

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

March 17, 2025

With the slight exception of my morning alarm-phone, I like timekeeping things. I realized my obsession yesterday where, upon returning from a yard sale, I plunked two more old clocks on a shelf that was littered with at least 20 others. I thought, “Geez. I must like clocks,” but then I went to the kitchen to make some flu-free scrambled eggs (“*Golden Eggs*” so-called because of both their color and their price!) and noticed I have no less than 9 egg timers, three stove-or oven-related clocks and 4 tiny hourglasses. I have a sundial in the yard, 18 wristwatches, an old [incense clock](#) (from my patchouli days), 4 stopwatches, 3 mantel clocks, a broken grandfather clock, a cuckoo clock with creepy seagulls popping out and a weird, delineated candle that supposedly burns one hour per line. Oh- and of course, a metronome. Much to my dismay, I have yet to find an [atomic clock](#), a [population clock](#) or a [pitch clock](#) to make my set complete. Regardless, none of these big or little Ben’s actually helps me with Time itself – especially after Crossover Day, when committee schedules are as wacky as [Wonderland’s White Rabbit](#) (“I’m late! I’m late! -for a very important date! No time to say hello, goodbye. I’m late! I’m late! I’m late!”). In fact, the House and Senate hearings themselves often result in old or new amendments flagging down a [DeLorean](#) or a [Tardis](#) phone booth (i.e., “vehicles”, meaning bills that have passed one chamber), to hitch a ride “back to the future” and maybe make it all the way to their destination, “Law”. Plus, 7 AM Appropriations hearings feel like I’ve been invited to a math class on a [desolate coast surrounded by melted clocks](#) (Thanks [Salvador!](#)), and waiting at the House or Senate ropes, without knowing when a lawmaker will come out to chat can totally mess up my [space-time continuum](#). Clearly, all my time pieces won’t resolve any of that, but I still like the idea of minutes and seconds lurching forward, especially as we count down the last 9 legislative days of the 2025 session whether by egg timer, sand or [4/4 time](#).

And this [timeline](#) is definitely careening towards Sine Die! So please use one of your 2025 minutes right now to act on the action alerts below, check out our summary of the House version of the 2026 budget and see what bills have grabbed a DeLorean.

As Doc says to Marty, [see you in about 30 years!](#) (or next week!)

--Polly

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Budget Information

Fiscal Year 2026 – HOUSE VERSION

Fiscal Year 2026 Governor's Recommended Budget

Total State Funds: \$37.7 billion (an increase of \$1.6 billion or 4.4% over the FY 2025 original budget)

Statewide

- **Increase funds** for the Teachers Retirement System to reflect an increase in the actuarially determined employer contribution from 20.78% to 21.91%.
- DBHDD, DCH, DHS, DPH - **Reduce funds** to reflect an adjustment in the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) from 66.04% to 66.40%.

Judicial Council

Council of Accountability Court Judges

- **\$158,750 Added** for personnel for one certification officer position.
- **\$159,375 Added** for personnel for one participant services statewide coordinator position.

Judicial Council

- **\$0 Added** for Civil Legal Services for families of indigent patients.(Governor asked for \$209,500)
- **\$100,000 Added** for grants to legal self-help centers.
- **\$400,000 Added** to annualize the juvenile court case management contract.

Dept. of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities

Adult Addictive Disease Services

- **\$1 Million Added** for alcohol use disorder peer support.

Adult Developmental Disability Services

- **\$3.5 Million Added** for 150 additional slots for the New Options Waiver (NOW) and the Comprehensive Supports Waiver Program (COMP) for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.(Governor asked for 100 slots and the House increased it)
- **\$100,000 Added** for Citizen Advocacy to expand services.
- **\$2.33 Million Added** to annualize the cost of 100 New Options Waiver (NOW) and Comprehensive Supports Waiver Program (COMP) slots for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- **\$3.24 Million Added** to annualize the operations of the Macon Crisis Stabilization and Diagnostic Center for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

- **\$26.71 Million Added** to annualize the provider rate increases recommended by the New Options Waiver (NOW) and Comprehensive Supports Waiver Program (COMP) provider rate study.

Adult Forensic Services

- **\$1.06 Million Added** to annualize the operations of a 30-bed jail-based competency restoration program pilot in Dodge County.
- **\$1.95 Million Added** to operationalize a new 17-bed forensic unit at the Central State Hospital Allen Building in Milledgeville.
- **\$1.19 Million Added** to operationalize a new 20-bed forensic unit at the Georgia Regional Hospital Skilled Nursing Facility in Atlanta.
- **\$1.62 Million Added** to operationalize a new 30-bed Project New Hope forensic step-down unit at the West Central Georgia Regional Hospital in Columbus.
- **\$185,420 Added** for a jail diversion pilot.

Adult Mental Health Services

- **\$12.53 Million Added** to annualize the provider rate increases recommended by the Community Behavioral Health Rehabilitation Services (CBHRS) provider rate study.
- **\$1.13 Million Transferred** from the DCH to the DBHDD for four licensure programs to match agency roles and responsibilities.
- **\$300,000 Added** to coordinate outreach to address homelessness in the Atlanta area.
- **\$750,000 Added** for homelessness community action teams.
- **\$1.7 Million Added** for the Georgia Housing Voucher program to support the requirements of the Department of Justice (DOJ) Settlement Agreement.
- **\$9.48 Million Added** for a North Fulton behavioral health crisis center.

Child and Adolescent Developmental Disabilities

- **\$600,000 Added** for autism centers.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

- **\$1.81 Million Added** to annualize the operations of the new Gateway child and adolescent crisis stabilization unit in Savannah.
- **\$166,667 Added** for psychiatric residential facility discharge planning.

Dept. of Community Affairs

- *Budget Direction:* Change program name from Coordinated Planning to Community Services to consolidate statewide community services under one program.
- **Recognize \$64.01 Million transferred of funds** and positions to consolidate statewide community services, align program structure with agency responsibilities, and reduce administrative burden.
- **Recognize \$162.83 Million transfer of funds** and positions to consolidate statewide housing initiatives, align program structure with agency responsibilities, and reduce administrative burden.
- *Budget Direction:* Change program name from Special Housing Initiatives to Housing Initiatives to consolidate statewide housing initiatives under one program.
- **\$2 Million Added** to expand the Accountable Housing Initiative.

- **\$4 Million Added** in one-time funds to the State Housing Trust Fund to improve homelessness programs and leverage additional federal grants. - - \$4,000,000
- **\$500,000 Added** for special housing assistance programs to address increased demand.

Dept. of Community Health

Departmental Administration

- **\$47,869 Added** for three Katie Beckett Medicaid program caseworkers and operating expenses to address increased workload.
- **\$1 Million Added** for The Department of Community Health to conduct a multi-year comprehensive study of all Medicaid provider reimbursement rates

GA Board of Dentistry

- **\$75,000 Added** for the operating expenses of new licensing software to enhance efficiency in licensure review.

GA Board of Pharmacy

- **\$75,000 Added** for the operating expenses of new licensing software to enhance efficiency in licensure review.

Health Care Access and Improvement

- **\$750,000 eliminated** in one-time start-up funding for federally qualified health centers.
- **\$500,000 Added** in one-time grant funds for two federally qualified health centers.
- **\$561,500 Added** in one-time funds for care and resource coordination and support for patients with sickle cell disease.
- **\$500,000 Added** in one-time funds for telecare and maternal health programs.
- **\$407,000 Added** in one-time funds to establish a regional vascular center.
- **\$3.5 Million Added** in one-time matching funds for behavioral and mental health services stabilization and augmentation.
- **\$100,000 Added** to the Georgia Rural Health Association (GRHA) to support the advancement of access to rural health care.
- **\$5 Million Added** in one-time funds to expand and sustain labor and delivery services in rural Georgia with necessary infrastructure in order to provide quality care.

Medicaid - Aged Blind and Disabled

- **\$29.5 Million Added** for growth in Medicaid based on projected utilization. (Governor recommended a \$41.78 Million add)
- **\$36.56 Million Added** for new high-cost drugs.
- **\$7.15 Million Added** for skilled nursing centers to reflect 2023 cost reports.
- *Budget Direction:* Replace \$5,415,201 in state general funds with hospital provider fees.
- *Budget Direction:* Replace \$6,108,816 in state general funds with nursing home provider fees.
- **\$2.8 Million Added** for emergency medical services (EMS) transport reimbursement to begin upon patient pickup.
- **\$701,766 Added** for rate increases for neonatologists and maternal fetal medicine specialists.

- \$758,431 Added to increase reimbursement rate for CIS speech therapy code 92507.
- \$864,838 Added to provide an increase for emergency medical services (EMS) reimbursement rates.
- \$3.36 Million Added to provide an increase for applied behavior analysis reimbursement rates.
- \$2.78 Million Added to increase reimbursement rates for primary care codes 99213 and 99214 (Primary care established patient visits).
- \$1.54 Million Added to increase dental code reimbursement rates.
- \$1.69 Million Added to increase durable medical equipment reimbursement rates.

Medicaid - Low Income

- \$177.12 Million Added for growth in Medicaid based on projected utilization. (Governor recommended a \$188.64 Million add)
- \$3.19 Million Added for emergency medical services (EMS) transport reimbursement to begin upon patient pickup.
- \$1.21 Million Added for rate increases for neonatologists and maternal fetal medicine specialists.
- \$1.18 Million Added to increase reimbursement rate for CIS speech therapy code 92507.
- \$986,451 Added to provide an increase for emergency medical services (EMS) reimbursement rates.
- \$2.95 Million Added to provide an increase for applied behavior analysis reimbursement rates.
- \$4.7 Million Added to increase reimbursement rates for primary care codes 99213 and 99214 (Primary care established patient visits).
- \$1.61 Million Added to increase dental code reimbursement rates.
- \$71,790 Added to increase durable medical equipment reimbursement rates.
- \$21.23 Million Added for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services requirement that the state provide 12 months of continuous eligibility for children under the age of 19 in Medicaid effective January 1, 2024.
- *Budget Direction:* Replace \$47,777,273 in state general funds with hospital provider fees.

PeachCare for Kids®

- \$1.58 Million Added for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services requirement that the state provide 12 months of continuous eligibility for children under the age of 19 in the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) effective January 1, 2024.
- \$1.78 Million Reduced for growth in Medicaid based on projected utilization. (governor had recommended a \$1.21 Million reduction.)
- \$27,641 Added to increase reimbursement rate for CIS speech therapy code 92507.
- \$106,671 Million Added to increase reimbursement rates for primary care codes 99213 and 99214 (Primary care established patient visits).
- \$44,939 Added to increase dental code reimbursement rates.
- \$25,094 Added to increase durable medical equipment reimbursement rates.

State Health Benefits Plan

- *Budget Direction:* Increase the employer health care contribution per-member per-month (PMPM) for non-certified school employees to match the PMPM for certified school employees, effective July 1, 2025, to maintain the financial stability of the plan.
- *Budget Direction:* Recognize an increase in formula funds (\$177,130,676) in DECAL, and Georgia Military College, to reflect an increase in the employer healthcare contribution per-member per-month

(PMPM) rate for certified school employees and lead and assistant teachers to \$1,885, effective July 1, 2025.

