MAY 16, 2023

JUMP TO SECTION:

Weekly Welcome
FY2024 Budget
Justice and Effective School Discipline
Protection and Safety
Health and Behavioral Health
Maternal Care and Early Care
Education
Miscellaneous
Weekly Welcome

Hey y’all –
I have no doubt that many of you have been pining away for just one more legislative update this calendar year. At red lights, you find yourself wondering if there will be a summary of a new and exciting house study committee in your inbox, an insomnia-curing budget update waiting on your phone, or simply a free-association, quasi-nonsensical introductory chunk of prose or poetry to entertain you as you as your ParkMobile app tries to download for the third time. Well, because I love you all (and also because Governor Kemp has finished his bill review period), I have decided to entertain you with one more missive summarizing our interpretation of “All That Was” for kids and families in the 2023 convening of Georgia’s General Assembly. So grab a seat and perhaps a beverage (and definitely a good handful of Milk Duds) and enjoy the following.

Stay groovy until I see you again.

--Polly

Polly McKinney
Advocacy Director
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Fiscal Year 2024 Budget

FINAL following Governor’s review

Total: $32.45 Billion

Red with strike through indicates that the Governor instructed the agency to disregard the line item. For funding, “disregard” means that the agency will not implement that particular spend at this time. For budget direction, “disregard” means that the agency should ignore the direction. In addition, there are some items that have been actually vetoed, which means that the money will definitely not be spent for the purpose of that line item at all.

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 $4,000-$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

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

Prosecuting Attorneys

$1.125 Million Added for the Prosecuting Attorneys Qualifications Commission, pursuant to SB92 (2023 Session).
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).

$25,000 Added for the Georgia Grown Farm to Food Bank Program.

Dept. of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities

$200,000 Added for two peer recovery coaches and one team leader for the Certified Addiction Recovery Empowerment Specialist (CARES) Warm Line. (Adult Addictive Diseases Services)

$200,000 Added for peer workforce to support additional Certified Addiction Recovery Empowerment Specialist (CARES) academies. (Adult Addictive Diseases Services)

$2 Million Added to expand addiction recovery support centers. (Adult Addictive Diseases Services)

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 the 513 New Options Waiver (NOW) and Comprehensive Supports Waiver Program (COMP) slots for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (Adult Developmental Disability Services). Upon signing the budget, Governor Kemp directed the agency thus: “$771,514 of this appropriation would fund only administrative overhead costs rather than provide additional waiver slots. The Department has sufficient existing program funding to deploy the additional slots without additional administrative overhead. Therefore, the agency is directed to utilize the funds included in [this line item] for direct waiver expenses only.”

$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. (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)

$1.22 Million Added to increase to market rate and fill nine vacant forensic-evaluator positions and 23 peer mentors. (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. (Adult Mental Health Services)

$6.65 Million Added for a 24-bed and 16 temporary observation chair behavioral health crisis center in Fulton County. (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. (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. (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)

$1.41 Million Added for the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network for peer services. (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)

$0 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.

**Budget Note:** “Utilize opioid funds for an addiction treatment locator site.”

$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.

**$800,000 Added** for the Home Access Program to increase the number of awarded grants to individuals requiring home accessibility modifications.

**$200,000 Added** to expand 2-1-1 in rural Georgia.

**$110.42 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. (NOTE: As opposed to a “disregard”, the governor actually vetoed this line item.)

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).”

**$1 Million Added** with the following direction: “Increase funds to 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)”

**Budget Note:** “The Department shall work with the Department of Human Services to submit a 1915(i) State Plan Amendment (SPA) providing youth with behavioral and mental health conditions access to Home and Community Based Services.”
**Budget Note:** “The Department of Community Health 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 Medicaid reimbursement for services provided by licensed professional counselors, licensed marriage and family therapists, and certified peer support specialists in federally qualified health centers (FQHCs).”

**Budget Note:** “Extend coverage for cochlear implants beyond 21 years of age for those Medicaid recipients who already have them prior to age 21.”

**$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

**$5 Million Reduced** for Rural Hospital Stabilization Grants in anticipation of the new hospital directed payment program.

**$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 for behavioral health expansion at Christ Community Health Services of Augusta and a school-based health center in Emanuel County.

