of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation. The total repayment amount must not exceed $120,000 or the total student debt amount, whichever is less, and the 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 the appropriation of funds by the General Assembly.
Status: PASSED HOUSE Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Higher Education Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

HB 167  (Momtahan-17th)  Bill Link
The original bill (which amended the list of individuals with a suspended, revoked, or cancelled license eligible to apply for a limited driving permit by adding persons not in compliance with a child support order) was gutted and replaced by language which establishes a law enforcement unit within the Georgia Public Safety Training Center.
Status: PASSED HOUSE Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Public Safety Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

HB 237  (Hagan-156th)  Bill Link
The original language (which designated the Southeast Georgia Soap Box Derby as the official soap box derby of the State of Georgia) was completely removed from the bill and the bill was amended to include the sports betting
Georgia Lottery Bill (which failed in the Senate earlier this session).
Status: **PASSED HOUSE** Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Economic Development and Tourism Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

**HB 242** (Hitchens-161st)  
Increases traffic violation under 'Joshua's Law' fines by 3%.  
Status: **PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE**

**HB 353** (Powell-33rd)  
Legalizes coin-operated amusement machines overseen by the Georgia Lottery Corporation  
Status: **PASSED HOUSE.** Assigned to Senate Economic Development and Tourism Committee.

**HB 375** (Leverett-123rd)  
Relating to conservatorships and guardians, defines "gross settlement" as the present value of all amounts paid or to be paid in settlement of the claim, including: cash; medical expenses; expenses of litigation; attorney's fees; and any amounts allotted to a structured settlement or other similar financial arrangement.  
Status: **PASSED HOUSE.** Assigned to Senate Judiciary Committee.  
The bill will be heard in committee today (MONDAY).

**SB 3** (Albers-56th)  
"Reducing Barriers to State Employment Act of 2023" - Requires the Department of Administrative Services to regularly assess and reduce, when possible, the requirements for jobs within state government.  
Status: **PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE** Awaits consideration by the governor.

**SB 55** (Parent-42nd)  
“Georgia Lemonade Stand Act” - Prohibits the regulation of businesses of individuals under 18 years of age selling non-consumable goods, prepackaged foods, lemonade, or nonalcoholic beverages on private property that earn $5,000 or less annually.  
Status: **PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE**

**SB 57** (Hickman-4th)  
Authorizes and provides for the regulation and taxation of sports betting and for additional powers and duties of the Georgia Lottery Corporation.  
Status: **FAILED SENATE**

**SB 62** (Summers-13th)  
Prohibits local governments from adopting or enforcing any policies that would prohibit the enforcement of any ordinance that prohibits unauthorized public camping, sleeping, or obstruction of sidewalks. The bill prohibits hospitals and local government entities from dropping off homeless individuals outside of their area of operation or jurisdiction, subject to specified exceptions. The bill requires the state auditor to conduct a performance audit of homeless program spending in this state, including local government spending and the expenditure of federal funds. The audit must be provided to the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the House of Representatives by December 31, 2023.  
Status: **PASSED SENATE** Recommended Do Pass by the House Governmental Affairs Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

**SB 195** (Walker-20th)  
Enacts statutes to facilitate licensure of transitioning service members, military spouses, and other qualified individuals who have certifications from or work experience in the military or licenses from or work experience in another state.  
Status: **PASSED SENATE** Recommended Do Pass by the House Regulated Industries Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

**HR 10** (Thomas-65th)  
Creates the House Study Committee on Public Water Systems Serving Disadvantaged Communities.  
Status: House Energy, Utilities, & Telecommunications Committee
HR 139  (Neal-79th)  
Bill Link
Creates the House Study Committee on Alternatives to Mass Shooter Prevention Methods.  
Status: House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee

SR 203  (Jones-10th)  
Bill Link
Creates the Senate Safe Firearm Storage Study Committee.  
Status: Senate Rules Committee

SR 275  (Albers-56th)  
Bill Link
Creates the Senate Study Committee on Expanding Georgia's Workforce.  
Status: Senate Rules Committee
Pick One (or Three!)

With just 7 legislative days left in the 2023 session, legislators are down to the wire to schedule and hold committee hearings on pending legislation and get those bills to the chamber floors.

We need your support TODAY on the following bills! Pick one (or all three!), click on the boxes below, and let your voice be heard.

- **Action Alert**
  - **House Bill 404**
    - Safe at Home Act

- **Action Alert**
  - **House Bill 462**
    - Raising the Age of Juvenile Court Jurisdiction

- **Action Alert**
  - **House Bill 520**
    - 2023 Mental Health Bill