- **Budget Direction:** Utilize existing funds for a \$3 per prescription dispensing fee for independent pharmacists until HB 196 (2025 Session) takes effect January 1, 2026. (Governor had recommended "Reduce funds for interim one-time funding for a \$3 per prescription dispensing fee for independent pharmacists awaiting the outcome of an SHBP Prescription Benefit Manager (PBM) study.")
- **\$1.2 Million Added** to reimburse a pharmacy for drugs dispensed to a covered person for self-administration in an amount equal to the national average drug acquisition cost (NADAC) on the day of claim administration and a professional dispensing fee.

Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce: Graduate Medical Education

- **\$2.88 Million Added** for 150 new residency slots in primary care medicine. (Governor asked for 75 slots and House increased it)
- **\$319,654 Added** for four child and adolescent psychiatry fellowships and two gastroenterology fellowships.
- **\$150,000 Added** for year three of the maternal fetal medicine fellowship.
- **\$5 Million Added** and directions to utilize existing funds (\$2,844,122) for grants for graduate medical education programs to support new and expanding residency programs with priority given to rural sites.

Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce: Mercer School of Medicine Grant

- **\$500,000 one-time matching funds eliminated** to recognize private fundraising for scholarships for year-four students committed to practicing primary care for five years in rural Georgia.
- **\$565,204 Added** for the sixth year of the seven-year plan for Mercer School of Medicine's medical school campus in Columbus.

Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce: Physicians for Rural Areas

- **Budget Direction:** Reflect a change in the program name to Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce: Healthcare Practitioner Loan Repayment.
- **\$250,000 Transferred** for the nursing faculty loan repayment program from the Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce: Undergraduate Medical Education program to the Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce: Physicians for Rural Areas program to include all loan repayment funds under the same program.

Dept. of Corrections

Across the Agency

- **Increase funds** for a 4% salary increase for correctional officer staff in state and private prisons, education, chaplain, food service, and maintenance positions to align with statewide averages to improve recruitment and retention.
- **Increase funds** for a six month in-grade promotion step for correctional officer and CSM correctional officer 1 and 2 and to address salary compression to improve career path and retention opportunities.

Detention Centers

- **\$348,034 Added** for an 8% salary increase for behavioral health counselor positions to align with statewide averages to improve recruitment and retention. (Governor had asked for \$219,573)
- **\$1.57 Million Transferred** from State Prisons program to Detention Centers program for ongoing capital maintenance and repairs.
- **\$4.42 Million Added** to add correctional officer positions to improve staff to offender ratios and reflect increased retention.

Health

- **\$7 Million Added** for the dental health contract to support increased population.(Governor had asked for \$2.2 Million)
- **\$22.21 Million Added** for the mental health contract to support increased population.(Governor had asked for \$8.08 Million)
- **\$6.07 Million Added** for the pharmacy services contract to support increased population.
- **\$20.39 Million Added** for the physical health contract to support increased population.(Governor had asked for \$14.66 Million)
- **\$998,022 Added** for healthcare contract for McRae Women's Facility to account for additional full time physical health employees

Private Prisons

- **\$10.34 Million Added** to add 500 private prison beds at Coffee Correctional Institution and 258 private prison beds at Wheeler Correctional Institution. (Governor asked for 188 beds)

State Prisons

- **\$39.64 Million Added** for additional correctional officer positions to improve staff to offender ratios. (Governor asked for \$20.19 Million addition for 330 positions).
- **\$3.71 Million Added** for a salary increase for behavioral health counselor positions to align with statewide averages to improve recruitment and retention.(Governor asked for \$1.78 Million for an 8% salary increase.)
- **\$15 Million Added** to address critical capital maintenance and repairs.
- **\$15.59 Million Added** for additional facility maintenance personnel and regional support staff to address critical facility maintenance needs.
- **\$1.02 Million Added** for a "tiger team" to support existing GDC locking team to address repairs needed on facility locks, locking controls, and security electronics.
- **\$2.6 Million Added** for skilled craftsman "tiger teams" focused on HVAC, plumbing, electrical, and fabrication needs in facilities.
- **\$3.58 Million Added** for ongoing support of body cameras and tasers for increased facility security. (Governor asked for \$3.37 Million)
- **\$1.83 Million Added** to implement an off-site mail screening solution to inhibit contraband and ensure the safety of facility staff.
- **\$2.46 Million Added** for software licenses for additional officer tablets to improve documentation and information sharing on offender management.
- **\$176,326 Added** for the Residential Substance Abuse Treatment program contract.
- **\$760,421 Added** for Technical College System of Georgia vocational education contracts.

- **\$4.11 Million Added** to continue operating the digital forensics unit through a contract.
- **\$3.81 Million Added** for personal services for the Over Watch and Logistics (OWL) Unit and ongoing technology fees.
- **\$1.95 Million Added** for the annual operating costs of the Data Intelligence Advanced Integration system.

Transition Centers

- **\$584,022 Added** for a salary increase for behavioral health counselor positions to align with statewide averages to improve recruitment and retention. (Governor asked for \$234,278 for an 8% salary increase.)
- **\$2.71 Million Added** for the opening of 100 additional beds at Smith Transitional Center.
- **\$718,679 Transferred** from State Prisons program to Transition Centers program for ongoing capital maintenance and repairs.

Dept. of Early Care and Learning

Child Care Services

- **\$1.54 Million Added** to annualize state match for Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) reimbursement to the 60th percentile of market rates for childcare providers.
- **\$3.93 Million Added** to provide 500 additional state-funded slots in the Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program.

Pre-K Program

- **\$5.26 Million Added** for annual update of teacher training and experience.
- **\$1.21 Million Added** to reflect an increase in health insurance employer contribution per-member per-month (PMPM) rate for certified teachers at public Pre-K providers to \$1,885 effective July 1, 2025.
- **\$14.06 Million Added** for year two of a four-year phase in to reduce classroom size from 22 to 20 students to improve instructional quality.

Dept. of Education

Agricultural Education

- **\$94,626 Added** to annualize the \$2,500 salary increase in FY 2025.
- **\$100,350 Added** in formula funds to reflect an increase in health insurance employer contribution per-member per-month (PMPM) rate for certified school employees to \$1,885 effective July 1, 2025.
- **\$100,000 added** for a Young Farmer position in Bibb County.
- **\$183,509 Added** for two education specialist positions at youth camps.
- **\$215,710 Added** for camp-affiliated staff.

Business and Finance Administration

- **\$200,000 one-time funds removed** from upgrade the Capital Outlay Program Software (COPS) to integrate public Pre-K classrooms pursuant to SB 233 (2024 Session).

Central Office

- \$500,000 Added for Plasma Games

Communities in Schools

- \$1 Million in one-time funds removed from leveraging matching grant funds for program expansion.
- \$250,000 Added for affiliates

Curriculum Development

- \$2.5 Million Added for college preparatory exams based on increased utilization.

Curriculum Development-Special Project

- \$0 Added to sustain supplements for school literacy leads at all 1,343 K-3 schools. (Governor asked for \$339,799)

Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS)

- \$4.03 Million Reduced to reflect a reduction in formula earnings based on enrollment and training and experience. (Governor had reduced by \$1.85 Million and the House increased the reduction)
- \$330,000 Added to reflect an increase in the health insurance employer contribution per-member per-month (PMPM) rate for certified school employees to \$1,885 effective July 1, 2025.

Information Technology Services

- \$3 Million Added to sustain 400mbps of state-funded bandwidth for all systems through PeachNet.

Literacy Coach Initiative

- \$18.48 Million Transferred and Added for 116 RESA-based literacy coaches to improve literacy outcomes for students in grades K-5 as follows: Transfer funds from Governor's Office of Student Achievement (\$1,600,000) and Curriculum Development - Special Project (\$6,111,300), and increase funds (\$10,768,700).

Non-Quality Basic Education (Non-QBE) Formula Grants

- \$5.94 Million Added for Sparsity Grants based on enrollment data.
- \$543,000 Added for custodian supplement grants.
- \$2 Million Added for character education programming.
- NOTE: Reduce funds (\$3,027,090) and transfer funds (\$1,995,000) to the Governor's Office of Student Achievement: Literacy Initiative Coordination for a free universal reading screener pursuant to HB 538 (2023 Session).
- \$150,000 Added for feminine hygiene grants due to inflation and increased enrollment.
- \$7.5 Million Added to educators for school supplies pursuant to SB 464 (2024 Session).

Nutrition

- \$0 Reduced to maintain current funding and hold harmless for formula reduction for school nutrition given the rising price of meals. (Governor sought a \$2.96 Million reduction).
- \$6.33 Million Recognized in existing state funds to provide for the cost of breakfast and lunch for reduced-price paying students.

Preschool Disability Services

- \$3.48 Million Added based on formula earnings.
- \$793,919 Added to reflect an increase in health insurance employer contribution per-member per-month (PMPM) rate for certified school employees to \$1,885 effective July 1, 2025.

Pupil Transportation

- \$10.13 Million Added for pupil transportation formula grants to reflect updated bus counts and operating expenses.
- \$158,400 Added for required bus driver safety training.

Quality Basic Education Equalization

- \$113.14 Million Reduced for Equalization grants. (Governor had reduced by \$112.93 Million and the House further reduced)

QBE Local Five Mill Share

- \$115.17 Million Reduced to adjust funds for the Local Five Mill Share. Governor had reduced by \$115.88 Million, and the House further reduced)

Quality Basic Education Program

- \$302.41 Million Added for enrollment growth and training and experience. (Governor had added \$305.9 Million and the House reduced)
- \$605,051 Reduced for differentiated pay for newly certified math and science teachers.
- \$24.72 Million Added for the State Commission Charter School supplement. (Governor had added \$34.12 Million and House reduced it)
- \$1.83 Million Reduced for the Completion Special Schools supplement.
- \$313,627 Added for the charter system grant.
- \$172.6 Million Added to reflect an increase in health insurance employer contribution per-member per-month (PMPM) rate for certified school employees to \$1,885 effective July 1, 2025.
- \$871,982 Added to fully fund school psychologist ratio at 1:2,420 for all QBE student categories pursuant to HB 283 (2013 Session).

Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs)

- \$55,239 Added to reflect an increase in health insurance employer contribution per-member per-month (PMPM) rate for certified school employees to \$1,885 effective July 1, 2025.

School Security Grants

- \$150,000 Added for a school safety coordinator position.
- \$24.94 Million Added and budget direction to contract with the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency (GEMA/HS) for the Statewide School and Student Safety Database and for local training and development of behavioral threat assessment management teams.

State Charter School Commission Administration

- \$449,899 Added and Transferred funds of \$265,501 from the Charter Schools program to implement the provisions of HB 318 (2024 Session). (Governor had transferred the same and added \$120,850 but the House increased the add.)

State Schools

- **\$358,045 Added** for training and experience. (Governor had asked for \$135,151)

Student Support Services

- **\$19.58 Million Added** to establish student mental health support grants.
- **\$5 Million Added** to establish grants for social work services.
- **\$10 Million Added** for out-of-school care for statewide and community grantees.
- **\$28.03 Million Added** for districts for targeted support to economically disadvantaged students.

