March 27, 2023

Jump to

Weekly Welcome
FY 24 Budget Senate Changes to House Revisions to Governor’s Recommendations
Justice, Public Safety, and School Discipline
Protection and Safety
Health and Behavioral Health
Maternal Care and Child Care
Education
Miscellaneous
2 Minute Advocacy Ask – HB 404
Weekly Welcome

Like many of my peers, I have spent the better part of the week in amazement. While so called “normal” people may have the luxury to stumble across this wide-eyed and breathtaking reflex when first seeing the Grand Canyon, the birth of a child, or the final tally on their Costco receipt, folks like myself (trapped in the flypaper of a legislative session) find wonder in things like the fact that a Senate Judiciary hearing can somehow carry-on for four hours, that room 307 CLOB still smells like hashbrowns at 5:08 pm, and that, here we are at Day 39, and not once have I seen anyone in a Mr. Peanut costume. (What the heck is wrong with this place?!?) I am also struck by the quality of the coffee from the new coffee machine in the snack bar (seriously, yum!), but less impressed by the stale jokes people still crank out about sausage-making (pun-intended), and “simple little bills” that are anything but.

What also causes me to wander through the halls, dazed and slack-jawed, is watching performances of what I like to think of as “Capitol Magic”. It is truly fantastical that with the simple flick of a wrist (or, rather, a whole committee full of wrists), a soap box derby bill (HB 237) can be transformed into a sports betting bill, a tornado insurance bill (SB 158) into a soap box derby bill, and a specialty license plate bill (SB 35) into a bill that can compensate people who were wrongfully convicted and lost years of their lives. I mean really! Who knew?? And, as if that weren’t enough, in the waning hours of the session (and perhaps without much hope), bills about everything from dry needling (HB 809) to livestock rustling (HB 827), appear, as if out of nowhere!

Most of all, however, I am awestruck by all the General Assembly elves and fairies who work into the wee hours to make the whole thing happen. First, you have the Legislative Counsel elves, who work for days and nights, cobbling together words that make up the bills for lawmakers to present. Then, there are all those little goblins and fairies in the House Clerk’s and Secretary of the Senate’s offices, who toil tirelessly to make sure that calendars are accurate, status sheets are up to date, amendments are printed, and that the binders given our elected officials are stuffed with the papers needed and expected to carry the future of the state (or not). And PLEASE, don’t forget all the other pixies, leprechauns, and sprites who keep the chamber doors open and closed; the halls, rooms, and bathrooms clean; the post moving; the grounds beautiful; and the buildings safe. Now that, my friends, is truly amazing.

Now, please find a few sparkly somethings to dazzle your mind as you check out the budget and bill updates below.

Astonished and stupefyingly yours,

Polly

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Fiscal Year 2024 – Senate Changes to House Revisions

to the Governor’s Recommendations

Total: $32.45 Billion
(Decreased from the governor’s Amended FY23 estimate of $32.56 Billion)

Yellow = House Changes
Turquoise = Senate Changes

Multi-Agency Budget Info

Statewide: Added $2,000 cost-of-living adjustment for all full-time, benefit-eligible state employees effective July 1, 2023 to address agency recruitment and retention needs. This includes certified Pre-K teachers, assistant Pre-K teachers, certified K-12 teachers and certified K-12 employees.

Base Salaries Adjusted by $2,000 for certified K-12 teachers, certified K-12 employees, certified Pre-K teachers and assistant pre-k teachers (GaDOE, DECAL, DJJ, GA Military College Prep School) effective September 1, 2023.

Base Salaries Adjusted by $6,000 for Public Safety POST-certified state employees

Council of Accountability Court Judges

$97,331 Added for one Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) Statewide Coordinator position

Juvenile Courts

$0 Added for grants to counties for the Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit (Governor had recommended $25,000)

$200,000 Reduced due to utilization and reporting levels concerning dependency case backlog.

Dept. of Administrative Services

$51.23 Million one-time funding Eliminated for the NextGen ERP Cloud Modernization project ($50 Million) to reduce state financial system costs and improve service delivery, and the All-Payer Claims Database ($1.23 Million) to enable analysis and public reporting of health care costs and utilization for medical, dental, and pharmaceutical services (under the Georgia Technology Authority)

Dept. of Agriculture

$0 Added to implement the 'Georgia Raw Dairy Act' (2022 Session). (House had added $637,232 but the senate cut the full amount)

$25,000 Added for the Georgia Grown Farm to Food Bank Program.
Dept. of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities

**Budget Note:** “Change the name of the Adult Developmental Disabilities Services - Special Project program to Adult Developmental Disabilities Respite Services program.”

**$10.95 Million Added** to annualize the cost of 513 New Options Waiver (NOW) and Comprehensive Supports Waiver Program (COMP) slots for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This amount is an increase from the governor’s recommendation of $10.18 Million. (Adult Developmental Disability Services)

**$9.4 Million Added** for 500 additional slots for the New Options Waiver (NOW) and Comprehensive Supports Waiver Program (COMP) for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and provide administrative workload support. The governor had recommended adding $4.2 Million for 250 additional slots; then the House added $8.06 Million bringing the total up to 375 slots; then the Senate increased that. (Adult Developmental Disability Services)

**Budget Note:** “Begin implementation of the 2022-2023 provider rate study pending approval by Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).” Adult Developmental Disability Services)

**$200,000 Added** for Citizen Advocacy to restore previous cuts and expand services. (Adult Developmental Disability Services)

**$0 Added** for an additional five forensic evaluators and four forensic peer mentors. The House had added $1.22 Million but the Senate cut it. (Adult Forensic Services)

**$277,000 Added** to increase salaries for forensic peer mentors. (Adult Forensic Services)

**$10.15 Million Added** to increase salaries for state psychiatric hospital staff to address agency recruitment and retention. (across DBHDD)

**$6.29 Million Added** for additional mobile crisis teams to address increasing demand (Adult Mental Health Services)

**$7.03 Million Added** to annualize the operating cost of a 24-bed and 16 temporary observation chair behavioral health crisis center at Serenity Behavioral Health Systems in Augusta. The governor had recommended adding $2 Million. (Adult Mental Health Services)

**$5.69 Million Added** for a 15-bed and 18 temporary observation chair behavioral health crisis center in Fulton County. The governor had recommended adding $5.69 Million; then the House added $6.65 Million for more beds, and the Senate returned to the Governor’s recommendation. (Adult Mental Health Services)
$10.82 Million Added to convert a crisis stabilization unit at CSB of Middle Georgia in Dublin to a 24-bed and 16 temporary observation chair behavioral health crisis center. The governor had recommended adding $5.41 Million. (Adult Mental Health Services)

$932,300 Reduction for one-time funds for a study on reimbursement rates for behavioral health providers (Adult Mental Health Services)

$2.25 Million Added for additional program and administrative support to manage the national ‘988’ hotline. (Adult Mental Health Services)

$0 Added to convert a crisis stabilization unit at Highland Rivers to a 32-bed and 16 temporary observation chair behavioral health crisis center. The House had added $4.56 Million, but the Senate cut it. (Adult Mental Health Services)

$1.9 Million Added for the Georgia Housing Voucher program to support the requirements of the Department of Justice (DOJ) Settlement Agreement. (Adult Mental Health Services)

$0 Added for the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network for peer services. The House had added $2.77 Million, but the Senate cut it. (Adult Mental Health Services)

$8.07 Million Added to support private psychiatric contract beds. (Adult Mental Health Services)

$825,000 Added for one-time funding to coordinate outreach to address homelessness in the Atlanta area. (Adult Mental Health Services)

$277,519 Added to create a crisis response team at View Point Health. (Adult Mental Health Services)

**Budget Note:** “The department is directed to work with the Department of Community Health (DCH) to increase Medicaid PRTF rates up to 75% of Medicare Inpatient Facility Rates, contingent upon Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) approval and agreement by facilities to follow DCH-defined payment polices that prioritize Georgia’s youth for placement.” (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)

$600,000 Added for one-time gap funding for Georgia psychiatric residential treatment facilities receiving less than $500 per patient per day while under current cost report reimbursement methodology. (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)

$100,000 Reduced for delayed contract implementation. (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)

$1 Million Added for the Multi-Agency Treatment for Children (MATCH) teams to support collaboration across state agencies to meet the treatment needs of children. (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)
**Budget Note:** “Utilize funds in the Adult Mental Health program for mobile crisis for children and family response.” (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)

$261,823 Eliminated from DBHDD departmental administration. These funds were originally appropriated to pay for administrative infrastructure necessary to implement the terms of the National Prescription Opiate Litigation settlement, the Georgia Opioid Abatement Trust funds, and the activities of the Opioid Recovery and Remediation Fund Advisory (ORRFA) Council. But... see next entry>>>

$0 Added to support operations personnel for the administration of federal opioid settlement funds. The House had added $300,000, but the Senate cut it.

$650,000 Added to support DBHDD agency operations.

$200,000 Added to expand the Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IPSE) program. (GA Council on Developmental Disabilities)

$1.6 Million Transferred to the Adult Developmental Disabilities Services – Special Project program to consolidate funds for respite services

Dept. of Community Affairs

$200,000 Added for the Helping Hands Ending Hunger program expansion to increase access to food, reduce food waste, and encourage better educational outcomes and sustainability.