**$500,000 Added** for charity clinics statewide.

**$950,000 Added** for Mercy Care Atlanta to support increased patient volume.

**$409,000 Added** to support existing and new housing with the Area Health Education Centers (AHEC).

**$4 Million Added** for one-time grants of up to $1 million for hospitals with GME programs to fund medical education training equipment and infrastructure needs to support new and expanding residency programs, with priority given to new and rural sites and including Colquitt Regional Medical Center and Archbold Medical Center. **Upon signing, Governor Kemp directed the agency thus:** “The agency is authorized to develop a competitive grant application process and criteria for awards to identify graduate medical education programs in greatest need of infrastructure funding in accordance with the purpose of the 16 HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS program and general law powers of the board.”

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

**$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.
$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)

$10.51 Million Added for a 4% 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)

$584,061 Added 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.
- **$225,000 Added** for three Graduate Medical Education (GME) feasibility grants to assist hospitals in establishing or expanding GME programs.
- **$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.
- **$432,338 Added** for child and adolescent psychiatry fellows at the Medical College of Georgia.
- **$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 at Morehouse School of Medicine.
$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.

$1 Million Added to support the increase of the Morehouse School of Medicine class size and expand rural clinical training.

$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. (Physicians for Rural Areas)

$1.56 Million Added for the physician loan repayment program to increase award amount and update program guidelines. (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. (Undergraduate Medical Education)

$0 Added for Georgia medical student capitation payments to the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (PCOM).

$3 Million Recognized in existing base funds 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. (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 Added 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.

$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.)

$253,635 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. (Ag Education)

$288,000 Added for two young farmer positions in Barrow, Lowndes, and Hall counties and an oversight position. (Ag Education)

$120,000 Added for a completion state special school program coordinator position pursuant to HB87 (2023 Session).

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.

$0 Added for Plasma Games statewide rollout and evaluate usage and effectiveness after one year. (Central Office)

$50,000 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)
$262,000 Added for Communities in Schools for additional affiliates.

$0 Added for life science industry certification for rural school districts. (Curriculum Development)

$400,000 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. (Non-QBE Formula Grants)

$50,000 Added for feminine hygiene grants due to inflation and increased enrollment. (Non-QBE Formula Grants)

$3.5 Million Added for Dyslexia Screening pursuant to SB48 (2019 Session). (Non-QBE Formula Grants)

$6.32 Million Added for school nutrition with a note from the House saying “for the cost of breakfast and lunch for reduce-paying students”

$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.

$4.65 Million Added for a 5.1% salary increase for school transportation workers.

$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. (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)). (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. (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. (QBE Program)

$73,853 Added for RESAs based on enrollment growth.

$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

$711,000 Added for construction industry certification. (Technology/Career Education)

$0 Added for a construction ready pre-apprenticeship program. (Technology/Career Education)

$450,000 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.

$1.25 Million Added to deploy Formulytics in gang database statewide. Upon signing the budget, Governor Kemp directed the agency thus: “State vendors must be selected in accordance with state procurement regulations and cannot be specified through an appropriations act. Therefore, the agency is directed to disregard the language included in [this line item] and utilize the funds for a competitive grant to facilitate gang activity prosecution.”
Governor’s Office of Health Strategy and Coordination

*Budget Note:* “The Office of Health Strategy and Coordination is directed to coordinate and facilitate inter-agency cooperation in developing a 1915(i) State Plan Amendment (SPA) to support youth with behavioral and mental health conditions.”

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.

$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 ($251,000) 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 ($749,000).

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.

$750,000 Added to the court appointed special advocates (CASA) to enhance statewide capacity.

$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).”

*Budget Note:* “The Department shall work with the Department of Community Health to develop a 1915(i) State Plan Amendment (SPA) providing youth with behavioral and mental health conditions access to Home and Community-Based Services.”

$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 the Public Health Emergency (PHE) expiration.

$5 Million Added to provide alternative housing options for youth with complex needs. (Out-of-Home Care)
$15.22 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**

$46 Million Added for the state reinsurance program.

**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.

$6.25 Million Reduced one-time funds for training grants. Upon signing the budget, Governor Kemp directed the agency thus: “While it is unfortunate the General Assembly did not maintain funds for these important training programs to ensure our law enforcement officers have appropriate training to deescalate threatening situations and better protect our citizens and our students, the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council is directed to allocate remaining training grant funds to provide on-going school resource officer training.”

$50,000 Added for drug abuse resistance education training.

$1.26 Million Added for sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE) coordinators and improve access to SANE resources for sexual assault centers.
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

$463,675 Added for the Sickle Cell Foundation of Georgia.