Technology/Career Education

- **\$383,444 Added** for 2 full-time and 2 part-time positions and operating costs to sustain Great Promise Partnership operations as a part of work-based learning programs for at-risk students at the Department of Education.
- **\$1.25 Million Added** to establish a high-demand equipment grant program for new and expanding career and technical education labs that support instruction for high-demand careers as identified by the State Workforce Board.
- **\$236,735 Added** to annualize the \$2,500 salary increase in FY 2025.
- **\$100,000 Added** for a government and public administration pathway.

Employees' Retirement System of Georgia

- **\$23.25 Million Added and \$26.75 Million Recognized** in existing funds for an annual payment to eligible retired members by December 1 each year. (Total Funds: \$50,000,000)

Governor's Office of Student Achievement

- **\$10,000 Added** to annualize state participation for newly established regional crisis recovery network at the Southern Regional Education Board to support student mental health in response to significant public safety or natural disaster incidents impacting schools or school systems.

Literacy Initiative Coordination

- **\$1 Million Transferred** from the Governor's Office of Student Achievement - Special Project for personal services and operating expenses for the Georgia Council on Literacy, pursuant to SB 211 (2023 Session), and support the implementation of effective literacy methods, including digital curriculum for Pre-K through 5.
- **\$2 Million Transferred** from the Non-Quality Basic Education program for a free universal reading screener pursuant to HB 538 (2023 Session).
- **\$247,000 Added** for a literacy coach coordinator position.
- **\$2.03 Million Added** to a research group for competency-based standards and evaluation for literacy coaches.

Dept. of Human Services

Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention

- **\$150,000 Added** to expand services for at-risk girls.

Child Support Services

- **\$60,899 Added** to expand participation in the Child Support Lien Network to include real property and lump sum payment matching services.
- **\$191,428 Added** to support the attainment of child support for out of state non-custodial parents.

Child Welfare Services

- **\$0 Eliminated** in matching funds for the wraparound services pilot due to the denial of federal funds by the Administration for Children and Families. (Governor recommended a \$1.5 Million elimination, but the House said No.)
- **\$125,000 Added** to expand heavy equipment operator certification program for high-risk youth.
- **\$1.72 Million Added** for Court Appointed Special Advocates to replace federal funds deemed ineligible by the Administration for Children and Families.

Federal Eligibility Benefit Services

- **\$5.76 Million Added** to annualize a \$3,000 additional salary enhancement for eligibility caseworkers.

Out-of-Home Care

- **\$19.29 Million Added** for utilization growth and increased costs of care.
- **\$400,000 Added** for essential clothing and supplies for foster youth.
- **\$500,000 Added** to place foster youth closer to their biological families.
- **\$6.14 Million Added** for a 2% provider rate increase for Child Caring Institutions, Child Placing Agencies, foster parents, and relative caregivers.
- **\$371,500 Added** for community action teams to deter child welfare involvement.
- **\$325,000 Added** to support youth aging out of foster care.

Out-of-School Care Services

- **\$2 Million Reduced** funds for out-of-school care.

Residential Child Care Licensing

- *Budget Direction:* Utilize existing funds (\$46,550) for one position to address new licensure and regulation responsibilities due to the creation of two new Child Caring Institution types in SB 377 (2024 Session) and HB 1201 (2024 Session).

Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Children Fund Commission

- **\$120,110 Reduced** to reflect FY 2024 collections of financial penalties for sex trafficking and sexual offenses pursuant to O.C.G.A. 15-21-208 and adult entertainment establishment assessments pursuant to O.C.G.A. 15-21-209

Office of the Commissioner of Insurance

- **\$58.84 Million Reduced** for the state reinsurance program and the state healthcare exchange and recognize exchange-generated user fees (Governor reduced \$50 Million and the House reduced further.)

Georgia Bureau of Investigation

- **\$390,789 Added** to establish a Strategic Threat Assessment Group responsible for addressing threats to public officials, investigating homeland security matters, and partnering with critical infrastructure partners to provide support during major events occurring in the state.
- **\$294,420 Added** to replace federal funds with state funds for three human trafficking positions.
- **\$2.15 Million Added** for one-time costs for the Columbus Gang Task Force positions.
- **\$200,000 Added** for advanced DNA testing and genetic genealogy testing for the cold case unit.
- **\$1.62 Million Added** for eight criminal intelligence analysts for Georgia Information Sharing Analysis Center (GISAC).
- **\$400,312 Added** to offset the loss of ARPA funds to continue operations at the Receiving Hope Center.
- **\$421,608 Added** for two advocate positions and ongoing maintenance of the End Human Trafficking Georgia 24/7 Hotline.

Criminal Justice Coordinating Council

- **\$8.13 Million Added** to offset the loss of VOCA funds to provide core services for victims of crimes.
- **\$750,000 Added** to implement the Georgia Motor Vehicle Crime Prevention program pursuant to HB 268 (2023 Session).

Criminal Justice Coordinating Council - Council of Accountability Court Judges

- **\$1.34 Million Added** for new and existing accountability courts to support population growth. (Governor asked for \$512,544)
- **\$155,375 Added** for one training coordinator position and for the implementation of Juvenile Treatment Courts per HB 873 (2024 Session). (Governor had asked for \$17,259 to implement juvenile treatment courts and House expanded on that ask)
- **\$153,680 Added** for new and existing juvenile treatment courts.

Dept. of Juvenile Justice

Across the Agency

- **Added funds** to provide a 4% salary increase for all juvenile correctional officer staff to improve recruitment and retention.
- **Added funds** for a 4% salary increase for education, chaplain, food service, and maintenance positions to align with statewide averages to improve recruitment and retention.
- **Added funds** for an 8% salary increase for behavioral health counselor positions to align with statewide averages to improve recruitment and retention.

Community Service

- **\$351,582 Added** for a 2% provider rate increase for Child Caring Institutions, Child Placing Agencies, foster parents, and relative caregivers.

Secure Confinement (Youth Detention Centers – YDCs)

- **\$401,330 Added** to increase rates and hours for full-time and contracted psychologist and psychiatrist positions.

Secure Confinement (Residential Youth Detention Centers – RYDCs)

- **\$798,670 Added** to increase rates and hours for full-time and contracted psychologist and psychiatrist positions.

Dept. of Law

- **\$536,928 Added** for four positions to expand the Gang Prosecution Unit to the Savannah region.
- **\$748,143 Added** to annualize six positions to expand the Human Trafficking Unit to the Macon and Augusta regions.

GA Public Defender Council

- **\$0 Added** for a Juvenile Conflict Division manager position. (Governor had asked for \$226,517 added)

Dept. of Public Health**Adolescent and Adult Health Promotion**

- **\$100,000 Transferred** to support lupus research, data collection, awareness, and education from the DCH to the DPH.
- **\$50,000 Added** for feminine hygiene products for low-income clients at community organizations.

Emergency Preparedness/Trauma System Improvement

- **\$1.2 Million Added** to the Office of Cardiac Care for grants to hospitals as cardiac complications are the leading cause of maternal mortality.
- **\$100,000 Added** mandating The Department of Public Health study the needs of regional emergency transportation and report the findings to the Office of Planning and Budget, the House Budget and Research Office, and the Senate Budget and Evaluation Office by September 1, 2025.
- **\$3.07 Million Eliminated** from the Georgia Coordinating Council.

Infant and Child Essential Health Treatment Services

- **\$437,000 Added** for the cost of mailing Low THC Oil Patient registry cards pursuant to SB 495 (2024 Session).

- **\$2.98 Million Added** to expand the 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.
- *Budget Direction:* **\$778,239 Added** plus existing funds (\$97,701) for a cardiac obstetric program to increase access to maternal fetal medicine.
- **\$700,000 Added** to support quality improvement at birthing facilities and additional funding to increase the number of birthing facilities with verified maternal and neonatal levels of care.
- **\$1.1 Million Added** for the retention and recruitment of Babies Can't Wait Service Coordinators and Special Instructors.
- **\$50,476 Added** to increase reimbursement rate for CIS speech therapy code 92507.

Infant and Child Health Promotion

- *Budget Direction:* Utilize existing funds (\$1,007,109) for newborn screening to include one additional disorder that has been approved by the Georgia Newborn Screening Advisory Committee.
- **\$843,772 Added** for a two-year pilot program to study the impact of Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy on the newborn screening panel.
- **\$250,000 Added** for Reach Out and Read Georgia to provide children with books during well-visit appointments.

Infectious Disease Control

- **\$250,000 Added** to implement the recommendations from the state viral hepatitis plan.

Dept. of Public Safety

GA Public Safety Training Center

- **\$253,202 Added** for additional training for jailers in accordance with SB 37 (2024 Session).
- **\$478,595 Added** for two training instructors and supplies for increased basic law enforcement training.

Office of Highway Safety

- **\$522,437 Added** for driver's education and training in accordance with FY 2024 Joshua's Law Collections.

University System of Georgia Board of Regents

Across the System

- **Increase funds** for the employer share of health benefits.
- In certain departments: **Increase funds** to reflect correction for FY 2025 employer share of health benefits.

Public Libraries

- **\$1.84 Million Added** to reflect an increase in health insurance employer contribution per-member per-month (PMPM) rate for certified school employees from \$1,580 to \$1,885.

- **\$372,012 Added** for the public libraries' formula based on an increase in the state population.

Teaching

- **\$169.53 Million Added** to reflect a 2.7% increase in enrollment (\$167,834,602) and a 0.5% increase in square footage (\$1,697,277).
- **\$17.75 Million Added** to reflect formula correction for FY 2025 cost-of-living adjustment.

Payments to Georgia Military College Preparatory School

- **\$304,200 Added** to reflect an increase in health insurance employer contribution per-member per-month (PMPM) rate for certified school employees to \$1,885.
- **\$254,726 Added** for enrollment, training, and experience.

Georgia Student Finance Commission

Dual Enrollment

- **\$17.44 Million Added** to meet projected need. (Governor recommended \$21.44 Million)

HERO Scholarship

- **\$50,000 Reduced** and budget direction to utilize surplus funds to meet the projected need.

HOPE Grant

- **\$17.22 Million Added** to meet projected need.

HOPE Scholarships – Private Schools

- **\$3.31 Million Added** to meet projected need.
- **\$10.15 Million Added** to increase the HOPE Scholarship Private award amount to match the Zell Private award amount in order to provide parity in HOPE Public and HOPE Private award policies.

HOPE Scholarships – Public Schools

- **\$49.91 Million Added** to meet projected need. (Governor had recommended \$60.06 Million added)

Promise Scholarships

- **\$45.65 Million Added** to fully fund the Promise Scholarship Program as established pursuant to SB 233 (2024 Session). (Governor had recommended \$141.02 Million Added.)

Technical College System of Georgia

Technical Education

- **\$33.49 Added** to reflect a 10.6% increase in enrollment (\$33,486,954) and a 0.02% decrease in square footage ((\$13,581)).

Technical Education: High-Cost Programs - Special Project

- **\$15.81 Million Added** to reflect growth in aviation, commercial truck driving, and nursing program enrollment at targeted supplemental credit hour rates.