$1 Million Added for the Home Access Program to increase the number of awarded grants to individuals requiring home accessibility modifications. The House had added $200,000 and the Senate increased it.

$200,000 Recognized in Base Funds for the Helping Hands Ending Hunger program expansion to increase access to food, reduce food waste, and encourage better educational outcomes and sustainability. The House had recommended adding $200,000 in state dollars, but the Senate said “No.”

$15 Million Added for Payments to Georgia Environmental Finance Authority to provide a grant program for natural gas pipeline expansion and capacity expansion for non-Universal Service Fund (USF) eligible entities.

Dept. of Community Health

$6.5 Million Eliminated to replace the Medicaid Management Information System (MMIS) with the Medicaid Enterprise System Transformation (MEST)
$1 Million Reduction of one-time funds for a study on reimbursement rates for mental health care providers (Departmental Administration)

**Budget Note:** “The Department shall submit a State Plan Amendment (SPA) to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to change any rules, regulations, or policies necessary to allow for reimbursement of Occupational Therapy Assistants (OTAs) and Physical Therapy Assistants (PTAs) providing services for Medicaid members receiving Children’s Intervention Services (CIS).”

**Budget Note:** “Establish the Qualified Residential Treatment Program (QRTP) designation for non-family-based placements to serve children in a trauma-informed model of care designed to address the needs, including clinical needs, of children with serious emotional or behavioral disorders or disturbances, and request necessary approvals with Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) by December 31, 2023.”

$1 Million Added with the following direction: “The Department shall implement a remote maternal/fetal health monitoring program for Medicaid eligible high-risk pregnant mothers. The Department of Community Health (DCH) will work with Medicaid Care Management Organizations (CMOs) to develop a model for potential recipient program eligibility and requirements.”

$800,000 Transferred from DCH Departmental Administration to the Office of Health Strategy and Coordination (OHSC) to establish operational funds for the All-Payer Claims Database

$6 Million Reduced for Rural Hospital Stabilization Grants in anticipation of the new hospital directed payment program. The House sought to reduce it by $3 Million, but the Senate reduced yet further.

$500,000 Eliminated one-time start-up funding for federally qualified health centers.

$500,000 Added for two federally qualified health center start-up grants. The House has added $750,000 for three federally qualified health center (FQHC) start-up grants for primary care in Union County, behavioral health expansion at Christ Community Health Services of Augusta, and a school-based health center in Emanuel County. The Senate reduced the addition and did not specify where the FQHC’s would be.

$500,000 Added for charity clinics statewide. The House had added $250,000 and the Senate doubled it.

$950,000 Added for Mercy Care Atlanta to support increased patient volume. The House had added $500,000 and the Senate increased it.

$409,000 Added to support existing and new housing with the Area Health Education Centers (AHEC).
$0 Added in one-time funds for Colquitt Regional Medical Center for medical education training equipment and clinical space. The House had added $1.24 Million, but the Senate directed “utilize anticipated increased funds from Directed Payment Program funding which exceeds requested amount...”

$0 Added in one-time funds for St. Francis Hospital to support graduate medical education facility expansion. The House had added $425,000, but the Senate directed, “Fund residency capitation for St. Francis Hospital in Georgia Board of Healthcare Workforce: Graduate Medical Education Program.”

**Budget note:** “Utilize anticipated increased funds from Directed Payment Program funding which exceeds requested amount for St. Francis Hospital for medical education training equipment and clinical space.”

$0 Added for Archbold Medical Center for infrastructure support for new residency programs. The House had added $1.2 Million, but the Senate directed, “Utilize anticipated increased funds from Directed Payment Program funding which exceeds requested amount...”

$250,000 Added to implement and regulate the new licensure category for adult residential mental health programs as established by HB 1069 (2022 Session)

$79.16 Million Added for growth in Aged Blind Disabled (ABD) Medicaid based on projected utilization. The governor had added $79.16 Million but the House eliminated that and reduced it further, but then the Senate restored the governor’s recommendation.

$199,578 Added to increase reimbursement rates for developmental and behavioral screening and testing. (ABD = $28,136; LIM = $159,455; PeachCare = $11,988)

$1.28 Million Added for reimbursement of Occupational Therapy Assistants (OTAs) and Physical Therapy Assistants (PTAs) providing services for Medicaid members receiving Children's Intervention Services (CIS). (ABD = $466,926; LIM = $408,729; PeachCare = $408,729)

$1.79 Million Added for adult coverage of dental services. ($1.39 Million for ABD, $1.4 Million for LIM)

$1.09 Million Added for a 5% increase to emergency medical services (EMS) reimbursement rates. ($650,651 for ABD, $442,464 for LIM, $11,243 for PeachCare)

$5.26 Million Added for a 2% rate increase for home and community-based service providers. (ABD)

$854,167 Added for a 5% rate increase for Georgia Pediatric Program (GAPP) providers. (ABD)

$621,296 Added to increase the dispensing fee to $11.50 for low-volume pharmacies that fill under 65,000 prescriptions per year. ($308,666 for ABD, $312,630 for LIM)
$7.24 Million Added to increase reimbursement rates for speech-language pathology, audiology, physical therapy, and occupational therapy providers. ($2.2 Million for ABD, $5.04 Million for LIM)

Budget Note: “Submit a State Plan Amendment to adjust psychiatric residential treatment facility (PRTF) rates up to 75% of Medicare Inpatient Facility Rates, contingent upon CMS approval and agreement by facilities to follow DCH defined payment policies that prioritize Georgia’s youth for placement.: (ABD)

$871,029 Added to reimburse for family psychological and therapy services. (LIM)

$0 Added to remove the five-year waiting period for pregnant women and children who are lawful permanent residents. The House sought $584,061, but the senate eliminated it and said “Utilize $698,571 from HB911 (2022 Session) to remove the five-year waiting period for pregnant women and children who are lawful permanent residents “(LIM)

$18.72 Million Added to increase select primary care and OB/GYN codes to 2021 Medicare levels. (LIM)

Budget Note: “The department shall require Medicaid managed care organizations to reimburse at no less than 100% of the state Medicaid program Durable Medical Equipment fee schedule for the same service or item of durable medical equipment, complex rehab technology, prosthetics, orthotics, and supplies. This shall also apply to managed care contractor subcontractors and third-party administrators.” (LIM)

Budget Note: “Increase employer contribution per-member, per-month (PMPM) rate for the State health benefits Plan for Certified and Non-Certified school employees to $1,580 effective January 1, 2023.” (SHBP)

Budget Note: “It is the intent of the General Assembly that the department shall make annual recommendations to adjust State Health Benefit Plan employer and employee contributions as needed to maintain the financial stability of the plan and report to the Office of Planning and Budget, the House Budget and Research Office, and the Senate Budget and Evaluation Office by September 1.” (SHBP)

Recognize Reduction in ABD Medicaid ($74.65 Million), LIM ($74.25 Million), and PeachCare ($624,600) from HB 81 (2021 Session) to reflect the temporary Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) increase provided by the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE) through December 31, 2023 (ABD Medicaid)

Recognize $65.46 Million from HB 81 (2021 Session) and Add $52.22 Million in new dollars to implement the Georgia Pathways to Coverage program established by the Patients First Act (2019 Session), effective July 1, 2023 (LIM)
Georgia Board of Healthcare Workforce (GBHW) (administratively attached to DCH)

$180,000 Added for additional staff and technology to assist with loan repayment program expansion.

$100,000 Added for one-time funding for a statewide Neurology assessment to evaluate current and future needs.

$2.01 Million Added for 116 new residency slots in primary care medicine. The Governor had recommended $1.77 Million for 102 slots.

$0 Added for five Graduate Medical Education (GME) feasibility grants to assist hospitals in establishing or expanding GME programs. The governor had asked for an addition of $375,000.

$153,352 Transferred from the Morehouse School of Medicine Grant program to GBHW Graduate Medical Education program for nine psychiatry residency slots and provide funds for one additional psychiatry resident position.

$240,000 Transferred from the Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce: Morehouse School of Medicine Grant program to the GBHW Graduate Medical Education program for child and adolescent psychiatry fellowship positions.

$35,000 Eliminated one-time funds for a statewide dental workforce assessment.

$216,169 Added for six child and adolescent psychiatry fellows at the Medical College of Georgia. The House had added $648,507 but the Senate reduced it.

$150,000 Added for a Maternal Fetal Medicine fellowship at the Medical College of Georgia.

$240,000 Added to support the start-up of a new rural OB/GYN graduate medical education program to address maternity care deserts in rural Georgia. This replaced the $240,000 which the House Added to support the start-up of a new rural OB/GYN graduate medical education program to address maternity care deserts in rural Georgia.

$663,100 Added for the fourth year of the seven-year plan for Mercer School of Medicine’s medical school campus in Columbus.

$240,000 Added to support the start-up of a new rural OB/GYN graduate medical education program to address maternity care deserts in rural Georgia.