$250,000 Added for pregnancy and parenting grant programs.

$0 Added for the Georgia Council of Lupus Education and Awareness to support research, data collection, awareness, and education. These funds are now reflected in the Dept. of Community Health budget.

$150,000 Added for feminine hygiene products for low-income clients at community organizations.

$150,000 Added and $1.22 Million recognized in state funds for the Georgia Poison Center.

$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.

$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.

$3 Million Reduced for the Georgia Coordinating Center to reflect projected expenditures.

$0 Reduced that were previously awarded to Wellstar - Atlanta Medical Center for Level 1 Trauma Center and redirect to other trauma centers.
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.

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). (Teaching Division)

$0 Million Reduced ("adjusted") in formula funds for enrollment growth to reflect corrected credit hour data for Georgia Institute of Technology.

$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.

$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.

$310,000 Added to expand the Archway Partnership into five additional communities.

$1.5 Million Added to support operations and address a backlog of projects at the Center for Rural Prosperity and Innovation.

$66 Million Reduced from the Teaching Division (which funds student instruction and to establish and operate other initiatives that promote, support, or extend student learning.)
$264,500 Added for the Anne Frank Holocaust Education Center.

$1.42 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.

$123,584 Added for five analysts to address increased licensure volume.

**Georgia Student Finance Commission**

$2 Million transferred in Lottery dollars for postsecondary gap funding grants from the Low Interest Loans program to the College Completion Grants program to reflect increased utilization.

$16 Million Reduced and $2,000,000 Transferred to the College Completion Grants program.

*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.”

$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.

$16.77 Million Added to increase the HOPE Private Zell award from $2,977 to $3,100 and adjust the HOPE Private award amount to 100% of the Zell award. Upon signing the budget, Governor Kemp directed the agency thus: “In order to maintain 32 HIGHER EDUCATION parity with the percentage increase provided to the HOP Scholarships - Public Schools award increase provided
for herein, the agency is instructed to disregard the language in line 333.2 and increase the HOPE Private award from $2,282 to $2,496 and HOPE Private Zell award from $2,977 to $2,985.

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

$46.98 Million Added to meet the projected need for the HOPE Scholarships - Public Schools program at a factor rate of 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. (NOTE: As opposed to a “disregard”, the governor actually vetoed this line item.)

$8.23 Million Added Increase funds for the first year of a three-year phase-in for increased credit hour earnings for the Aviation, Commercial Driver’s License, and Nursing programs to reflect the high-cost nature of providing these programs.

$1.1 Million Added to implement the Tools for Success matching grant program.
Legislative Update
As of 05/14/2023

Justice, Public Safety and School Discipline

HB 142 (Mainor-56th)  Bill Link
Provides for the establishment of unified campus police forces through agreements entered by colleges and universities.

Status: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.

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 of 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. PASSED SENATE. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.

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.

Status: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.

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. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.

SB 92 (Robertson-29th)  Bill Link

Creates the Prosecuting Attorneys Qualifications Commission (PAQC). The PAQC consists of a five-member investigative panel with the members consisting of those with various amounts of experience as a district attorney (DA) or solicitor-general (SG), and who are appointed by the governor, lieutenant governor, speaker of the House, and Senate Committee on Assignments. The three-member panel will consist of members with experience as a DA or SG, as well as a former judge with prior experience as a DA or SG, who are appointed by the governor, a vote of the Senate, and a vote of the House. All members must be appointed by July 1, 2023.

The PAQC will end its investigation into any DA or SG when that person is under indictment. The bill contains various grounds for discipline by the PAQC, including mental or physical incapacity; willful misconduct in office; willful and persistent failure to carry out duties; conviction of a crime involving moral turpitude; conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice; and knowingly authorizing or permitting an assistant DA or assistant SG to commit any act constituting a ground for removal. The PAQC is allowed to entertain a complaint on various grounds, including when a DA or SG has a stated policy that demonstrates that the DA or SG categorically refuses to prosecute any type of an offense or offenses. No complaints can be filed prior to October 1, 2023. If a DA or SG is removed, the individual is disqualified from being appointed or elected to either of the two positions in any county in the state for a period of 10 years. The bill adds a duty for DAs and SGs, requiring the elected positions to review every case for probable cause, and to make a prosecutorial decision based on the law and facts of each individual case. The failure to perform these duties will constitute a ground for recall from the position. The Act is effective upon approval by the governor.