- **\$8.47 Million Transferred** from Technical Education program to recognize all state funds budgeted to fully fund supplemental earnings for high-cost programs.

Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission – Capital Projects Fund (a few highlights)

- **\$75 Million Added** for capital projects statewide. (Governor asked for \$150 Million)

Dept. of Education

- **\$0 Added** for Capital Outlay Program – Regular for local school construction, statewide. (Governor had asked for \$146.01 Million but the House directed the state to “Recognize funding in bond package” instead.)
- **\$0 Added** for Capital Outlay Project - Low Wealth for school construction, statewide. (Governor had asked for \$14.9 Million but the House directed the state to “Recognize funding in bond package” instead.)
- **\$0 Added** for Capital Outlay Project - Additional Low Wealth for local school construction, statewide (Governor had asked for \$17.6 Million but the House directed the state to “Recognize funding in bond package” instead.)
- **\$0 Added** for Purchase vocational and agriculture education equipment, statewide. (Governor had asked for \$7.35 Million but the House directed the state to “Recognize funding in bond package” instead.)
- **\$0 Added** for Purchase school buses, statewide. (Governor had asked for \$20 Million but the House directed the state to “Recognize funding in bond package” instead.)

University System of Georgia Board of Regents

- **\$4 Million Added** for Construction of the renovation of the Harry Downs Building for Nursing and Dental Hygiene, Clayton State University, Morrow, Clayton County.
- **\$9.7 Million Added** for Construction of the renovation of the Lakeview Nursing and Dental Hygiene building, Georgia Highlands College, Rome, Floyd County.

Technical College System of Georgia

- **\$13.44 Million Added** for System-wide equipment refresh, statewide.

Dept. of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities

- **\$10 Million Added** to address Regional State Hospitals' significant capital needs according to the 2023 Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission (GSFIC) campus survey partially funded in House Bill 915 (2024 Session), statewide.

Dept. of Public Health

- **\$1.17 Million Added** for improvements and renovations to district offices and public health laboratories, statewide.

Dept. of Community Supervision

- **\$6.8 Million Added** for design and construct a new facility for the Columbus Day Reporting Center and Field Office, Columbus, Muscogee County.

Dept. of Corrections

- **\$0 Added** for design and construction of a long term, acute care unit at Johnson State Prison, Wrightsville, Johnson County. (Governor had asked for \$6.2 Million but the House directed the state to “Recognize funding in bond package” instead.)
- **\$0 Added** for additional construction at McRae State Prison, McRae-Helena, Telfair County. (Governor had asked for \$15.5 Million but the House directed the state to “Recognize funding in bond package” instead.)

Dept. of Juvenile Justice

- **\$0 Added** for additional construction funds for a 56-bed facility expansion, Columbus, Muscogee County. (Governor had asked for \$3.5 Million but the House directed the state to “Recognize funding in bond package” instead.)
- **\$0 Added** for Construction and additional design of a 80-bed facility expansion, Macon, Bibb County. (Governor had asked for \$82.7 Million but the House directed the state to “Recognize funding in bond package” instead.)
- **\$0 Added** for upgrades to safety and security systems at facilities, statewide. (Governor had asked for \$5 Million but the House directed the state to “Recognize funding in bond package” instead.)

Public Libraries

- **\$8.3 Million Added** for various initiatives for certain public libraries across the state from renovations to additions to technology grants.

GO Bonds New

- **\$32.22 Million Added** to increase the debt service for the following bonds:

Department of Education

[Bond # 1] Provide \$145,795,000 in 20-year bonds for the Capital Outlay Program - Regular for local school construction, statewide.

[Bond # 2] Provide \$14,900,000 in 20-year bonds for the Capital Outlay Program - Low Wealth for local school construction, statewide.

[Bond # 3] Provide \$17,595,000 in 20-year bonds for the Capital Outlay Program - Additional Low Wealth for local school construction, statewide.

[Bond # 4] Provide \$8,260,000 in 5-year bonds to purchase career, technical, and agricultural education equipment, statewide.

[Bond # 5] Provide \$20,000,000 in 10-year bonds to purchase school buses, statewide. -

[Bond # 6] Provide \$2,000,000 in 10-year bonds to incentivize the purchase of alternative fuel school buses.

Department of Corrections

[Bond # 7] Provide \$6,200,000 in 20-year bonds to design and construct a long term, acute care unit at Johnson State Prison, Wrightsville, Johnson County.

[Bond # 8] Provide \$15,500,000 in 20-year bonds for additional construction at McRae State Prison, McRae-Helena, Telfair County.

Department of Juvenile Justice

[Bond # 9] Provide \$3,500,000 in 20-year bonds for additional construction for a 56-bed facility expansion, Columbus, Muscogee County

[Bond # 10] Provide \$82,695,000 in 20-year bonds to design and construct an 80-bed facility expansion, Macon, Bibb County.

[Bond # 11] Provide \$5,000,000 in 5-year bonds for upgrades to safety and security systems at facilities, statewide.



Justice, Public Safety, & School Discipline

HB 123 (Werkheiser- 157th) In criminal cases involving a capital offense for which the death penalty is sought, the bill allows an accused person to file a pretrial notice of intent to raise a claim of intellectual disability. Such notice shall state that the accused has intellectual disability.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Judiciary Committee.

HB 627 (Persinger-119th) Expands crimes for which 13 through 16-year-olds may be tried as adults to include aggravated assault with a firearm (against anyone as opposed to just against a public safety officer).

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Judiciary Committee.

HB 736 (Jones-60th) Establishes policies prohibiting bullying and cyberbullying, incorporating age-appropriate progressive discipline. Alternatives to suspension or expulsion may include student and parent meetings, counseling, anger management, health counseling, community service, and in-school suspension or detention.

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill was introduced late and did not cross over.

SB 29 (Williams-25th) Requires the collection of DNA samples of individuals arrested for the commission of a serious violent felony at the time such individuals are booked or otherwise processed by a detention facility. This includes children who are under the age of 17 who have allegedly committed a serious violent felony as described in O.C.G.A. 17-10-6.1. A detention facility is defined as "any place of confinement for juvenile or adult individuals accused of, convicted of, or adjudicated for violating a law of this state or an ordinance of a political subdivision of this state."

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Public Safety & Homeland Security Committee.

SB 61 (Dolezal-27th) This bill expands the list of offenses for which youth aged 13 to 17 are automatically tried as adults, adding 23 crimes, including aggravated assault with a firearm, school-related terroristic threats, and various attempted or conspiracy charges for violent offenses like murder, rape, and armed robbery. While these cases will initially be treated in superior court, they may be transferred to juvenile court after indictment. Additionally, the bill mandates that students in grade 6 or higher must authorize the release of records for certain felony offenses, with noncompliance punishable by a fine or imprisonment. It also requires courts and child-serving agencies to notify local schools when a student is under electronic monitoring, intensive supervision, or home confinement, allowing schools to use the information for safety purposes. The bill defines and creates penalties for "terroristic threats" and "terroristic acts" against schools, with punishments ranging from a misdemeanor to felony charges with up to 40 years of imprisonment if a serious injury occurs. It also mandates annual site threat assessments of school buildings and facilities, which must be included in school safety plans submitted to the Department of Education.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. The bill will be heard in subcommittee this TUESDAY.

SB 147 (Rhett-33rd) Requires the Department of Corrections, upon request from an eligible person, provide individuals released from custody with essential documents, such as vital records, to support post-release employment and to assist in obtaining identification cards or driver's licenses.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Public Safety & Homeland Security Committee.

SB 160 (Kirkpatrick-32nd) Requires the installation of an intelligent speed assistance device upon a second conviction for stunt driving. The device will limit the vehicle's speed to a maximum of 70 miles per hour and must be installed within 10 days of issuance for a minimum of three months. The offender is responsible for installation costs. Failure to install the device will result in a misdemeanor charge.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Motor Vehicles Committee.

SB 185 (Robertson-29th) Prohibits the use of state funds or resources for sex reassignment surgeries, hormone replacement therapies, and cosmetic procedures intended to alter the appearance of primary or secondary sexual characteristics of inmates in state correctional facilities.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Public & Community Health Committee.



Child Welfare & Protection

HB 136 (Newton-127th) Expands tax credits to qualified organizations for expenses relating to wrap around services for justice involved youth and expands the wraparound services that are qualified expenditures. The bill also provides for such tax credits to be used by certain insurance companies against insurance premium tax liability.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Finance Committee.

HB 171 (Thomas-21st) Prohibits distribution of computer-generated obscene material depicting a child and provides penalties and probation for such obscenities.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Judiciary Committee.

HB 253 (Clark-100th) "Ethan's Law": Requires that any judge hearing the issue of custody for a child appoint a licensed counselor to determine the best interest of the child in any unification or reunification treatments, programs, or services with the child's parent or legal guardian. Moreover, no judge shall order a family reunification or unification that result or require the following: 1. Violation of a court order requiring that a child have no contact with his or her parent or legal guardian, 2. An overnight, out-of-state, or multi day stay, 3. A transfer of physical or legal custody of the child, 4. The use of private youth transporters or private transportation agents engaged in the use of force, the threat of force, physical obstruction, acutely distressing circumstances, or circumstances that place the safety of the child at risk; or 5. A 90 day or more no-contact period between the child and his or her parent or legal guardian.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Children & Families Committee.

HB 325 (Martinez-11th) A member of the organized militia who alleges stalking by another member may file a verified petition for a protective order under Georgia Code Section 16-5-90. Jurisdiction exists if there is a connection between the alleged stalking and the militia, with a rebuttable presumption if either party is on state active duty or in Title 32 status during the alleged conduct. The petitioner files the request through their commander, who must forward it to the Office of the State Judge Advocate within 24 hours, and the respondent's commander serves the petition. A military judge may issue a temporary ex parte order if probable cause exists, and a hearing takes place within 10 to 45 days to determine whether to grant a temporary or permanent protective order. The order applies statewide and remains in effect unless the respondent leaves the militia, though it continues during active U.S. military service; appeals follow the same process as domestic relations cases.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Judiciary Committee.

HB 433 (Ballinger-23rd) Allows the Department of Human Services to access GCIC (GA Crime Information Center) data for the purposes of employee oversight in certain circumstances.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Children & Families Committee.

HB 465 (Gilliard-162nd) Provides for the Autism Missing Person Alert System Act whereby certain entities must cooperate in the development of the alert system, with an emphasis on the search of waterways in locating missing individuals with autism spectrum disorder.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Public Safety Committee.

HB 582 (Gunter-8th) Provides for defendants to support a justification defense by offering evidence of family violence, dating violence, or child abuse committed by the alleged victim, and provides for petitions for the opportunity to present such evidence. The bill also revises provisions for the defense of coercion and to provide for the application of such defense in all criminal cases. It also provides for resentencing for certain murder convictions and provides a privilege for participation in victim centered programs and victim-offender dialogues.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Judiciary Committee.

HR 428 (Reese-140th) Creates the House Study Committee on the Affordability and Accessibility of Georgia's Legitimation Process.