$0 Added to support the increase of the Morehouse School of Medicine class size and expand rural clinical training. The House had added $1.5 Million, but the Senate eliminated it.
$850,000 Added to establish a loan repayment program for mental health professionals. (Physicians for Rural Areas)

$0 Added to establish the medical examiner loan repayment program. The governor had recommended adding $190,000 but the House noted “Reflect in the Georgia Student Finance Commission’s Service Cancelable Loans program”. (Physicians for Rural Areas)

$1.96 Million Added for the physician loan repayment program to increase award amount and update program guidelines. The governor had recommended $2.04 Million; then the House decreased it to $.56 Million and the Senate upped the House’s amount. (Physicians for Rural Areas)

$440,000 Added for additional loan repayments for five physician assistants and 39 advanced practice registered nurses (Physicians for Rural Areas)

$250,000 Added to establish the nursing faculty loan repayment program. The governor had recommended $1.05 Million; The House reduced it to $500,000 and the Senate reduced further. (Undergraduate Medical Education)

$0 Added for Georgia medical student capitation payments to the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (PCOM). The House had added $636,341 but the Senate removed it.

$1 Million Added for equipment and operating grants for nursing programs with wait lists and additional student capacity.

$431,836 Added for personal services to support increased licensure application volume. The House had added $314,373 and the Senate increased it. (GA Composite Medical Board)

Dept. of Corrections

$25.15 Million Added for physical health and pharmacy services contracts

$20.9 Million Reduced to reflect the closure of Georgia State Prison

$2.68 Million Added for safety and security technology projects

$26 Million in bond funds for emergency maintenance and repairs

Dept. of Early Care and Learning

$179,000 Reduced in formula funds for training and experience for Pre-K teachers.

$8.18 Million Added to reflect an increase in the employer contribution for State Health Benefit Plan (SHBP) from 18.534% to 29.454% of salary to maintain formula fidelity. The House had added $11.93
Million Added to reflect an increase in the employer contribution per-member per-month (PMPM) rate for lead and assistant teachers at public Pre-K providers effective January 1, 2023, but the Senate reduced it as noted.

$14.04 Million Added for classroom operations and redirect existing funding to Pre-K lead teacher salaries.

Georgia Dept. of Education

$481,786 Transferred from the Department of Community Affairs to the Department of Education for the AmeriCorps Math Corps and Reading Corps programs. (Note: The only amount specified for this transfer in the DCA section of the budget is $240,894, so I am not sure where the other half of the total came from.)

$506,730 Added to reflect an increase in the employer contribution per-member per-month (PMPM) rate for certified school employees to $1,580 effective January 1, 2023. (Ag Education)

$114,000 Added for 12 new extended day/year programs. House had asked for 18 programs at $171,000. (Ag Education)

$96,000 Added for an oversight position in Barrow, Lowndes, and Hall counties. House had asked for $288,000 and three young farmer positions. (Ag Education)

Budget Note: “The Department of Education is authorized to establish a pilot program consisting of a representative sample of schools and school systems to study whether the use of advanced technologies capable of reliably detecting children at potential risk of harming themselves or others based on their internet use patterns is effective at reducing rates of youth suicide and violence; provided, however, that such study is limited to internet use on school-issued devices.” (Central Office)

$0 Removed for one-time funds in the GaDOE Central Office. The House sought to remove $75,000, but the Senate directed GaDOE to recognize $75,000 in base funds for outdoor learning grants instead.

$0 Added for Plasma Games statewide rollout and evaluate usage and effectiveness after one year. The House added $3 million, but the Senate cut it. (Central Office)

$100,000 Added for one-time funding to conduct study and host meetings with House and Senate committees and stakeholders concerning Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS) formula funding. (Central Office)

$1.7 Million Added for charter facility grants pursuant to HB 430 (2017 Session). (Charter Schools)
$0 Added for Communities in Schools for additional affiliates. The House had added $262,000, but the Senate cut it.

$0 Added for life science industry certification for rural school districts. The House had added $200,000, but the Senate cut it and directed GaDOE to use base funds instead. (Curriculum Development)

$904,903 Reduced from GNETS.

$4.71 Million Reduced for enrollment and Training and Experience decline in GNETS

$211,250 Added for Sparsity Grants based on enrollment data (Non-QBE Formula Grants)

$152,463 Reduced formula funds for Residential Treatment Facilities based on attendance. The governor had recommended a reduction of $406,200. (Non-QBE Formula Grants)

$0 Added for feminine hygiene grants due to inflation and increased enrollment. The House had added $200,000, but the Senate cut it and directed GaDOE to use base funds instead. (Non-QBE Formula Grants)

$4.97 Million Added for Dyslexia Screening pursuant to SB48 (2019 Session). (Non-QBE Formula Grants)

$3.96 Million Added for school nutrition with a note from the House saying “for the cost of breakfast and lunch for reduce-paying students”. The governor had recommended adding $1.58 Million; then the House increased it to $6.33 Million; and the Senate reduced that amount.

$1.6 Million Added for a 5.1% salary increase for school nutrition workers

$4.47 Million Added to Preschool Disability Services

$1.34 Million Added for pupil transportation. The governor had recommended adding $1.6 Million.

$4.65 Million Added for a 5.1% salary increase for school transportation workers. The governor had recommended adding $14.32 Million.

$122.28 Million Added in formula funds for QBE Equalization grants

$155 Million Added for enrollment growth and training and experience (QBE Program)

$13.28 Million Added in formula funds for the State Commission Charter School supplement. The governor had recommended adding $20.67 Million. (QBE Program)
$43.87 Million Reduced for State Charter Supplement funds for Mountain Education (($18,543,435)) and Coastal Plains (($9,447,172)) and Foothills Charter High School (($15,874,465)). The governor had recommended a reduction of $26.07 Million which included an increase for Foothills. (QBE Program)

$27.75 Million Reduced in QBE formula funds due to expiration of state charter contracts for Mountain Education and Coastal Plains pursuant to SB 153 (2021 Session) (QBE Program)

$8.67 Million Added to provide a salary supplement of $1,000 to all custodians.

$296,000 Added in formula funds for the charter system grant (QBE Program)

$188,500 Added in formula funds for the local charter school grant (QBE Program)

$464,969 Reduced in formula funds for differentiated pay for newly certified math and science teachers. The governor had recommended reducing the funds by $655,100. (QBE Program)

$26.93 Million Added to fully fund school counselor ratio at 1:450 for all QBE student categories pursuant to HB 283 (2013 Session) (QBE Program)

$49,493 Added to provide a military counselor to Chattahoochee County and evaluate the utilization of existing grants for military counselors. The governor recommended using existing funds. (QBE Program)

$73,853 Added for RESAs based on enrollment growth. This nearly doubled the governor’s recommended addition

$482,496 Added for a 5.1% salary increase for RESAs.

$1.8 Million Added for a 5.1% salary increase for school nurses, along with a Budget Note to maintain current funding and hold harmless for formula reduction for school nurse funding.

$495,700 Added in formula finds for Training and Experience in State Schools

$0 Added for construction industry certification. The House had added $711,000, but the Senate cut it. (Technology/Career Education)

$1 Million Added for a construction ready pre-apprenticeship program. (Technology/Career Education)

$873,215 Eliminated to reflect testing contract (i.e., fewer tests).
Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget

$1.95 Million Transferred from the Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget to reflect funds appropriated for the Georgia Data Analytic Center.

Budget Note: “The Office of Health Strategy and Coordination is directed to support the transition of Child Caring Institutions (CCIs) to Qualified Residential Treatment Programs (QRTPs).”

$58,000 Added for operations and maintenance for GEMA/HS South building at Georgia Public Safety Training Center. The House had added $40,000 and the Senate increased it.

$2.5 Million Added to deploy Formulytics in gang database statewide.

Governor’s Office of Student Achievement

$0 Added to support the implementation of a digital learning-based Pre-K through 5 program that teaches language and literacy curriculum for all students to increase their ability to meet grade-level reading standards. The House had sought $1 Million, but the Senate eliminated it.

$250,000 Added for the Literacy Lab's Leading Men Fellowship program.

$1 Million Added to provide personnel and operations for the Georgia Council on Literacy ($251,108) pursuant to SB211 (2023 Session) and to support implementation of effective methods which additionally includes digital learning-based learning curriculum for Pre-K through 5 ($750,000).

Dept. of Human Services

$185,000 Added to reflect FY 2022 collections of marriage and divorce filing fees pursuant to HB 511 (2021 Session) (Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention)

$400,000 Added to expand services for at-risk girls at Pace Center for Girls.

$500,000 Added to the court appointed special advocates (CASA) to enhance statewide capacity. The House had added $1 Million but the Senate reduced it.

$20,000 Added to operate the Georgia Commission for the Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

Budget Note: “The Department shall work with the Department of Community Health to transition Child Caring Institutions (CCIs) to Qualified Residential Treatment Programs (QRTPs) by December 31, 2023.”

$11.15 Million Added to annualize funds provided in Amended FY 2023 to support the staffing of 450 case managers, 75 supervisors, and one district manager for Medicaid redeterminations due to
Legislative Update – March 27, 2023

**Public Health Emergency (PHE) expiration.** The governor had recommended an addition of $3.24 Million for 300 additional Medicaid eligibility caseworkers.

**$5 Million Added** to provide alternative housing options for youth with complex needs. The House simply noted this, but the Senate added the money. **(Out-of-Home Care)**

**$18.17 Million Added** to provide state funds for loss of federal Foster Care Title IV-E funds to Child Caring Institutions for a portion of the year. **(Out-of-Home Care)**

**$500,000 Reduced** for non-programmatic expenditures in Out-of-School Care Services.

**$1 Million Added** to Out-of-School Services to bridge the education gap.

**$160,000 Added** to Out-of-School Services for community center after school programs.

**$89,600 Added** to reflect FY 2022 collections from the Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Children Fund Commission.