Status: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.

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. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.
Protection and Safety

SR 282 (Kirkpatrick-32nd)  
Bill Link

Creates the Senate Study Committee on Foster Care and Adoption.

Status: PASSED SENATE. As a Senate Study Committee, it does not need agreement from the House or the Governor.

HB 121 (Anderson-10th)  
Bill Link

Adds definitions for the terms "wakeboarding" and "wake surfing", and placing restrictions on these activities. Except in certain circumstances, no person is to engage in either of these two defined activities between sunset and sunrise, 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. Language is added further defining multipurpose off-highway vehicles and regarding license plates for such vehicles. It requires multipurpose off-highway vehicles manufactured after January 1, 2000 to be registered and issued a title. The bill authorizes the commissioner to issue temporary operating permits and provides equipment requirements for multipurpose off-road vehicles. Such vehicles are permitted to operate on highways that are part of county road systems but are limited to crossing highways that are a part of a municipal street or state highway system.

Status: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.

HB 188 (Sainz-180th)  
Bill Link

Changes the name of the Sexual Offender Registration Review Board to the Sexual Offender Risk Review Board (SORRB). The bill defines the term "sexual felony" to be a felony conviction of the following crimes: aggravated assault; kidnapping that involves a victim under the age of 14, except by a parent; sex trafficking; rape; aggravated sodomy; statutory rape; child molestation; aggravated child molestation; enticing a child for indecent purposes; improper sexual contact by employee or agent in the first or second degree or improper sexual contact by a foster parent in the first or second degree, unless the punishment was not subject to O.C.G.A. 17-10-6.2; incest; aggravated sexual battery; and sexual exploitation. Any person who was previously convicted of a sexual felony who is convicted of aggravated assault with the intent to rape; kidnapping; human trafficking for sexual servitude; rape; aggravated sodomy; statutory rape; aggravated child molestation; enticing a child for indecent purposes; improper sexual contact by an employee, agent, or foster parent in the first or second degree; incest; sexual exploitation of children; or aggravated sexual battery is subject to imprisonment for life or a split sentence that is a term of imprisonment followed by probation for life that includes electronic monitoring as a condition of probation. The bill also removes the crime for removing or inhibiting an electronic monitoring device who is required to wear it under O.C.G.A. 42-1-14, as a response in part to the Supreme Court of Georgia case Park v. State. The bill changes the name of SORRB and requires that a defendant who was sentenced to probation submit to SORRB within 60 days of being sentenced for a risk assessment rather than the current requirement of 10 days. Among other provisions, the bill also adds the crime of electronically furnishing obscene material to minors to the list of crimes defined as a "dangerous sexual offense" under O.C.G.A. 42-1- 12(a)(10)(B.4) and clarifies the procedure for when a sexual offender moves from another state or territory to Georgia, the risk assessment process for sexually dangerous predators, and the timelines for when risk assessment valuations need to be made by SORRB.

Status: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.

HB 402 (Hilton-48th)  
Bill Link

Edna Mae McGovern Act' - Requires each public school to provide parents or students over 18 years of age with information on water safety education. At the beginning of each school year, the school will provide information to promote safety in, on, and around bodies of water. This may include information on local water safety.
courses and swim lessons.

Status: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.

**HB 460 (Ballinger-23rd)** Bill Link

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

Status: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.

**SB 42 (Williams-25th)** Bill Link

Revises the penalty for businesses violating the requirement that businesses post signage making people aware of the human trafficking hotline. A law enforcement officer is required to notify a business of its noncompliance, and the owner is required to comply within 30 days of receipt of the notice. Currently, the punishment is discretionary, although the bill changes it to mandatory. Further, the fine is revised from being a maximum fine of $500 to instead be between $500 and $1,000. Upon a second or subsequent offense, it is still a high and aggravated misdemeanor, but the bill clarifies that the fine is between $1,000 and $5,000. Currently, that fine is listed as a maximum of $5,000 without a minimum.

Status: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.

**SB 61 (Strickland-17th)** Bill Link

Makes permanent the provision that requires employers who offer sick leave to employees to allow an employee to use that sick leave for the care of an immediate family member.

Status: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.

**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.

Status: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.

**SB 131 (Tillery-19th)** Bill Link

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
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. PASSED HOUSE. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.

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

Status: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. SIGNED INTO LAW BY 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 admissible 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. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.