STATUS: House Judiciary Committee

SB 8 (Kirkpatrick-32nd) Adds juvenile court judges to the list of judges who may issue a warrant for the arrest of any offender against the penal laws, based on probable cause either on the judge's own knowledge or on the information of others given to the judge or officer under oath.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Judiciary Juvenile Committee. The bill moves to House Rules Committee.

SB 9 (Albers-56th) Prohibits distribution of computer-generated obscene material depicting a child and provides penalties and probation for such obscenities. The bill also defines an "artificial intelligence system" as a machine-based system capable of emulating human cognitive processes such as reasoning, learning, predicting, and communicating. It applies enhanced penalties to a range of offenses, including stalking, exploitation of vulnerable individuals, fraud, election interference, and various crimes under Title 16 of Georgia law. If a defendant knowingly and intentionally uses AI in committing one of these offenses, the court must impose additional penalties: for misdemeanors, a sentence of 6 to 12 months in confinement and a fine up to \$5,000; for felonies, a minimum of two years' imprisonment and a fine of at least \$5,000. If the felony already carries a minimum sentence of two years or more, the judge must add at least one additional year to the sentence. Prosecutors must notify defendants in writing before trial if they intend to seek an AI-related sentence enhancement. The judge must also specify the enhancement at sentencing.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Technology & Infrastructure Innovation Committee.

SB 27 (Albers-56th) Establishes the offense of 'doxing' by criminalizing the malicious publication of private information online to intimidate, harass, or harm someone. A person commits the offense of aggravated doxing when such person posts another person's personally identifying information without their consent with the intent that another person engages in conduct that is likely to or does cause the person whose information is posted, or his or her close relation, to suffer death or bodily injury. Offenders face a misdemeanor for first-time offenses and a felony (1-3 years imprisonment) for serious harm, repeat offenses, or if an adult targets a minor. Victims can seek protective orders and sue for damages, including legal fees. Legal action can be filed where the communication originated, was received, or where the victim lives.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee.

SB 42 (Hatchett-50th) Eliminates ambiguity in sentencing laws for the offenses of prostitution, keeping a place of prostitution, pimping, and pandering. The rule of lenity, which now could allow for lighter sentencing, will no longer be an option for traffickers of minors.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. The bill will be heard in committee this WEDNESDAY.

SB 85 (Brass-6th) Georgia Foster Care Scholarship Act - Establishes a financial aid program to support foster youth pursuing postsecondary education. Administered by the Georgia Student Finance Authority (GSFA), the scholarship provides grants covering tuition, room, board, meal plans, and books for eligible students attending approved institutions. To qualify, students must be under 26 years old, currently or formerly in foster care, an independent living program, or an adoption program, and either enrolled or accepted into an eligible institution within three years of completing high school. The GSFA contracts with a nonprofit grant coordinating organization to ensure 100% of appropriated funds are allocated to student grants. Eligible students must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), maintain good academic standing, and comply with program regulations. The total award amount is adjusted based on other federal and state aid received. Institutions receiving funds must ensure proper certification of student eligibility and refunds for unused scholarships, with penalties for misreporting. The bill includes audits and compliance measures to prevent fraud and misrepresentation.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Higher Education Committee.

SB 98 (Cowser-46th) Revises the definition of a county conservator and county guardian to a general county conservator. Provides clarity that if one individual serves as a both conservator and county guardian in the same matter, the individual is responsible for giving both separate bonds with good security.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the Judiciary Juvenile Committee. The bill moves to House Rules Committee.

SB 100 (Robertson-29th) Andee's Law: allows individuals born in Georgia who are at least 18 years old and had a new birth certificate issued due to adoption, legitimation, or paternity determination to request a copy of their original birth certificate. The copy will be marked as unofficial and cannot be used for legal purposes. If the individual is deceased, their parent, sibling, or descendant may request the original birth certificate.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Judiciary Committee. The bill will be heard in committee this TUESDAY.

SB 110 (Anavitarte-31st) Clarifies definitions related to child neglect and independent activities under Georgia's juvenile code. Defines blatant disregard as the conscious exposure of a child to an obvious and imminent risk of harm without precautionary measures. Specifies that neglect does not include allowing a child to engage in reasonable independent activities if the child is deemed mature enough to do so safely. The bill defines "independent activity" as the activity of a child who is not under the direct supervision of a legal custodian or person acting in loco parentis and shall include, but shall not be limited to, playing indoors or outdoors alone or with other children; walking to or from school; running errands; or traveling to local commercial or recreational facilities. Additionally, it amends reckless conduct laws to ensure that allowing a child to engage in independent activities does not constitute a criminal offense unless it meets the legal definition of neglect.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Judiciary Juvenile Committee. The bill moves to House Rules Committee.

SB 245 (Hodges-3rd) Includes grandparents within the category of persons who may seek to revoke or amend an existing grandparent visitation order.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Judiciary Committee. The bill will be heard in committee this TUESDAY.

SB 259 (Brass-6th) Grants physicians the right to seek an independent medical evaluation or specialty consultation when a child is in temporary protective custody. Requires them to inform DFCS of their findings, including whether a physical examination was performed, and which medical records were reviewed. The bill also allows any parent or legal guardian of a child who is taken into temporary protective custody to have the right to obtain an independent medical evaluation or pediatric specialty consultation of such child at his or her own expense unless prohibited by court order.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Judiciary Juvenile Committee.

SR 310 (Kirkpatrick-32nd) Creates the Senate Study Committee on Additional Services and Resources for Transition Youth Age Youth in Foster Care.

STATUS: Senate Children & Families Committee

SR 393 (Jones II-22nd) Creates the Senate Study Committee on Improving Family Caregiver Services.

STATUS: Senate Hopper



Health & Behavioral Health

HB 81 (Ballard-147th) "Interstate Compact for School Psychologists"- Joins Georgia to state pathway that allows school psychologist to obtain and practice in schools in any member state. If passed, the Act would become effective once 7 states are in the compact.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. Awaits transmission to the governor for his consideration.

HB 87 (Clark-100th) Requires health insurance benefits to cover medically necessary orthotic devices and prosthetic devices for affected persons during a three-year period. Additionally, healthcare insurance beneficiaries are to be provided with at least two distinct healthcare professionals under their coverage for each issuance and renewal of their coverage. Allows health insurers to deny coverage for the replacement or repair of an orthotic or prosthetic device if the damage or loss is due to misuse, malicious damage, gross neglect, loss, or theft.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Insurance & Labor Committee.

HB 124 (Scoggins-14th) Requires the State Health Benefits Plan to cover healthcare services for pediatric autoimmune neuropsychiatric disorders associated with streptococcal infection (PANDAS) and pediatric acute onset neuropsychiatric syndrome (PANS) in accordance with nationally recognized clinical practice guidelines.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Insurance & Labor Committee

HB 144 (Newton-127th) Includes dentistry in the tax credit for medical preceptor rotations, providing \$1,000 per physician or licensed dentist and \$750 per APRN, with a total annual cap of \$6 million.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Finance Committee.

HB 154 (Richardson-125th) Designates ambulance services as essential services.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Health & Human Services Committee.

HB 196 (Kelley-16th) Amends the State Health Benefits Plan by establishing a transparent reimbursement structure for drugs dispensed for self-administration. The bill mandates that insurers reimburse pharmacies based on a transparent, index-based pricing system, such as the national average drug acquisition cost or Georgia's estimated acquisition cost, plus a professional dispensing fee. The legislation prohibits insurers from passing dispensing fees to beneficiaries through cost-sharing measures like deductibles. Additionally, it prevents insurers from circumventing these reimbursement requirements through discount programs or alternative pricing methods. Violations of these provisions would allow affected pharmacies or beneficiaries to seek legal remedies.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Insurance & Labor Committee

HB 197 (Hawkins-27th) Implements a callback telecommunications system or website in which a provider or provider's appropriately qualified designee can communicate a potential treatment plan for a patient.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Insurance & Labor Committee.

HB 227 (Dickey-134) Revised Georgia's Medical Cannabis laws. Replaces language of "Low THC oil" to "medical cannabis" and keeps consistent criminal provisions to include "hemp" or "medical cannabis." The bill expands the duties of the Georgia Access to Medical Cannabis Commission to include public awareness efforts on the potential benefits of medical cannabis for eligible patients, and specifically directs that marketing does not "include any medical claim, unless such claim is supported by reliable scientific evidence; make any false or misleading claim; or be attractive to children or otherwise directly or indirectly targeted to individuals under 21 years of age." It also removes or relaxes certain medical criteria for eligibility.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Health & Human Services Committee.

HB 291 (Taylor-173rd) Establishes the Georgia Community Health Worker Certification Committee in order to oversee qualifications and certify community health workers. The bill also establishes grounds for complaints related to the practice of certified community health workers, and implements procedures for the review, investigation, and resolution of such complaints. The bill also provides for criminal background checks and some other criteria for CHW certification.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Health & Human Services Committee.

HB 322 (Hawkins-27th) Requires applicants with a doctoral degree in dentistry from a non-accredited dental school to meet the following criteria for a teacher's or instructor's license: Hold a valid dental license from another state, country, or territory, submit a recommendation letter from the dean or director of their teaching institution to the prospective employer, have never failed the Georgia licensure examination, have never had a dental license revoked in Georgia or any other jurisdiction, maintain a current CPR certification. Furthermore, the bill authorizes the licensee to practice dentistry only while an

employee of such accredited school or college or only in connection with programs or training clinics affiliated with or endorsed by such school or college.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Higher Education Committee.

HB 352 (Seabaugh-34th) Expands Medicaid coverage for glucose monitors to include Medicaid recipients with gestational diabetes.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Health & Human Services Committee. The bill moves to Senate Rules Committee.

HB 422 (McCollum-30th) Mandates the State Health Benefits Plan to offer at least two high-deductible health plans from different insurance providers. Allows covered employees to make pre-tax contributions to their high-deductible health plans through payroll deductions. This applies to local education school boards who are further encouraged to ensure that individuals who are enrolled are able to make pretax contributions.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Insurance & Labor Committee.

HB 472 (Stephens-164th) Expands the list of Schedule 1 controlled substances.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Health & Human Services Committee. The bill moves to Senate Rules Committee.

HB 506 (Hilton-48th) Provides Medicaid coverage for tobacco cessation treatments.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Health & Human Services Committee. The bill moves to Senate Rules Committee.

HB 467 (Dempsey-13th) Adjusts criteria for teledentistry as well as requirements for insurance coverage for such.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Health & Human Services Committee.

HB 577 (Gaines-120th) "Georgia Nicotine Vapor Products Directory Act (HB 577)" - Establishes a state-managed directory of authorized nicotine vapor products, requiring all products sold in Georgia to be listed for compliance with federal and state laws. The bill grants the Commissioner of Revenue authority to certify products, enforce compliance checks, and penalize violations through fines, license revocations, and product seizures. Manufacturers must submit FDA approval documentation, and non-listed products will be banned and removed from the market. Dealers and distributors are subject to unannounced inspections, and violations incur escalating penalties. The bill mandates annual reporting on compliance and enforcement efforts and will only take effect if funding is specifically appropriated.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Regulated Industries & Utilities Committee.