**$3.38 Million Added** to assist in the rehabilitation of children, youth, and adult victims of sexual trafficking (Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Children Fund Commission).

**$20,000 Reduced** for the Georgia Commission for the Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

**Office of the Commissioner of Insurance**

**$173.1 Million Added** for the state reinsurance program. The governor had recommended an addition of $92 Million, the House decreased it to $61 Million and the Senate significantly increased the amount.

**Criminal Justice Coordinating Council** (administratively attached to the GA Bureau of Investigation)

**$94,250 Added** for one position to administer the sexual assault kit tracking system.

**$4.57 Million Added** for personal services and operations for the Georgia Crime Victims Emergency Fund.

**$5 Million Reduced** one-time funds for training grants. The House had reduced the funding by $7.5 Million, but the Senate lessened the reduction.

**$0 Added** for sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE) coordinators and improve access to SANE resources for sexual assault centers. The House had added $2.53 Million, but the Senate cut it.
Dept. of Juvenile Justice

**Budget Note:** “The department shall study recruitment and retention strategies to reduce turnover and report back to the Office of Planning and Budget and the chairs of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees by July 1, 2023.”

Dept. of Law

**$90,800 Added** for one business operations analyst position in the human trafficking unit.

Dept. of Public Health

**$363,675 Added** for the Sickle Cell Foundation of Georgia.

**$250,000 Added** for pregnancy and parenting grant programs. The House had added $500,000 and the Senate reduced it.

**$50,000 Added** for the Georgia Council of Lupus Education and Awareness to support research, data collection, awareness, and education.

**$150,000 Added** for the Georgia Poison Center. The House had added $250,000 and the Senate reduced it.

**$1.69 Million Added** for a pilot to provide home visiting in at-risk and underserved rural communities during pregnancy and early childhood to improve birth outcomes, reduce preterm deliveries, and decrease infant and maternal mortality.

**$804,842 Added** to increase reimbursement rates for speech-language pathology, audiology, physical therapy, and occupational therapy providers in the Babies Can't Wait program. The House had added $402,421 and the Senate doubled it.

**$1.7 Million Removed** one-time funds provided by the General Assembly for infrastructure and support disregarded and redirected to general grant-in-aid formula grants to counties.

**$6.65 Million Reduced** for the Georgia Coordinating Center to reflect projected expenditures. The House had reduced by $2.3 Million and the Senate reduced it further.

**$692,516 Reduced** that were previously awarded to Wellstar - Atlanta Medical Center for Level 1 Trauma Center.
Dept. of Public Safety

$2.07 Million Added for equipment, installation, and training associated with a new statewide public safety radio network to achieve statewide interoperability.

$292,000 Added for annual CPR training for dispatchers. (GPSTC)

$0 Reduced for driver’s education and training. The governor recommended a reduction of $2.9 Million.

University System of Georgia

$600,000 Transferred for K-12 rural Georgia computer science pilot program to the Public Service/Special Funding Initiatives program. (GA Tech Research Institute)

$9.88 Million Added to reflect a 2.3% decrease in enrollment with an increase in higher-cost program areas ($7,568,313) and 0.6% increase in square footage ($2,313,040). The governor recommended adding $12.65 Million. (Teaching Division)

$0 Million Reduced (“adjusted”) in formula funds for enrollment growth to reflect corrected credit hour data for Georgia Institute of Technology. The governor recommended adding $2.76 Million.

$2.45 Million Decreased for the Augusta University / University of Georgia Medical Partnership Expansion

$540,159 Transferred for the Fort Valley State University land-grant match requirements to the Teaching Program (the funds were transferred from Agricultural Experiment Station ($378,752) and from Cooperative Extension Service ($161,407))

$59,625 Added for the public libraries’ formula based on an increase in state population.

$1.11 Million Added for public libraries for materials grants by 5 cents from $0.60 to $0.70 per capita. House had increased from $0.60 to $0.65 per capita ($556,796) and the Senate increased that.

$1.4 Million Added for K-12 rural Georgia computer science pilot program at the Georgia Institute of Technology.

$90,000 Added for the STEM Teacher Academy through the Georgia Youth Science Technology Center.

$1.19 Million Added for Middle Georgia Aviation to support increased enrollment. The House had added $814,761 and the Senate increased it.
$0 Added to expand the Archway Partnership into five additional communities. The House had added $775,000 and the Senate cut it.

$1.5 Million Added to support operations and address a backlog of projects at the Center for Rural Prosperity and Innovation. The House had added $750,000 and the Senate doubled it.

$87 Million Reduced from the Teaching Division (which funds student instruction and to establish and operate other initiatives that promote, support, or extend student learning.)

$250,000 Added for the Anne Frank Holocaust Education Center. The House had added $344,500 and the Senate reduced it.

$3.75 Million Reduced from payments to Georgia Public Telecommunications Commission.

Agency-wide cut of funding for the employer share of health benefits in USG.

Secretary of State

$129,196 Added for two nursing analysts and one full-time educator for the Georgia Board of Nursing to address increased licensure and complaint volume. The House had added $191,915 and the Senate reduced it.

$123,584 Added for five analysts to address increased licensure volume. The House had added $308,959 and the Senate reduced it.

Georgia Student Finance Commission

$1.82 Million transferred for postsecondary gap funding grants from the Low Interest Loans program to the College Completion Grants program to reflect increased utilization. The House had added $10 Million and the Senate reduced it.

Budget Note: “Utilize other existing funds to support commission operations and student access to financial aid programs, including the Behavioral Health Service Cancelable Loan program as established in HB 1013 (2022 Session), and the law enforcement and medical examiner loan repayment programs.”

$6.6 Million Reduced in Dual Enrollment based on projected need.

$1.62 Million Reduced for administrative costs associated with service cancelable loan programs and utilize existing funds to implement loan repayment programs for mental health professionals.

$0 Transferred from Engineer Scholarship to Tuition Equalization Grant (TEG) program based on 2017 Department of Audits and Accounts Performance Audit. The House added the note: “Recognize existing funds for the Scholarship for Engineering Education at Mercer University, which
is designed to incentivize students to pursue a career in engineering and remain in Georgia upon graduation.” The governor had recommended transferring $315,000.

**$3.23 Million Added** to meet the projected need for the HOPE Grant program at a factor rate of 100% and reduce out of pocket needs for students in Commercial Drivers’ License and Law Enforcement programs at TCSG. The governor had recommended adding $3.23 Million or a factor rate of 100%; the House reduced that factor rate to 95% (1.92 Million) and the Senate put it back to 100%.

**$0 Added** to increase the HOPE Private Zell award from $2,977 to $3,100 and adjust the HOPE Private award amount to 95% of the Zell award, increasing it from $2,282 to $2,945. The House had added $15.37 Million and the Senate reduced it.

**$1.45 Million Added** to meet the projected need for the HOPE Scholarship at private institutions.

**$57.9 Million Added** to meet the projected need for the HOPE Scholarships programs at factor rate of 100% at public postsecondary schools. The governor had recommended adding $57.9 Million or a factor rate of 100%; the House reduced that factor rate to 95% ($31.93 Million) and the Senate put it back to 100%.

**$955,830 Added** for IPSE grants to be awarded to eligible students enrolled in IPSE programs at postsecondary institutions across the state.

**Budget Note:** “Utilize state and other funds to fully fund REACH program needs.”

**$1.7 Million Reduced** funds associated with the Leo Scholarship Grant Service Cancelable Loans (HB 1319 of the 2022 Session, which was not enacted into law)

**Budget Note:** “Utilize existing other funds to support the Georgia Military College Transfer Service Cancelable Loan.”

**$3.2 Million Added** to provide up to $20,000 maximum loan repayments across five years of service to support recruitment and retention of public law enforcement officers across the state.

**$140,000 Added** and recognize in existing funds to establish the medical examiner loan repayment program.

**Budget Note:** “Utilize existing funds ($10,000,000) to provide service cancelable loans to Georgia residents enrolled in degree programs in qualified behavioral health professions pursuant to HB 1013 (2022 Session).”

**Technical College System of Georgia**
$8.98 Million Reduced to reflect a 3.5% decrease in credit hours (-$9,292,213) with an increase in funds to reflect a 2.1% increase in square footage ($315,390) (Technical Division)

$325,000 Added for a Quick Start style program to address healthcare shortages throughout the state.

$7.58 Million Added for the first year of a three-year phase-in for increased credit hour earnings for the Commercial Driver’s License, and Nursing programs to reflect the high-cost nature of providing these programs. The House had added $8.23 Million and included Aviation programs, but the Senate eliminated Aviation and reduced the overall amount.

$1.1 Million Added to implement the Tools for Success matching grant program.
Legislative Update
As of 03/24/2023

Justice, Public Safety, and School Discipline

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

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. House disagreed to Senate amendment. The Senate must consider the House’s rebuttal.

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. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Judiciary Committee.  The bill is scheduled for a vote on the Senate floor for either today (MONDAY) or this WEDNESDAY.