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. PASSED HOUSE. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.
Health and Behavioral Health

SB 23 (Kirkpatrick-32nd)  Bill Link
Amends the Code by revising committee names and authority titles while also repealing specific inactive authorities, committees, advisory councils, offices, and commissions. The bill specifies how assets of certain entities are devolved following repeal. Senate Bill 23 also defines the Georgia Data Analytic Center (GDAC) as an agent of all executive state agencies that shares and receives government information. Executive state agencies shall cooperate with GDAC requests for receipt of or access to data unless an Office of Planning and Budget review upon consultation of the chairpersons of the Senate and House appropriations committees determines and explains that the request would result in a violation of law. Sharing of data to and from GDAC does not constitute a disclosure or release under law, and any confidential or privileged designation of government information shall be maintained when sharing with GDAC.

Status: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. VETOED 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 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. VETOED BY GOVERNOR.

HR 603 (Cooper-45th)  Bill Link
Creates the House Study Committee on Certificate of Need Modernization.

Status: PASSED HOUSE. Since this is a House study committee, it does not need approval by the Senate or the governor and so is now PASSED.

SR 279 (Dolezal-27th)  Bill Link
Creates the Senate Study Committee on Certificate of Need Reform.

Status: PASSED SENATE. As a Senate Study Committee, it does not need agreement from the House or the Governor.

SR 371 (Hatchett-50th)  Bill Link
Creates the Senate Study Committee on Rural Medical Personnel Recruitment.
Status: PASSED SENATE. As a Senate Study Committee, it does not need agreement from the House or the Governor.

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 also adds a definition for "bare knuckle boxing match" to O.C.G.A. 43-4B-1, and exempts the term from the current definition of "boxing match." The Georgia Athletic and Entertainment Commission shall have jurisdiction over any bare-knuckle boxing match that is held in the state, is filmed in the state, or is broadcast in the state. Rules are also provided for contestants of bare-knuckle boxing matches.

Status: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.

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. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.

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. PASSED SENATE. SIGNED INTO LAW BY 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. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.

HB 414 (Blackmon-146th)  Bill Link
Creates the Veterans Mental Health Services Program, a competitive grant program administered by the Department of Veterans Service. The grant program will provide behavioral health services to service members, veterans, or family members through non-profit community behavioral health programs.

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

Status: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.

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

Status: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.

SB 1 (Dolezal-27th)  
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. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.

SB 20 (Kirkpatrick-32nd)  
"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. PASSED HOUSE. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.

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

Status: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.

SB 65 (Watson-1st)  
Allows the state to establish a state-based healthcare exchange.

Status: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.

SB 140 (Summers-13th)  
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 223 (Watson-1st)  
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. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.

SB 246 (Hodges-3rd)  
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. Eligible students may also receive an additional IPSE grant to cover certain fees. The bill 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. (Contains provisions of HB 185.)

Status: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.
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. SIGNED INTO LAW BY 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. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.

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. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.
Education

HB 249 (Martin-49th)  Bill Link

Provides College Completion Grant eligibility to students who have completed 70 percent of a four-year program or 45 percent 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 provides free tuition for specified training programs that relate to the operation of a commercial motor vehicle for qualified participants who are U.S. armed forces veterans.

Status: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. VETOED BY GOVERNOR.

HB 319 (Martin-49th)  Bill Link

Abolishes the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation and transfers any obligations, liabilities, or assets to the Georgia Student Finance Authority. The bill prohibits tuition and fee increases of more than 3% unless a joint resolution is passed by the General Assembly.

Status: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. VETOED BY GOVERNOR.

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. FAILED HOUSE.

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. PASSED HOUSE. Since this is a joint study committee it does not need approval from the governor and is therefore approved.

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 and encourages the development of new completion special schools.

Status: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.

HB 147 (Wade-9th)  
“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. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.

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. The bill also amends O.C.G.A. 48-7-29.21, relating to tax credits for qualified education donations for the purpose of awarding grants to public schools by extending the repeal date to December 31, 2026. Local school board members are prohibited from discussing personnel matters with superintendents or other school personnel other than a referral of a personnel matter to the superintendent.

Status: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.

HB 538  
“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. PASSED SENATE. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.

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

Status: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. SIGNED INTO LAW BY 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. SIGNED INTO LAW BY 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. SIGNED INTO LAW BY 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. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.