HB 584 (Petrea-166th) Reassigns licensing and oversight of drug abuse treatment and education programs, narcotic treatment programs, licensed community living arrangements , and adult residential mental health programs from the Department of Community Health to the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Health & Human Services Committee. The bill moves to Senate Rules Committee.

HB 612 (Dempsey-13th) Adds the state's Commissioner of Insurance to the Behavioral Health Coordinating Council. The bill also establishes a parity compliance review panel under the BHCC to which health care providers will be required to report suspected mental health parity violations.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Insurance & Labor Committee.

HB 677 (Dempsey-13th) Establishes protocols for the placement of children who remain in hospitals or psychiatric residential treatment facilities after being medically cleared for discharge because their parent, guardian, or legal custodian fails to resume custody within 48 hours. The bill requires the formation of a task force, including a care coordinator, a licensed psychiatrist, and representatives from the Department of Human Services, the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, the child's health insurer, and Medicaid care management organizations—to ensure the child is placed in an appropriate environment without delay.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Children & Families Committee.

HB 751 (Campbell-35th) Authorizes the Department of Community Health to submit a Section 1115 waiver request to the United States Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to include childcare and caregiving as qualifying activities.

STATUS: House Public & Community Health Committee

HB 757 (Kelley-16th) Introduces regulations for kratom products in Georgia. The bill defines an "approved kratom delivery form" as a kratom product registered under Code Section 16-13-123 and assigns oversight authority to the Department of Agriculture. The bill requires kratom processors to register their products annually with the department, pay a fee covering administrative costs, and submit a certificate of analysis from an independent third-party lab. Processors must also provide sworn certification that their products are safe for consumption, manufactured in FDA-registered facilities, free from dangerous or synthetic substances, not manipulated to increase potency, and not made in a way that appeals to children. Products with the same ingredients and delivery form but different packaging can be registered together. By January 1, 2026, the department must maintain an online registry of approved kratom products available for retailers to verify before selling to consumers.

STATUS: House Agriculture & Consumer Affairs Committee

HB 795 (Campbell-35th) Introduces consumer protections against aggressive medical debt collection practices by large healthcare facilities and medical debt collectors. It requires facilities to inform uninsured patients about medical assistance programs and prohibits charging interest or late fees on medical debt. Patients with debts over \$500 must be offered payment plans, capping monthly payments at 5% of their gross monthly income. The bill bans extraordinary collection actions such as wage garnishment, bank account seizures, property liens, and lawsuits against patients while also restricting the sale of medical debt unless the buyer agrees to fair collection practices. Spouses cannot be held liable for a partner's medical or nursing home debt unless they consent, while parents remain responsible for the medical debts of minors under 18. Additionally, overpayments by patients qualifying for financial aid must be refunded within 60 days. The bill delays extraordinary collection actions for 120 days after the first bill and prohibits reporting medical debt to credit agencies for at least one year after billing or three months after a payment.

STATUS: House Agriculture & Consumer Affairs Committee

HR 8 (Schofield-63rd) Creates the "State Workgroup to Increase Chronic Disease Information and Screening in Communities of Color."

STATUS: House Public & Community Health Committee

HR 72 (Hawkins-27th) Creates a House Study Committee on Cancer Care Access.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Health Committee. The bill moves to House Rules Committee.

HR 304 (Au-50th) Creates a House Study Committee on the Cost and Effects of Smoking.

STATUS: House Public & Community Health Committee

HR 368 (Sainz-180th) Creates the Joint Study Committee on Intoxicating Cannabinoids in Consumable Hemp Products.

STATUS: House Motor Vehicles Committee. The bill will be heard in committee this WEDNESDAY.

HR 397 (Cooper-45th) Creates the House Study Committee on Healthcare Quality and Reporting.

STATUS: House Health Committee.

HR 512 (Hagan-156th) Creates a House Study Committee on the Addiction Epidemic and Solutions for Recovery.

STATUS: House Health Committee

HR 592 (Newton-127th) Creates the House Study Committee on Noncompete Clauses in Physician Contracts.

STATUS: House Hopper

SB 5 (Kirkpatrick-32nd) Provides that each insurer that utilizes prior authorization requirements shall implement and maintain a program that allows for the selective application of reductions in prior authorization requirements based on the stratification of healthcare providers performance and adherence to evidence-based medicine. Such program shall promote quality, affordable healthcare and reduce unnecessary administrative burdens for both the insurer and the healthcare provider.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Insurance Committee. The bill moves to House Rules Committee.

SB 30 (Watson-1st) Prohibits the prescription or administration of puberty-blocking medication to a minor if such procedure or treatment is performed, prescribed, or administered for the purpose of attempting to alter the appearance of or affirm such minor's perception of his or her sex if such appearance or perception is inconsistent with such minor's sex.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Public & Community Health Committee.

SB 39 (Tillery-19th) Prohibits coverage of expenses for gender-affirming care under the State Health Benefit Plan or with any state funds and prohibits state healthcare facilities and healthcare providers employed by the state from providing gender-affirming care. Exceptions are made for medically necessary treatments unrelated to gender dysphoria, disorders of sex development, partial androgen insensitivity syndrome, and similar conditions permitted under the State Health Benefit Plan as of January 1, 2026.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Health Committee.

SB 72 (Brass-6th) Creates a pathway for patients who are terminally ill to be considered for individualized investigational treatment by providing written informed consent. Provides that medical insurance is not required for related treatments and prohibits sanctions against physicians or manufacturers for any harm done to such patients.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Health Committee. The bill will be heard in committee this WEDNESDAY.

SB 79 (Goodman-8th) Revises the threshold amounts of fentanyl and related substances required to constitute offenses such as possession, sale, distribution, and manufacturing. It also increases penalties for these offenses and amends sentencing provisions for trafficking in fentanyl and other controlled substances. Additionally, bond will not be granted for individuals charged with trafficking any Schedule II controlled substances.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee.

SB 91 (Tillery-19th) Prohibits the Board of Community Health from entering into, executing, or renewing a contract or contracts with any pharmacy benefits manager that owns or has an ownership interest in any retail pharmacy or any legal entity that contracts with or uses such pharmacy benefits manager.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Health Committee. The bill will be heard in committee this WEDNESDAY.

SB 130 (Hodges-3rd) Expands the definition of eligible loan recipient hospitals to include teaching hospitals that contract with the state to offer residency or fellowship programs accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) and medical facilities with a certification number for Medicare and Georgia Medicaid services. Additionally, requires that residents or fellowship physicians receiving loans under this program must be U.S. citizens.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Health Committee. The bill will be heard in committee this WEDNESDAY.

SB 131 (Hodges-3rd) Creates the Georgia Health Care Professionals Data System to collect and disseminate non-identifying descriptive data on licensed healthcare professionals in the state. The data provided by the state licensing boards shall include the healthcare professionals' age, race, gender, ethnicity, location of practice, and license type.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Regulated Industries Committee. The bill will be heard in committee this TUESDAY.

SB 140 (Dolezal-27th) Permits doctors of optometry to dispense and sell pharmaceutical agents to patients.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Health Committee. The bill will be heard in committee this WEDNESDAY.

SB 162 (Hufstetler-52nd) Requires the Georgia Composite Medical Board to implement a data management software system to automate the credentialing process of physicians, advanced practice registered nurses, licensed physician assistants, and anesthesiologist assistants by no later than January 1, 2026. The bill was amended by the House to add language from HB 717, which requires the Georgia Composite Medical Board to establish rules and regulations for the administration of psychedelic-assisted treatment and therapy in clinics. This will apply to any physician, anesthesia assistant, or certified registered nurse anesthetist administering psychedelic-assisted treatment and therapy in a clinic. Administration of psychedelic-assisted treatment and therapy in a clinic shall only be performed by a physician licensed in this state with advanced airway management training, a certified registered nurse anesthetist licensed in this state under the direction and responsibility of a duly licensed physician, or an anesthesia assistant licensed in this state under the direct supervision of a duly licensed physician. A review of the prescription drug monitoring program database shall be completed for each patient and documented in the patient's medical record before the administration of any psychedelic-assisted treatment and therapy.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Public & Community Health Committee. The bill moves to House Rules Committee.

SB 195 (Hufstetler-52nd) Allows pharmacists to dispense a 30- to 60-day supply of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) or administer a long-term injectable PrEP dose. It also permits pharmacists to distribute a 28-day supply of post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) under CDC guidelines for eligible patients, provided they notify the patient's primary care doctor. No prescription from a licensed practitioner is required if the pharmacist completes a Georgia State Board of Pharmacy training program covering pharmacology, contraindicated medications, financial assistance programs, and relevant federal CDC guidelines on PrEP and PEP.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Health Committee. The bill will be heard in committee this WEDNESDAY.

SB 220 (Brass-6th) Revised Georgia's Medical Cannabis laws. Replaces language of "Low THC oil" to "medical cannabis" and keeps consistent criminal provisions to include "hemp" or "medical cannabis." The bill expands the duties of the Georgia Access to Medical Cannabis Commission to include public awareness efforts on the potential benefits of medical cannabis for eligible patients or healthcare institution. It also removes the requirement that qualifying medical conditions must be severe or in the end stage to receive a registration card. Additionally, individuals with a valid registration card may lawfully possess or purchase up to 20 ounces of medical cannabis, provided it is labeled by the manufacturer and contained in its original bottle.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Regulated Industries Committee. The bill will be heard in committee this TUESDAY.

SB 233 (Jones II-22nd) Extends the Behavioral Health Reform and Innovation Commission until December 31, 2026 and officially changes some of the subcommittees, in particular, replacing subcommittees as follows: Involuntary Commitment replaced by Addictive Diseases, and Workforce and System Development with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Public & Community Health Committee.

SR 311 (Robertson-29th) Creates the Senate Study Committee on Recovery Residences.

STATUS: Senate Health & Human Services Committee

SR 342 (Strickland-42nd) Creates the Senate Study Committee on Certified Peer Specialist & Addiction Recovery Programs.

STATUS: Senate Health & Human Services Committee

SR 344 (Orrock-36th) Creates the Senate Study Committee on a Single-payer Healthcare Program.

STATUS: Senate Health & Human Services Committee



Maternal & Infant Care

HB 89 (Cooper-45th) Amends the duties of the Maternal Mortality Review Committee to include review of psychiatric or other clinical records provided by healthcare facilities and pharmacies. Additionally, this bill establishes the "Regional Perinatal Center Advisory Committee" which shall advise the Commissioner of Public Health on related perinatal centers and adequacy of the regional perinatal system. The bill also sets provisions for the consideration of any hospital wishing to be designated as a regional perinatal center and allows for the authorization of release of a copy of the record of a deceased patient or deceased former patient to the Maternal Mortality Review Committee.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Health & Human Services Committee. The bill will be on the Senate floor for a vote this TUESDAY.

HB 94 (Lumsden-12th) Requires health insurance benefits to cover standard fertility preservation services when medically necessary treatments such as radiation therapy, and chemotherapy have potentially infertility side effects.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Insurance & Labor Committee

HB 329 (Hilton-48th) Allows certified nurse practitioners and physician assistants to administer or perform artificial insemination if delegated and authorized by a physician or surgeon. Additionally, if both spouses provide written consent authorizing the procedure, the certified nurse practitioner or physician assistant is relieved of civil liability.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Health & Human Services Committee. The bill moves to Senate Rules Committee.