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. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

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

Grants original jurisdiction to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) for violation of laws concerning domestic, cyber, biological, chemical, and nuclear terrorism.


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.

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, PASSED HOUSE. Needs the Senate to agree to changes the House made.

**SB 92  (Robertson-29th)**  
Creates the Prosecuting Attorneys Oversight Commission.  
**Status:** PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

**SB 110  (Walker-20th)**  
Creates a Back the Blue Fund of which the revenue commissioner will be the custodian and administer to sheriffs' offices through the Georgia Sheriff's Association for the purpose of providing bonuses to deputy sheriffs and jailers. An option will be provided to contribute $5 to the fund upon issuance or renewal of a motor vehicle car tag.  
**Status:** PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Insurance Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

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

HB 402  (Hilton-48th)  
“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. Awaits consideration by the governor.

HB 460  (Ballinger-23rd)  
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. Awaits consideration by the governor.

SB 42  (Williams-25th)  
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. PASSED HOUSE. Awaits consideration by the governor.

SB 61  (Strickland-17th)  
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.

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

SB 131  (Tillery-19th)  
Requires a guardianship petition hearing to be conducted in accordance with O.C.G.A. 29-2-18 and 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. The bill also 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 and allows the court to exercise its discretion when determining the custody of a child and one parent was indicted for the offense of murder or voluntary manslaughter of the other parent.

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

SB 134  (Cowsert-46th)  
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. PASSED HOUSE. Awaits consideration by the governor.

HB 803  (Schofield-63rd)

Amends Georgia code concerning the given requirements to receive tax credits given to contributors who make contributions to certain local firefighter foundations.

Status: House Natural Resources and Environment 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. The bill also regulates multipurpose off-highway vehicles.

Status: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Transportation Committee. The bill is scheduled for a vote on the Senate floor for either today (MONDAY) or this WEDNESDAY.

HB 144  (Lewis-Ward-115th)  Bill Link

The bill requires state agencies to consider antisemitism when determining whether an alleged criminal act was motivated by discriminatory intent. (FYI, The original language of the bill was gutted. Originally, the bill updated 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. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Children and Families Committee. The bill is scheduled for a vote on the Senate floor for either today (MONDAY) or this WEDNESDAY.

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

Legislative Update – March 27, 2023  www.georgiavoices.org
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 is scheduled for a vote on the Senate floor for either today (MONDAY) or this WEDNESDAY.

**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 marriage and family therapist, or professional counselor.

Status: **PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Children and Families Committee.** The bill is scheduled for a vote on the Senate floor for either today (MONDAY) or this WEDNESDAY

**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. Currently TABLED in the 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. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Judiciary Committee.** The bill is scheduled for a vote on the Senate floor for either today (MONDAY) or this WEDNESDAY.

**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
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
Makes the crimes of pimping and pandering penalized by a felony with one to 10 years of imprisonment. A person who commits a second or subsequent offense of pimping, or who commits a second or subsequent offense of pandering, will be penalized by a felony, with imprisonment of one to 10 years, and a mandatory minimum of one year. The court can depart from either crimes' mandatory minimum if it deems in its discretion that the sentence is not in the interest of justice, although the court must state its findings on the record when doing so. Multiple Code sections are also revised to broaden the eligibility for vacating of sentences when a victim of human trafficking commits a crime while trafficked but is not technically convicted since they were sentenced as a felony first offender. The bill adds a provision that makes a person guilty of a misdemeanor when they bring a weapon or long gun while on the property of the Georgia World Congress Center, or on the property of a locality during a private event involving a gated entry and ticketing, and on which alcohol is licensed to be sold. This is limited to three consecutive days, and it only applies when the government and the private party have contractually agreed that the private entity will indemnify the government for acts occurring on the property during the events. This provision may not be implemented more than two times in a calendar year. The crime of aggravated assault is modified to include when someone immediately exits a vehicle and discharges a firearm at a person, an occupied motor vehicle, or an occupied building. The crime of criminal damage to property in the first degree is modified to include when someone knowingly and without justification causes damage to a building by discharging a firearm while inside a vehicle or after immediately exiting a motor vehicle. This also increases the penalty for second or subsequent violations to imprisonment of between five and 20 years. The bill creates a new crime of drive-by shooting when a person who is either in a motor vehicle or is close to a motor vehicle that they used to drive to the location, discharges a firearm at another person, motor vehicle, or dwelling, with the intent to injure. The penalty is imprisonment of between five and 20 years. Penalties for drive-by shootings that result in serious bodily injuries or are against a person under the age of 16 years old are also imprisonment of between five to 20 years. The crime of drive-by shooting is added to the list of statutes that are eligible to be prosecuted under the racketeering influenced and corrupt organizations (RICO) framework. (Note this bill has been amended to include a number of policies from other bills.)

Status: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

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 was POSTPONED ON THE HOUSE FLOOR.

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 133  (Strickland-17th)  Bill Link
Clariﬁes procedures for implementing existing law within the Juvenile Code. Section 1 stipulates that in a child in need of services (CHINS) proceeding, a juvenile court must comply with the law related to a dual designation of a child. Section 2 provides a framework for CHINS proceedings in which the juvenile court must hear or consider certain information, and comply with Title 15, Chapter 11, Article 3, prior to placing a child in the custody of the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) on a nonemergency basis or in the absence of exceptional circumstances based on evidence provided at a disposition hearing. Once a child has been ordered into the custody of DFCS, the juvenile court must conduct a preliminary protective hearing within 72 hours after the placement. All parties to the CHINS case must provide copies of medical, psychological, and educational assessments, and reports of the child or the child’s parent or guardian to DFCS within 72 hours after the ordering of custody. Section 3 stipulates that in a disposition of a dependent child, a juvenile court must comply with the law related to a dual designation of a child. Section 4 provides a framework for child delinquency proceedings in which the juvenile court must hear or consider certain information, and comply with Title 15, Chapter 11, Article 3, prior to placing a child in the custody of DFCS on a nonemergency basis or in the absence of exceptional circumstances based on evidence provided at a disposition hearing. Once a child has been ordered into the custody of DFCS, the juvenile court must conduct a preliminary protective hearing within 72 hours after the placement. All parties to the CHINS case must provide copies of medical, psychological, and educational assessments, and reports of the child or the child’s parent or guardian to DFCS within 72 hours after the ordering of custody.
Status: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Juvenile Justice Committee. The bill is expected to 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
Amends references to "babysitter" in O.C.G.A. 49-5-8.1, related to short-term babysitting of a child in foster care, to instead say "respite care", which the bill defines as occasional or short-term relief for a caregiver by a person or entity.
Status: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Juvenile Justice Committee. The bill is expected to be on the House Floor for a vote 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.

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.

SR 159  (Strickland-17th)  Bill Link
Creates the Senate Study Committee on the Parenting Time Deviation in Georgia’s Child Support Guidelines Statute.
Status: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Rules Committee.

SR 282  (Kirkpatrick-32nd)  Bill Link
Creates the Senate Study Committee on Foster Care and Adoption.
Status: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Rules Committee. The bill is on scheduled for a vote (via a Consent Calendar) today (MONDAY) or this WEDNESDAY.
Health and Behavioral Health

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 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; PASSED SENATE. Awaits consideration by the governor.

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, PASSED HOUSE. Awaits consideration by the governor.

SB 47  (Hufstetler-52nd)  Bill Link
Adds the smoking of electronic smoking or vaping devices to the Georgia Smokefree Air Act of 2005.
Status: PASSED SENATE, PASSED HOUSE. Awaits consideration by the governor.

SB 65  (Watson-1st)  Bill Link
Allows the state to establish a state-based healthcare exchange.
Status: PASSED SENATE, PASSED HOUSE. Awaits consideration by the governor.

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. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.

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 to be 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.

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

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. The nature of ancillary support and guidelines on financial eligibility will be disclosed and conform to federal law.

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

HB 358 (Bazemore-69th)  Bill Link
Requires local boards of education to include Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) prevention information as well as the risks associated with tampon use in sexual education curriculum. The bill also encourages healthcare professionals that provide tampons to female patients to include written information about the risk of toxic shock syndrome.


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

Status: House Regulated Industries Committee

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

Status: House Hopper

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. The bill also eliminates the GORRC (Georgia Occupational Regulation Review).

Status: PASSED HOUSE, PASSED SENATE. Needs agreement from the House to the Senate Changes.

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 is scheduled for a vote on the Senate floor for either today (MONDAY) or this WEDNESDAY.**

**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**. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. **The bill is scheduled for a vote on the Senate floor for either today (MONDAY) or this WEDNESDAY.**

**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**. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. **The bill is scheduled for a vote on the Senate floor for either today (MONDAY) or this WEDNESDAY.**

**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**. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Insurance and Labor Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules 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**. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Insurance and Labor Committee. **The bill is scheduled for a vote on the Senate floor for either today (MONDAY) or this WEDNESDAY.**

**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

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**. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Insurance and Labor Committee. The bill is scheduled for
a vote on the Senate floor for either today (MONDAY) or this WEDNESDAY.

**HB 414** (Blackmon-146th)  
Bill Link
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.

**HB 416** (Silcox-53rd)  
Bill Link
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 is scheduled for
a vote on the Senate floor for either today (MONDAY) or this WEDNESDAY.

**HB 440** (Stoner-40th)  
Bill Link
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)  
Bill Link
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 (BHIRC). BHIRC, with DBHDD, is required to develop a common definition of "serious mental illness" and include "familiar faces" to initiative coordination. BHIRC is tasked with creating a multi-year plan to expand the use of forensic peer mentors. BHIRC 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 Assigned to Senate Health and Human Services Committee.

**Bill Link**

HB 557 (Stephens-164th)

Authorizes advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants to prescribe Schedule II controlled substances

Legislative Update – March 27, 2023

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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. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee. The bill is scheduled for a vote on the Senate floor for either today (MONDAY) or this WEDNESDAY.

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 was POSTPONED ON THE HOUSE FLOOR.

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 or $105.00 per 90-day supply.

Status: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Health Committee.

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.

SB 109 (Echols-49th)  Bill Link
Prohibits insurers from denying coverage of an in-network provider for provider administered medication or the administration of such medication under certain circumstances. The bill 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 SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Public Health Committee. The bill is expected to be on the House Floor for a vote today (MONDAY).

SB 157 (Strickland-17th)  Bill Link
Provides for changes to existing licensing requirements for applicants, specifically pertaining to use of criminal history records, and also with records restrictions and petitions for the sealing of records. Section 1-1 of SB 157 adds a definition of "covered misdemeanor" as a misdemeanor conviction in the last five years prior to the application and an offense listed in O.C.G.A. 35-3-37(j)(4)(B), which provides for family violence offenses, offenses against children, sexual offenses, and serious traffic offenses. The section also defines "conviction" and "felony". Section 1-2 replaces the "crime of moral turpitude" standard and requires the professional licensing board to bear the burden of denying an applicant for a license due to their criminal record by the standard of clear and convincing evidence. An applicant is also entitled to a hearing before the professional licensing board per the 'Georgia Administrative Procedure Act'. Section 1-3 makes a denial of a request for reinstatement of a revoked license and the refusal to issue a previously denied license a contested case under the 'Georgia Administrative Procedure Act'. Section 1-4 permits license denial only if a direct relationship is found between a criminal record and the licensed occupation, and the applicant’s licensure would pose a direct and substantial risk to public safety because they have not been rehabilitated to safely perform the licensed duties and responsibilities. This section clarifies what rehabilitation evidence will be considered and the disclosure of criminal records to those that are serious, recent, and relevant convictions that have not been
expunged or pardoned. A list of specific crimes must always be disclosed, while others must be excluded. Requirements related to character standards are modified to require individualized consideration of applicants, and boards are required to provide a procedure, including written findings that it uses to justify a license denial due to a criminal record. Further, the section requires boards to allow an applicant to apply for a predetermination procedure to determine whether their criminal history record will lead to a denial in the future. Boards are also required to post public information on their websites and application about the criminal record consideration, including the legal standard, disclosure rules, predetermination process, and appeal. By March 31 of each year, the occupational licensing board will be required to file with the Secretary of State’s office an annual report containing required information on licensing and criminal records, including the racial and ethnic distribution of applicants whom were denied. Section 1-5 changes a referenced definition for the term "felony". Parts II, III, IV, and VI replace the "crime of moral turpitude" standard; require the review of an applicant’s criminal history to be directly related to the profession; require a denial on criminal history records grounds to be due to a substantial risk to public safety standards; and regulate disclosure of criminal records to serious, recent, and relevant convictions, for the following boards: Georgia State Board of Accountancy, Georgia Board of Dentistry, Georgia Composite Medical Board, Georgia Real Estate Commission and Appraisers Board, Structural Pest Control Commission, Professional Standards Commission, and Georgia Board of Pharmacy. Only some of the provisions are applied to requirements of the insurance commissioner due to conflicts with federal law. Part V applies to long-term care facilities and modifies the definition of "criminal record" to exclude certain parties who received a general pardon from the State Board of Pardons and Paroles for their convictions, starting from the date of their conviction or adjudication rather than the completion of their sentence. Parts VII through IX revise O.C.G.A. 35-3-37 to make those who commit the crime of theft eligible for a record restriction. The bill removes the limitation that only two misdemeanor convictions, or a series of misdemeanors arising from one incident, could be requested to be restricted through a petition. It increases eligibility for who can petition the court to seal records to those who have had records restricted pursuant to O.C.G.A. 17-10-21 (vacating of sentence for trafficking victim defendants), and an individual who was cited for a criminal offense and later had the charge dismissed, nolle prosed, or reduced to a violation of a local ordinance. The court is required to order all records held by the clerk to be restricted and unavailable to the public if the record has been restricted through a pardon by the Board of Pardons and Paroles. The bill allows restricted information to always be available to criminal justice agencies for law enforcement or criminal investigative purposes. It removes the requirement that the prosecutor must agree with a petition to the court for a retroactive grant of first offender status. The bill does not allow a court to provide retroactive first offender status for a conviction that was used as the underlying conviction pursuant to 16-11-131 (possession of firearms by convicted felons and first offender probationers) or if the conviction was used to enhance a sentence pursuant to 17-10-7 (punishment of repeat offenders). Part X makes the bill effective on January 1, 2024, and applies to all applications for licensure submitted on or after that date.

Status: **PASSED SENATE** Recommended Do Pass by the House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

**SB 177** (Jones II-22nd)  
[Bill Link](#)

Creates the 'Georgia Food Security Advisory Council' within the Georgia Department of Agriculture to recommend and advise the General Assembly and state agencies on best practices and policies to address food insecurity. The council will consist of 15 members as follows: the commissioner of the Department of Agriculture; the commissioner of the Department of Human Services; the state school superintendent; four members appointed by the governor, including one representative from the Department of Public Health, one representative from the Department of Early Care and Learning, one representative of an institution of high learning with a focus on alleviating food insecurity, and one person to serve as the council’s chairperson; four members appointed by the lieutenant governor, including a representative from a hospital or health system focused on food insecurity, a representative from a food policy council, an owner of a grocery store that accepts SNAP and WIC program benefits, and a representative from a municipal chamber of commerce in an urban area; and four members appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives, including a Georgia farmer, a CEO of a food bank or food bank supporting organization, one representative from a municipal chamber of commerce in a rural area, and an owner or operator of a local community farmers’ market. The council must submit a report to the governor and General Assembly each year beginning on July
1, 2024, and will stand abolished on June 30, 2026. 

Status: **PASSED SENATE**. Recommended Do Pass by the House Agriculture and Consumer Affairs Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

**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

**HR 547** (Mathiak-74th)  
**Bill Link**

Creates the House Study Committee on Rural Medical Personnel Recruitment. 

Status: Recommended Do Pass by the House Special Rules Committee.

**HR 566** Hilton-48th)  
**Bill Link**

Creates the House Study Committee on Georgia's COVID-19 Response and Future Pandemic Preparedness. 

Status: House Public Health Committee

**HR 568** (Hawlins-27th)  
**Bill Link**

Creates the House Study Committee on Dentists and Dental Hygienists. 

Status: House Health Committee

**HR 603** (Cooper-45th)  
**Bill Link**

Creates the House Study Committee on Certificate of Need Modernization. 

Status: House Rules Committee

**SR 279** (Dolezal-27th)  
**Bill Link**

Creates the Senate Study Committee on Certificate of Need Reform. 

Status: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Rules Committee. **The bill is on scheduled for a vote (via a Consent Calendar) today (MONDAY) or this WEDNESDAY.**

**SR 354** (Robertson-29th)  
**Bill Link**

Creates the Senate Study Committee on the Effects of Cannabis Use. 

Status: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Rules Committee.

**SR 371** (Hatchett-50th)  
**Bill Link**

Creates the Senate Study Committee on Rural Medical Personnel Recruitment.
Status: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Rules Committee. The bill is on scheduled for a vote (via a Consent Calendar) today (MONDAY) or this WEDNESDAY.
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. Awaits consideration by the governor.

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.

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. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

SB 106  (Walker-20th)  Bill Link
Creates a Medicaid program to provide remote maternal health clinical services to women with high-risk pregnancies through the Department of Public Health’s pilot home visiting program.
Status: PASSED SENATE, PASSED HOUSE. Needs the Senate to agree to changes the House made.
Legislative Update – March 27, 2023

Education

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.

SB 45 (Anavitarte-45)  Bill Link
Creates 'A.J.'s Law' to provide 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, PASSED HOUSE.** Awaits consideration by the governor.

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, PASSED HOUSE.** Awaits consideration by the governor.

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. Defines an accrediting agency as a reliable authority as to the quality of education offered in Georgia secondary schools. The bill sets the standards and criteria accrediting agencies must meet by the State Board of Education to be recognized as an accrediting agency. The State Board of Education will have oversight authority of accrediting agencies, and may determine if an agency is not in compliance with state standards. When disputes arise between an accrediting agency and a public secondary school, the school has the right to appeal to the state board.

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

HR 564 (Dubnik-29th)  Bill Link
Constitutional Amendment to provide for the election of members of the State Board of Education by the members of the House of Representatives and Senate whose respective districts are embraced or partly embraced by each congressional district of this state; and to provide for appointment of the State School Superintendent by the State Board of Education.

Status: House Education Committee

SB 318 (Setzler-37th)  Bill Link
Provides that the minimum salaries of special education teachers who meet certain criteria shall be 110 percent of the minimum salary such teacher would otherwise qualify for on the schedule of minimum salaries established by the State Board of Education.

Status: Senate Education and Youth 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. The bill was amended to include
language that states "No high school which receives funding under this article shall participate in, sponsor, or provide coaching or support staff for interscholastic athletic or literary events or other school activities which are conducted under the authority of, conducted under the rules of, or scheduled by any athletic association that is a member of a national association, federation, or alliance of high school athletic, literary, or school activities associations that does not include or recognize all other voluntary nonprofit athletic, literary, or school activities associations of Georgia high schools in compliance with the requirements of Code Section 20-2-319.2 and Code Section 20-2-324.1 as a member or affiliate member with all the rights and privileges associated with membership in said association, federation, or alliance."

Status: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Education and Youth Committee. The bill is scheduled for a vote on the Senate floor for either today (MONDAY) or this WEDNESDAY.

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

**HB 87**  (Erwin-32nd)  Bill Link
Focuses on Mountain Education, Foothills, and Coastal Plains Charter Schools (alternative schools for students who are on the verge of dropping out and need flexibility and night classes). The bill allows these schools to continue as “Completion Special State Schools” and transition beyond their charter contracts. However, it changes their geographical boundaries, creates additional zones to serve the rest of the state, and establishes a funding mechanism for these programs. The bill also defines eligible students for these schools and their attendance zones.

Status: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. Needs agreement from the House to the Senate Changes.

**HB 101**  (Crowe-118th)  Bill Link
Revises Rural Hospital tax credits to include rural freestanding emergency departments. The bill also deals with mortgage loan policy. Additionally, it increases the cap from $120 million to $130 million for student scholarship organizations (SSOs) but adds a sunset provision.

Status: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Finance Committee.

**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. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Higher Education Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules 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 is scheduled for a
vote on the Senate floor for either today (MONDAY) or this WEDNESDAY.

**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. The bill was amended to include provisions from HB 641 which, relates to definitions regarding tuition equalization grants at private colleges and universities. It revises the definition of approved school to include schools which were previously accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, are now accredited by the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools.  
Status: **PASSED HOUSE** Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Higher Education Committee. The bill is scheduled for a vote on the Senate floor for either today (MONDAY) or this WEDNESDAY.

**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. The bill was amended to also include a provision which, subject to appropriations, allows the state to pay for commercial motor vehicle training for military veterans.  
Status: **PASSED HOUSE** Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Higher Education Committee. The bill is scheduled for a vote on the Senate floor for either today (MONDAY) or this WEDNESDAY.

**HB 301** (Ridley-6th)  
Bill Link  
This bill originally increased penalties for overtaking a school bus, but was amended on Legislative Day 38 and those provisions were removed and ultimately amended into HB 348. This bill, HB 301, currently contains the contents of SB 11 and SB 12, which 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. The bill also enhances penalties for abuse of a disabled person or an elder adult. It allows in a criminal proceeding in which the accused is accused of family violence, abuse of a disabled person, an elder adult, or a series of crimes driven by certain prejudices, that evidence of the accused's prior commission of any other like acts to be admissible and may be considered for its bearing on any matter to which it is relevant. The bill grants original jurisdiction to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) for violation of laws concerning domestic, cyber, biological, chemical, and nuclear terrorism.  
Status: **PASSED HOUSE** Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Public Safety Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.
HB 318 (Hilton-48th)  
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. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Education and Youth Committee. The bill is scheduled for a vote on the Senate floor for either today (MONDAY) or this WEDNESDAY.

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. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Higher Education Committee. The bill is scheduled for a vote on the Senate floor for either today (MONDAY) or this WEDNESDAY.

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. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Education and Youth Committee. The bill is scheduled for a vote on the Senate floor for either today (MONDAY) or this WEDNESDAY.

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 is scheduled for a vote on the Senate floor for either today (MONDAY) or this WEDNESDAY.

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

HB 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) Bill Link
Amended with provisions allowing rural freestanding emergency departments to be eligible for the rural hospital tax credit and allows an individual rural hospital organization to keep contributions even if such contribution would cause the rural hospital organization to exceed its maximum amount of contributions for that year. The bill also increases by $5 million the public education foundation tax credit. Another provision excludes amounts attributable to level 1 freeport exemptions for purposes of calculating local five mill share for public school funding.

Status: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Finance Committee. The bill is scheduled for a vote on the Senate floor for either today (MONDAY) or this WEDNESDAY.

HB 538 (Ballard-147th) Bill Link
“Georgia Early Literacy Act” - Beginning July 1, 2025, the department shall require teachers in all programs licensed or commissioned by the department to receive training on developmentally appropriate evidence-based literacy instruction. Such training shall be aligned with content standards promulgated the department in collaboration with the Office of Student Achievement. The state Board of Education, in consultation with the department and the Office of Student Achievement, shall establish such policies, rules, and regulations as necessary to implement uniform grade-appropriate metrics for measuring literacy. They shall approve high-quality instructional materials to be used for teaching students in kindergarten through third grade to read and establish a procedure for each public school and local school system to annually certify to the department that such school or school system's locally approved instructional materials and content constitute high-quality instructional materials. By January 1, 2024, the department shall establish submission procedures for education service providers to submit one or more universal reading screeners to be considered for inclusion on the board's list of approved universal reading screener providers. By July 1, 2024, the board would approve the list of screeners. GaDOE shall, in consultation with the University System of Georgia, the Professional Standards Commission, the Office of Student Achievement, Georgia’s Regional Education Service Agencies, and literacy experts, develop or procure one or more training programs for kindergarten through third grade teachers on the science of reading, structured literacy, and foundational literacy skills that enable students to develop reading skills required to meet state standards in literacy. Beginning April 1, 2026, the department shall provide an annual report on the impacts of the implementation of the provisions of this Code section. Local boards of education shall, by December 1, 2024, approve high-quality instructional materials for students in kindergarten through third grade, and by December 15, 2024, and by August 1 each year thereafter, certify to the department that its locally approved instructional materials and content constitute high-quality instructional materials. Each public school and local school system shall provide instructional support for kindergarten through third grade teachers. Any public school or local school system claiming that a lack of sufficient funding prevents them from providing instructional support as shall promptly and in writing notify the Department of Education and shall describe all efforts they’ve made to secure sufficient funding from local, state, federal, and private sources. GaDOE shall provide technical assistance and other guidance to public schools and local schools systems in identifying local, state, federal, and private funding sources to provide for instructional supports. Three times each school year each public school and local school system shall administer a universal reading screener to each student in kindergarten through third grade, with the first administration occurring within 30 days of the beginning of the school year and report the results to parents and guardians and to GaDOE. Starting August 1, 2024, public schools and local school systems shall implement tiered reading intervention plans for public school students in kindergarten through third grade who at any time during the school year exhibits a significant reading deficiency, as measured by performance on universal reading screener. Each such tiered reading intervention plan shall be implemented no later than 30 days after a student has been identified for intervention and plans may be incorporated into and included as part of the school’s existing multi-tiered system of supports or response to intervention frameworks. Each student who has been identified as exhibiting a significant reading deficiency shall receive intensive reading intervention until such student is no longer identified as exhibiting a significant reading deficiency
Status: **PASSED HOUSE.** Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Education and Youth Committee. The bill is scheduled for a vote on the Senate floor for either today (MONDAY) or this WEDNESDAY.

**HB 607 (Pirkle-169th)**  
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.** Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Higher Education Committee. The bill is scheduled for a vote on the Senate floor for either today (MONDAY) or this WEDNESDAY.

**SB 4 (Davenport-44th)**  
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.** Assigned to House Education Committee.

**SB 32 (Anavitarte-31st)**  
"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.** Recommended Do Pass by the House Education Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

**SB 37 (Robertson-29th)**  
Requires peace officers who want to qualify as candidates for the office of sheriff to be in good standing with the Georgia Peace Officers Standards and Training (POST) Council. The bill requires the executive director of POST Council to create and provide for an affidavit attesting to the person's compliance with the new standard for qualifying. The director, or their designee, must sign the affidavit and the person seeking to qualify must present the affidavit to elections officials in order to qualify. The bill allows a sheriff who serves in more than one court to receive salary for each court but prohibits the sheriff receiving more than two additional salaries. The bill amends the statute relating to school bus cameras and school zone speed cameras to allow for the Department of Revenue to remove penalty on a vehicle registration if the department receives adequate proof of payment of the fee and any late fee from the agent or governing body. 

**SB 50 (Burns-23rd)**  
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.** Assigned to House Education Committee.

**SB 112 (Anavitarte-31st)**  
Creates the 'Workforce EXCELeration Act' which provides for a pilot program to establish the High School Diploma Program for Adult Learners. The program will be facilitated by the State Board of the Technical College System of Georgia. The pilot program must include no more than three program locations in the state and will be automatically repealed on June 30, 2028. 
Status: **PASSED SENATE.** Recommended Do Pass by the House Higher Education Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

**SB 137 (Burns-23rd)**  
Allows eligible institutions that have been located in this state since on or before January 1, 2021, to qualify to receive tuition equalization grant funds. The bill 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 or a regional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. These institutions must also 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 SENATE**. Recommended Do Pass by the House Higher Education Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

**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 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

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

Status: **PASSED SENATE**. TABLED IN THE HOUSE.