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. PASSED HOUSE. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.
Miscellaneous

SR 85 (Walker-20th)  Bill Link
Creates the Senate Occupational Licensing Study Committee.

Status: PASSED SENATE. As a Senate Study Committee, it does not need agreement from the House or the Governor.

SR 275 (Albers-56th)  Bill Link
Creates the Senate Study Committee on Expanding Georgia's Workforce.

Status: PASSED SENATE. As a Senate Study Committee, it does not need agreement from the House or the Governor.

HB 88 (Gaines-120th)  Bill Link
“Coleman-Baker Act” - It requires the head of an agency or their designee to review a cold case murder when requested in writing, and to determine if a full reinvestigation would result in the identification of probative investigative leads or a likely perpetrator. The review must: look at what procedures may have been missed initially; whether witnesses should be interviewed or reinterviewed; if forensic evidence was properly tested and analyzed; and perform an update of the case file using the most current investigative standards to the extent it would help develop probative leads. The agency must conduct a full investigation if, at the agency's sole discretion, the review concludes that a full reinvestigation would result in additional, previously unidentified probative leads or a likely perpetrator. An investigation cannot be fully conducted by a person who previously investigated the case, and only one full reinvestigation can be undertaken at one time with respect to the same victim. If a full reinvestigation is completed and a likely perpetrator is not identified, no additional investigation will occur for a period of five years from the conclusion of the reinvestigation, unless there is newly discovered material evidence. Each law enforcement agency is required to develop a written application and procedures, and the agency must provide a written notification of receipt of the application as soon as reasonably possible. If a request does not meet the criteria, then the agency must provide the requestor with a letter stating that final review is not necessary. The law enforcement agency has six months from receipt of the application to complete its case file review and conclude whether or not a full reinvestigation is warranted. The agency can extend the time limit once for a maximum of six months if the agency finds that it would be unfeasible to comply with the original time limit. The Carl Vinson Institute of Government will establish and maintain a case tracking system and searchable public website with information about the applications, extensions, number of reinvestigations, and statistical information on suspects, arrests, etc. This process applies to any cold case murders that occurred on or after January 1, 1970. The bill allows a coroner or medical examiner to issue a death certificate with a non-specific cause of death.

Status: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.

HB 120 (Corbett-174th)  Bill Link
Amends the list of individuals with a suspended, revoked, or cancelled license eligible to apply for a limited driving permit by adding persons convicted of driving under the influence of a controlled substance or marijuana, and those in non-compliance with a child support order. The bill provides conditions for revocation of a limited driving permit. (Contains provisions of HB 167)

Status: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.

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. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.

HB 242 (Hitchens-161st)  
Bill Link  
Increases traffic violation under 'Joshua's Law' fines by 3%.

Status: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. SIGNED INTO LAW BY 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. SIGNED INTO LAW BY 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. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.

SB 56 (Hufstetler-52nd)  
Bill Link  
Creates a deferred compensation plan for eligible county tax commissioners. The Employees' Retirement System of Georgia will administer the plan and the state will match contributions of up to 5% of the minimum annual salary for county tax commissioners. The bill provides an update to the definition of "Internal Revenue Code" and stipulating that Section 174 of the Internal Revenue Code be included with other sections that will be treated as they were in effect before Public Law 115-97 was enacted in 2017. The bill also clarifies that on January 1, 2024, the income tax imposed will be 5.49% and can be reduced annually at a rate of 0.10% if certain conditions are met, beginning on January 1, 2025, until the rate reaches 4.99%. The bill adds O.C.G.A. 48-7-27.1 to allow for eligible itemizers, defined as eligible residents that choose to deduct certain itemized nonbusiness deductions, to receive a credit of $300. The bill amends O.C.G.A. 48-7-29.22, relating to tax credits for certain medical preceptor rotations, by extending the sunset provision from December 31, 2023 to December 31, 2026; and amends 48-7-40.24, relating to tax credits for jobs associated with large-scale projects, by including a pandemic, defined as a disease outbreak that affects a significant portion of the population and impacts the ability to conduct business, to terms qualifying as "force majeure". SB 56 allows for the imposition of sales and use tax on the retail purchase or sale of certain digital goods, products, and services to an end user. The sale must be for permanent use of the product and cannot be contingent on a reoccurring payment agreement.

Status: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.

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. PASSED HOUSE. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR.

SB 272 (Kennedy-18th)  
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. PASSED HOUSE. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR