House Bill 404 – “Safe at Home Act” – This bill encompassed a number of policies which would prevent unnecessary evictions and also help ensure safer living conditions for those with low income who rent. This bill received a unanimous vote in the House and a Do Pass recommendation by the Senate Judiciary Committee, but was tabled in the Senate on Day 39 along with many other bills. This was done to allow the Senate flexibility in sequencing floor votes. Unfortunately, it was not taken off the table before time ran out on the last day of session. The bill will likely be recommitted to committee next year and therefore would remain viable for 2024.

Rep. Casey Carpenter  
Sen. Chuck Hufstetler

Senate Resolution 282 – The hoteling of children in foster care who have high needs is a problem that has plagued Georgia’s DFCS for decades. Multiple DFCS directors have worked on the issue and to little avail. This session, the issue gained the attention of lawmakers who offered both budget allocations (hoteling is extremely expensive) and legislation. While both can be helpful to the issue at hand, time within the session did not permit a deep enough look at issues surrounding foster care. Therefore, the Senate will implement a study committee via SR 282 to examine foster care and adoption. We look forward to the hearings and want to thank the sponsor for initiating the work.

Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick

Senate Bill 211 & Senate Bill 538 These bills, which passed with overwhelming support and are headed to the governor’s desk, both aim to improve Georgia’s worrisome literacy rate for children and adults. SB 211 creates a Literacy Council to consider the full range of options for combating illiteracy through the life cycle, and HB 538 targets student assessment, teacher training and learning materials in public schools, especially K-3. One hopes that such legislation coupled with funding for dyslexia screening ($3.5 Million in the FY24 budget) and other literacy initiatives in various agencies, (e.g., GOSA, GaDOE and DHS/DFCS) can truly help our kids (and adults) learn to read so they can read to learn.

Sen. Billy Hickman  
Sen Clint Dixon  
Rep. Bethany Ballard  
Rep. Chris Erwin  
Rep. Becky Evans