**SB 237 (Hatchett-50th)**  
Bill Link

Provides for student loan repayment for peace officers.

Status: **PASSED SENATE**. Assigned to House Higher Education Committee.

**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

**HR 490 (Olaleye-59th)**  
Bill Link

Creates the House Study Committee on Education Funding Mechanisms.
Status: House Education Committee

**HR 604** (Knight-134th) [Bill Link](#)
Creates the House Study Committee on Funding for the Technical College System of Georgia.
Status: House Rules Committee

**SR 121** (Butler-55th) [Bill Link](#)
Creates the Senate Helping Georgia Students Overcome COVID-19 Related Learning Loss Study Committee.
Status: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Rules Committee.

**SR 144** (Estevez-6th) [Bill Link](#)
Creates the Senate Expanding Early Childhood Education Study Committee.
Status: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Rules Committee.

**SR 175** (Brass-28th) [Bill Link](#)
Creates the Joint Study Committee on Dual Enrollment for Highly Skilled Talent at Younger Ages. This committee will examine existing dual enrollment opportunities to develop highly skilled talent at younger ages and develop solutions to produce more dual enrollment talent. Section 2 creates the Joint Study Committee on Service Delivery Strategy (SDS). The committee will consist of 10 members as follows: the president of the Senate will appoint three members of the Senate, including the chair of the Senate State and Local Governmental Operations Committee, a county commissioner from a county currently levying a local option sales tax (LOST), and a mayor of a city within a county currently levying a LOST; the speaker of the House will appoint three members of the House of Representatives, including the chair of the House Committee on Governmental Affairs, a county commissioner from a county currently levying a LOST, and a mayor of a city within a county currently levying a LOST. A co-chairperson each from the House of Representatives and Senate will be chosen by the president of the Senate and speaker of the House, respectively. The committee will stand abolished on December 1, 2023.
Status: [PASSED SENATE](#) Recommended Do Pass by the House Education Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

**SR 251** (Davenport-44th) [Bill Link](#)
Creates the Senate Rosenwald Schools Study Committee.
Status: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Rules Committee.
Miscellaneous

HB 242  (Hitchens-161st)  Bill Link
Increases traffic violation under 'Joshua's Law' fines by 3%.
Status: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. Awaits consideration by the governor.

SB 3  (Albers-56th)  Bill Link
"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)  Bill Link
“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. The youth must be enrolled in a public school, licensed private school, or licensed home-study program or a state approved adult education class if studying for a High School Equivalency (HSE) diploma; or have already obtained a high school diploma or a HSE diploma.
Status: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. Awaits consideration by the governor.

HB 795  (Davis-87th)  Bill Link
Enacts the "immaculate conception" clause, stating that "a prospective father of an unborn fetus shall receive the same penalties as the woman who is the prospective mother of the unborn fetus unless it is medically proven that the woman conceived the unborn fetus solely by 'immaculate conception'".
Status: House Public Health Committee

HB 796  (Davis-87th)  Bill Link
Relating to restrictions on the performance of abortions, availability of records, civil cause of action, and affirmative defenses, the bill enacts the "medical oath protection" clause, which provides for review of alleged medical professional misconduct prior to adjudication.
Status: House Public Health Committee

SB 319  (Harrell-40th)  Bill Link
Protects individuals from discrimination in housing, public accommodations or employment for reasons of sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or age.
Status: Senate Judiciary 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.

HB 88  (Gaines-120th)  Bill Link
Establishes protocols for review of cold case murder files by law enforcement agencies.
Status: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill is scheduled for a vote on the Senate floor for either today (MONDAY) or this WEDNESDAY.

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. PASSED SENATE. Needs agreement from the House to the Senate Changes.

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 is scheduled for a vote on the Senate floor for either today (MONDAY) or this WEDNESDAY.

HB 353 (Powell-33rd) Bill Link
Legalizes coin-operated amusement machines overseen by the Georgia Lottery Corporation.

Status: PASSED HOUSE. Currently TABLED in the Senate.

HB 375 (Leverett-123rd) Bill Link
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. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

SB 57 (Hickman-4th) Bill Link
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) Bill Link
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 is expected to be on the House Floor for a vote today (MONDAY).

SB 158 (Robertson-29th) Bill Link
Was once a bill addressing property insurance premium discount or rate reduction for property owners regarding tornado, hurricane, or other catastrophic windstorm events, but was completely replaced with language from HB 237 which designates the Southeast Georgia Soap Box Derby as the official soap box derby of the State of Georgia. (As you may remember, HB 237 was gutted by the Senate and replaced with language legalizing sports betting in the state.)
Status: PASSED SENATE, PASSED HOUSE. Needs the Senate to agree to changes the House made.

SB 195 (Walker-20th)  Bill Link
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.

SB 272 (Kennedy-18th)  Bill Link
Reestablishes the Criminal Case Data Exchange Board, which was previously under the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council and later the Council of Superior Court Clerks, to a board under the Judicial Council and its Administrative Office of the Courts. The board continues to have 19 members and meetings can be called to order by the chairperson of the board, the designee to the board from the Judicial Council, the chief justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia, or the governor. The board must fulfill multiple duties, including participation in the review and improvement of the state's criminal case data exchange and management systems; make recommendations for the improvement of data sharing for the benefit of the public, employers, and law enforcement; provide regular advice and counsel to the Judicial Council of Georgia; regularly review and update uniform standards; and prepare a report by October 1 of each year detailing the board's progress, which will be sent to multiple parties, including the chairs of the Senate Judiciary Committee, the House Judiciary Committee, House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee, the Senate Appropriations Committee, and the House Appropriations Committee, by October 10 of each year. The board will be required to conduct a review with experts in the field of criminal justice on the feasibility of a system for tracking and analyzing criminal history data related to recidivism, criminal plea agreements, and immunity defenses. The feasibility study will include a review of a system to track charges pertaining to human trafficking, and whether those charges resulted in convictions or resulted in pleas of lesser or related charges. This review will be required to be completed by December 1, 2024, at which point the board will deliver it to the required parties in the legislative, executive, and judicial branches.
Status: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

HR 10 (Thomas-65th)  Bill Link
Creates the House Study Committee on Public Water Systems Serving Communities in Georgia.
Status: Recommended Do Pass by the 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

HR 567 (Thomas-21st)  Bill Link
Creates the House Study Committee on Workforce Innovation and Development.
Status: House Special Rules Committee

SR 85 (Walker-20th)  Bill Link
Creates the Senate Occupational Licensing Study Committee.
Status: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Rules Committee. The bill is on scheduled for a vote (via a Consent Calendar) today (MONDAY) or this WEDNESDAY.

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

SR 275 (Albers-56th)  Bill Link
Creates the Senate Study Committee on Expanding Georgia's Workforce.
Status: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Rules Committee. The bill is on scheduled for a vote (via a Consent
Calendar) today (MONDAY) or this WEDNESDAY.

SR  293  (Halpern-39th)  Bill Link
Creates the Senate Study Committee on an Equity Impact Tool for Legislation.
Status: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Rules Committee.
House Bill 404: Safe at Home Act

Call members of the Georgia Senate and ask them to vote **YES** to House Bill 404, the Safe at Home Act, when it comes to the floor for a vote.

**What’s in the Bill**

*House Bill 404:*

- Requires that rental properties are fit for human habitation.
- Includes cooling as a utility that cannot be shut off prior to an eviction action.
- Prohibits landlords from requiring a security deposit that exceeds two months’ rent.
- Allows a tenant three business days (following a written notice) to pay owed monies prior to an eviction proceeding being filed. (This is called a “right to cure.”)
- Requires that an eviction notice be posted conspicuously on the property door in a sealed envelope and delivered via any methods agreed to in the rental agreement.

**Why It Matters**

- In FY23, 20% of foster care placements cite inadequate housing as a reason for removal of a child from the home.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has increased housing insecurity in Georgia, which directly impacts children.
  - According to the U.S. Census Household Pulse Survey, as of May 2022, approximately 21% Georgia households with children surveyed reported little to no confidence in their next rent or mortgage payment on time.
- Black students make up a disproportionate amount of Georgia’s homeless student population at nearly 52%, followed by White students at almost 30% and Hispanic students at nearly 13%.
- When kids experience housing instability, unsafe homes or homelessness, they struggle with so much more, such as:
  - Asthma
  - Good nutrition and hunger
  - School attendance, learning and high school completion
  - Fear and trauma
- Check out our [Homelessness and Children in Georgia factsheet](#)
What to Say When You Call

Please vote **YES** to House Bill 404, the Safe at Home Act, when it comes to the Senate floor for a vote. In 2021, 20% of foster care placements cite inadequate housing as a reason for removal of a child from the home. Children who experience housing instability, unsafe homes, or homelessness often also struggle with asthma; school attendance, learning, and completion; as well as fear and trauma resulting from the insecurity caused by where they are going to sleep at night. This bill ensures that landlords, in various rental agreements, will maintain habitability for tenants, sets a maximum security deposit amount, and sets procedure for breach of conduct. Thank you for your thoughtfulness on behalf of Georgia’s children with regards to this bill.

Who to Contact

Contact members of the [Georgia Senate](https://www.georgiavoices.org) here.