HB 428 (Franklin-160th) Grants the right to access in vitro fertilization.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Health & Human Services Committee.

HB 471 (Cheokas-151st) Requires licensed general hospitals and birthing center make available a water safety education video to parents or guardianship of newborn infants within 24 hours of birth.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Health & Human Services Committee.

HB 520 (Mathiak-82nd) Provides for the licensure and regulation of midwives, with renewals every two years. Establishes an advisory board for Licensed Midwives and mandates healthcare coverage for midwifery services under health insurance plans, including Medicaid.

STATUS: DID NOT CROSSOVER but had a hearing in House Health in committee nonetheless.

HB 593 (Newton-127th) Creates the House Study Committee on Maternal, Prenatal, and Pediatric Care Access and Funding.

STATUS: House Hopper

SB 101 (Robertson-29th) Revises current statute to include newborn screenings for Duchenne muscular dystrophy in the list of prevention of serious illness, severe physical or developmental disability, and death caused by inherited genes.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Public & Community Health Committee.



Early Childhood Education & Out-of-School Time

HB 175 (Jones-25th) Revise the provisions to require comprehensive background checks for early care and education programs and Head Start programs. Further, it requires all early care and similar programs to provide documentation of each background check on personnel or risk revocation of licensure.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Children & Families Committee. The bill moves to Senate Rules Committee.

HR 527 (Hilton-48th) Recognizes October 6-10, 2025, as Georgia Pre-K Week.

STATUS: READ AND ADOPTED

SB 89 (Strickland-42nd) Increases the amount of a tax credit based on the federal tax credit for certain child and dependent care expenses to 40 percent of such federal tax credit, and creates a state child tax credit in the amount of \$250 per child for qualifying filers. The bill also expands the existing tax credit for employers providing child care by decreasing the number of children who use the facility that are required to be children of employees from 95% to 75% and by increasing the amount of the credit.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Ways & Means Committee.

SR 369 (Payne-54th) Recognizes October 6-10, 2025, as Georgia Pre-K Week.

STATUS: READ AND ADOPTED



K-12 Education

HB 37 (Leverett-123rd) Requires each school system to provide a notice of whether: 1. Social Security taxes will be withheld from the employee's pay, 2. The employee is eligible to be included in a plan with coverage for the benefits of Title II and, 3. if the employee is eligible to be included in one or more plans. This applies to new, current, and nearly new employees of local school systems.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Education and Youth Committee.

HB 81 (Ballard-147th) "Interstate Compact for School Psychologists"- Joins Georgia to state pathway that allows school psychologist to obtain and practice in schools in any member state. If passed, the Act would become effective once 7 states are in the compact.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. Awaits transmission to the governor for his consideration.

HB 105 (Wade-9th) Increases payment of indemnification for public school personnel in the event of death or disability from \$75,000 to \$150,000.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Education and Youth Committee. The bill moves to Senate Rules Committee.

HB 127 (Cox-28th) Increases the number of accumulated sick leave days teachers and other school personnel may take each school year for personal or professional reasons from three days to five days.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Education and Youth Committee.

HB 192 (Gambill-15th) Revises from a graduation plan to an individual college and career plan for students and now includes grades 6–12. Requires the State Workforce Development Board to create a High-Demand Career List, which must be shared with the State Board of Education to guide the implementation of these plans. QBE grants must align with the High-Demand Career List, and the career plans will incorporate Georgia MATCH and Gafutures accounts.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Higher Education Committee.

HB 200 (Bazemore-69th) Establishes a three-year pilot immersive writing program for public school students for 2nd to 5th grade to improve literacy skills. Provides playground construction requirements for new elementary school being constructed after July 1, 2027 which must include components of a communication board, one learning American Sign Language (ASL) alphabet panel or one learning Braille alphabet panel.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Education and Youth Committee.

HB 217 (Hong-103rd) Extends the Dual Achievement Program (a dual enrollment pilot program with the Technical System of Georgia), for five more years. Credits for unemancipated minors 16-18 who participate in the program will also count toward their resident high school's graduation rate and process. The bill requires an agreement between TCSG and a local school system, and students will be able to earn a high school diploma and a TCSG certificate simultaneously.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Higher Education Committee.

HB 229 (Neal-79th) Exempts materials used in the construction of capital outlay projects for educational purposes from local sale or use taxes approved and funded through a constitutionally authorized education special purpose local option sales tax (ESPLOST). Effective date is July 1st, 2025 to December 31st, 2033. This exemption only applies to projects for local school systems that have in effect certain homestead exemptions from property taxation.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Finance Committee.

HB 235 (Townsend-179th) Allows public school teachers, public school employees, and postsecondary employees to receive leaves of absence, without loss of pay or use of sick leave for not more than seven days for bone marrow donation, and not more than 30 days for the purpose of organ donation. Such notice must be given to the employer no less than seven days prior to any leave of absence scheduled.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Education and Youth Committee. The bill moves to Senate Rules Committee.

HB 267 (Bonner-73rd) "Riley Gaines Act" - Defines male and female sports and who may participate in those sports, allows for some co-ed sports. The bill also provides for separate restroom and changing areas for males and females in schools, for sleeping arrangements on school trips to be made according to sex with exceptions for family members; requires any collector of vital statistics throughout this state to identify each individual as either male or female and replaces the term "gender" throughout the Code with "sex". Applies to public K-12 schools, interscholastic athletics, and postsecondary institutions. The bill was amended in an attempt to ensure enforceability of current Georgia "Hate Crimes" Law.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Judiciary Committee.

HB 268 (Persinger-119th) Ensures children in state custody can enroll in local schools and receive appropriate education, mandates grants for school-based behavioral health coordinators, and authorizes Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESAs) to mediate student records disputes. The bill also strengthens data privacy laws by clarifying custodial definitions and requiring the state's Chief Privacy Officer to issue guidance on student information sharing. It accelerates student records transfer, making critical records (such as disciplinary history and threat assessments) available to new schools and requiring rapid parental access. Additionally, the bill mandates annual training for staff and students on suicide and violence prevention, establishes anonymous reporting systems, and requires student-led violence prevention clubs. It also creates a formal behavioral threat assessment system, requiring schools to develop structured processes for identifying and managing potential threats, with state oversight. The legislation enhances coordination between schools and law enforcement, requiring police to notify schools about student threats and encounters. A new statewide School Safety Database (S3) will track behavioral threats and ensure timely interventions, with strict data governance rules. Other provisions require all schools to maintain locked doors for security, adopt progressive discipline plans for students who make threats, and implement family reunification plans for emergencies. (For a more thorough summary, click here. https://024d2608-0225-4a65-9e75-25d868da6eb4.usrfiles.com/ugd/024d26_31131a77339448b6a0ea5baf73cbb01a.docx)

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Judiciary Committee.

HB 307 (Ballard-147th) Clarifies that the three-cueing model is not the primary method for literacy instruction or considered high-quality material, though it may be used in supplemental resources. It revises dyslexia definitions, repeals a Reading Recovery provision, and establishes a three-year review cycle for state-approved literacy screeners. The bill requires the Georgia Department of Education to publish an annual dyslexia handbook and provide teacher training on the science of reading. The bill also extends the deadline for districts to create and implement plans for removing devices from classrooms, with plans due by Jan. 1, 2026, and implementation by July 1, 2026. It adds the Georgia Coach Coordination Council within the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA), which will employ a coordinator to guide literacy coaching efforts throughout the state.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Education and Youth Committee.

HB 328 (Carpenter-4th) Increases the annual aggregate limit for tax credits available for donations to student scholarship organizations from \$140 million to \$200 million per year. Allows for the State Revenue Commissioner to approve, deny, or prorate additional requested aggregate amounts of tax credits that have not been reached by a qualified scholarship organization.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Finance Committee.

HB 340 (Hilton-48th) Distraction-Free Education Act - Forbids public school students in kindergarten through 8th grade from using personal electronic devices during the school day unless otherwise protected by Individual Education Plan or medical plan.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Children & Families Committee.

HB 371 (Corbett-174th) Increases the State Board of Education's maximum authorization of capital outlay funding of QBE from \$300 million to \$347 million annually starting in fiscal year 2027.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Education and Youth Committee.

HB 451 (Cannon-172nd) Permits local school boards to offer hunting safety courses, the curriculum of which shall be based on the hunter education courses offered by the Department of Natural Resources, as an elective for grades six through twelve beginning in the 2026-2027 school year.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Education and Youth Committee.

HB 736 (Jones-60th) Establishes policies prohibiting bullying and cyberbullying, incorporating age-appropriate progressive discipline. Alternatives to suspension or expulsion may include student and parent meetings, counseling, anger management, health counseling, community service, and in-school suspension or detention.

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill was introduced late and did not cross over.

HB 740 (Scott-76th) Implements grade promotional standards for students in kindergarten, grade one, and two; mandates that students will not be promoted to the following grade if promotional standards for grade readiness, as set by the Office of Student Achievement, are not met.

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill was introduced late and did not cross over.

SB 1 (Dolezal-27th) "Fair and Safe Athletic Opportunities Act"- Establishes regulations requiring that interscholastic sports competitions be categorized based on the student-athlete's sex assigned at birth. Sports are designated as male, female, or coed, depending on the student-athletes actively participating in interscholastic competitions. Provides guidelines and restrictions for reasonable accommodations for student-athletes, including access to single-occupancy restrooms, changing areas, or sleeping quarters as needed. Extends the right to appeal decisions made by a covered entity to the superior court of the county where the local school is located for any student aggrieved by such decisions. The bill states that judgements on a student's ability to play will not be based on "visual inspection of such student's external sex organs." Additionally, the bill applies to local school systems, public schools, and participating private schools, as well as postsecondary schools.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to the House Education Committee.

SB 4 (Dolezal-27th) Eliminates the word "micromanage" in state statute, provides for public complaints with the Georgia Professional Standards Commission by residents 18 or older who allege ethics code violations by members of local boards of education. The bill also eliminates required school board training beyond the 15 hours when first elected and for those on the high-risk audit list and prescribes required and prohibited training programs topics and provides for a sanction for school board trainers who do not comply. Training cannot encourage lobbying of the legislature and cannot include statements, recommendations, or suggestions "that are for or against current, pending, past, or future legislation affecting public schools or local school systems."

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Education Committee.

SB 17 (Anavitarte-31st) Ricky and Alyssa's Law- Requires local school systems to implement a mobile panic alert system capable of connecting directly to emergency services and first responders. It states that each local school system may implement additional strategies or systems to ensure real-time coordination between multiple first responder agencies in the event of a school security emergency, but that no local school system shall be required to procure or implement new or additional capabilities if, as of July 1, 2026, the system has a functioning mobile panic alert system in place with capabilities that meet the requirements of this legislation. The bill also authorizes the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency to adopt rules and regulations for the requirements for school mapping data.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Education Committee.

SB 44 (Watson-11th) Reduces the minimum required millage rate from 14 mills to 10 mills for a school system to qualify for equalization grants.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Education Committee.

SB 63 (Dixon-45th) Requires each local school system that offers the PSAT/NMSQT, SAT, PreACT, or ACT or an advanced placement exam to students enrolled in such local school system post the exams on their school system websites and make them free of charge for home school students who reside in that local school system.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Education Committee.

SB 82 (Dixon-45th) Allows local boards of education to reconsider the denial of local charter school petitions and requires the Office of Charter School Compliance to prepare guidelines for local boards of education for the evaluation of charter school petitions.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Education Committee.

SB 93 (Kemp-38th) Prohibit the three-cueing system from inclusion in high-quality instructional materials or structured literacy with the exception of expressed agreement by a parent for a student's Individualized Education Program.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Education Committee.

SB 123 (Kennedy-18th) Prevents students from being expelled solely for absenteeism. Each local school system must establish policies to identify and support chronically absent students, including attendance review teams and intervention plans for students and their parents or guardians. School systems with a chronic absenteeism rate of 10% or higher must create a district-level attendance review team, while schools with a 15% or higher rate must establish their own school-level attendance review teams. These teams must meet at least monthly, review individual student cases, and develop intervention plans. They may include administrators, counselors, social workers, teachers, and parents to ensure effective support for students.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Education Committee.

SB 124 (Still-48th) Mandates that the School Superintendent and the Department of Education take all necessary steps to implement federal agency guidance. Additionally, students with a parent on active military duty in the state qualify for a Promise Scholarship until they return to public school, graduate, turn 20, or, for special education students, turn 21. Mandates that within 15 calendar days of receiving a guidance document from a federal agency which the State School Superintendent or the State Board of Education deems relevant and applicable to the duties, responsibilities, or business of the Department of Education, the Department of Education shall publish such guidance document on a dedicated web page.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Education Committee.

SB 126 (Dixon-45th) Lowers the age of eligibility from 18 to 16 for certain students to be enrolled in a completion special school.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Education Committee.

SB 148 (Hatchett-50th) Directs the Department of Education to establish a pilot program at select elementary and secondary school properties to assess implementation strategies and design standards for outdoor learning spaces. The bill also includes language replicated in HB 147 and SB 247 which increases the number of accumulated sick leave days teachers and other school personnel may take each school year for personal or professional reasons from three days to five days.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Education Committee.

SB 152 (Dolezal-27th) Allows biological or adopted children of individuals who have been foster parents in the last ten years to qualify for Promise Scholarship funds regardless of their school attendance zones. Foster children are not eligible.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Education Committee.

SB 179 (Dixon-45th) Requires schools to transfer academic and disciplinary records of transferring students within 10 days by a school superintendent or school principal and mandates written reports to school officials and parents regarding law enforcement encounters with students. Parents would have access to student records within five days. It requires parents to disclose felony charges of a student to the school. Parents who do not disclose felonies or disciplinary issues may be charged. The bill introduces evidence-based suicide awareness, prevention training, and youth violence prevention programs, along with student violence prevention clubs and an anonymous statewide reporting system for potential threats. It also establishes criminal penalties for making terroristic threats or committing violent acts on school property, including felony charges for serious offenses. The legislation provides guidelines for the surrender and return of firearms in relation to school threats and outlines responsibilities for state agencies in implementing these provisions.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Education Committee.

SB 236 (Wicks-34th) Allows students whose parents or guardians are on active duty to be eligible for enrollment in the public school of the attendance zone in which they physically reside and to use their permanent change of station military orders in place of a lease or proof of residency. Permits for high school junior and seniors to remain enrolled in his or her current school placement until graduation despite any changes in physical residency.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Education Committee.

SB 252 (Halpern-39th) Allows municipalities to lease out, grant easements over, or convey certain property to an independent school system operating in such municipality for a valuable consideration. The bill states that if such property is conveyed, the governing authority of such municipality shall subsequently replace such property with one or more properties which are determined by such governing authority to be, in the aggregate, of substantially equivalent benefit to the citizens of such municipality.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Intergovernmental Coordination Committee.

SR 217 (Kennedy-18th) Creates a Senate Study Committee on Combating Chronic Absenteeism in Schools.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Education & Youth Committee. The bill moves to Senate Rules Committee.

SR 301 (Davenport-17th) Creates the Senate Rosenwald School Study Committee.

STATUS: Senate Education & Youth Committee



Higher Education

HB 38 (Martin-49th) Alters the definition of an "eligible student" for a need-based financial aid program to include a person who has also completed 70% of the credit requirements for a four-year program instead of 80%, and includes students who have completed 45% of the credit requirements for a two-year program.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Higher Education Committee. The bill moves to Senate Rules Committee.

HB 56 (Petrea-166th) Expands postsecondary tuition grants to include spouses of law enforcement officers, firefighters, prison guards, emergency medical technician, or highway emergency response operators. The bill also provides for postsecondary tuition grants for a spouse and children of a public school employee killed or permanently disabled in the line of duty. The bill limits both types of grants to \$18,000 per academic year (lifetime maximum of \$72,000) at approved schools.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Higher Education Committee.

HB 150 (Fleming-114th) Requires the university system to produce quarterly reports related to funding from the People's Republic of China or any entity or official of the People's Republic of China or the Chinese Communist Party.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Higher Education Committee.

SB 149 (Hickman-4th) Revises the eligibility criteria for private colleges and universities, specifying that institutions in operation on or before January 1, 2021, qualify for tuition equalization grants.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Higher Education Committee.

SB 154 (Hatchett-50th) Revises or removes references to the United States Department of Education from the Official Code of Georgia Annotated and replaces a reference to student aid reports with FAFSA submission summary instead.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Education Committee.

SB 180 (Dixon-45th) Revises High Demand Apprenticeship Program to provide opportunities for apprenticeship sponsors to enter into apprenticeship program contracts with the State Board of the Technical College System of Georgia.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Higher Education Committee.

SB 193 (Brass-6th) Establishes the Adult Workforce High School Diploma Program which allows eligible adults, 21 to 40 years of age, without a high school diploma to enroll in approved programs to earn a diploma. Third party providers are eligible for funding on the condition that graduation rates meet or exceed 50% and the cost per graduate must not exceed \$7,500 and that funding is based on student milestones.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Higher Education Committee.

SB 326 (Davenport-17th) Establishes a Support Service Provider Program to assist blind and deaf-blind individuals in accessing employment and higher education by providing, arranging, and funding support services. The program aims to reduce workforce and education barriers, enhance economic independence, and promote social inclusion through real-time assistance. It creates a Support Service Provider Program Advisory Committee composed of advocacy groups, service providers, policymakers, and individuals with lived experience to oversee implementation, provide guidance, and ensure effective service delivery. The program also contracts with qualified nonprofits and independent providers to deliver these services.

STATUS: Senate Health & Human Services Committee. The bill was introduced late and did not cross over.



Environmental Safety

HB 79 (Newton-127th) Provides a tax credit for firearm safe handling instructional courses and firearm secure storage devices of up to \$300. This tax credit must be pre-approved and can only be applied once in a taxpayer's lifetime. The aggregate limit of tax credits is capped at \$10 million per year.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Finance Committee.

HB 225 (Washburn-144th) Requires the removal of speeding radar devices in school zones and repeals the enforcement of automated traffic safety devices in those areas, effective July 1, 2026.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Public Safety Committee.

HB 651 (Powell-33rd) Requires the installation of automatic traffic safety enforcement devices within 500 feet of any warning sign announcing a school zone speed limit reduction. Violations may be enforced using recorded images for drivers exceeding the speed limit by more than 10 miles per hour. Enforcement applies one hour before and after a school's official start time and one hour before and after its dismissal time.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Public Safety Committee.

SB 47 (Anavitarte-31st) Exempts sales taxes for eleven days each year on firearms, ammunition, gun safes, and related accessories, starting on the second Friday of October with a sunset date of July 1st, 2030.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Ways & Means Committee.

SB 144 (Watson-11th) Clarifies that a manufacturer cannot be held liable for failing to warn consumers of health risks of pesticides above those required by the United States Environmental Protection Agency. The bill specifically states that any pesticide registered with the Commissioner or the Environmental Protection Agency that displays a label approved by the EPA shall be deemed a sufficient warning label in this state.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. The bill awaits transmission to the governor for his consideration.



Shelter & Nutrition

HB 14 (Carpenter-4th) Designates cornbread is as the official Georgia state bread.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Economic Development & Tourism Committee.

HB 233 (Townsend-179th) Designates Brunswick stew as the official Georgia state stew.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Economic Development & Tourism Committee.

HB 399 (Oliver-84th) Requires any landlord that is not a resident of this state that owns or operates 25 or more single-family or duplex residential rental properties in GA to shall a licensed broker (that may or may not reside within this state) and at least one person to be located within this state, who shall be responsible for receiving, coordinating, managing, and responding to communications from tenants of such landlord related to maintenance and other issues related to such properties.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Economic Development & Tourism Committee.

HR 191 (Olaleye-59th) Creates a House Study Committee on the Use of Local Fees to Support Affordable Housing.

STATUS: House Special Rules Committee

HR 207 (Bell-75th) Creates of a House Study Committee on the Eradication of Homelessness.

STATUS: House Special Rules Committee

SB 170 (Jackson-41st) Establishes the Georgia Interagency Council for Homelessness to ensure a coordinated statewide approach to addressing homelessness.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Governmental Affairs Committee.



Miscellaneous

HB 34 (Washburn-144th) The Secretary of State shall create a professional licensing board tracking solution that will track the compliance of all licenses and continuing education requirements for license renewal beginning on January 1st, 2026. Additionally, the bill provides that a professional licensing board shall not renew a license until the applicant has complied with all applicable continuing education requirements as verified using the continuing education tracking solution, with some exceptions.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Regulated Industries & Utilities Committee. The bill moves to Senate Rules Committee.

HB 111 (Hong-103rd) Reduces the state income tax rate from 5.39% to 5.19% until January 1, 2026, upon which such rate shall be reduced by 0.10% annually.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Finance Committee. The bill moves to Senate Rules Committee.

HB 112 (McDonald III-26th) Provides a one-time tax credit to individuals who filed on time tax returns for 2023 and 2024.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Finance Committee. The bill moves to Senate Rules Committee.

HB 147 (Thomas-21st) Requires Georgia Technology Authority an annual inventory of artificial intelligence usage by state agencies.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Science & Technology Committee.

HB 161 (Crowe-118th) Permits Georgia Bureau of Investigation to issue electronic subpoenas for cyber enabled threats with the exception of disclosing ongoing investigations. Revises the definition of domestic terrorism to include committed or attempted felonies intended to intimidate civilians or political entities, coerce state policy, or influence government actions through destruction, assassination, or kidnapping. Establishes new penalties including life imprisonment or death for cases of fatalities.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill moves to Senate Rules Committee.

HB 177 (Cooper-45th) Provides protection for household pets in both family violence and dating violence protective orders.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Judiciary Committee.

HB 181 (Ehrhart-36th) Creates the issuance of a "Certificate of Foreign Birth" by the state registrar in which the child must have automatically acquired U.S. citizenship following a foreign adoption and possess a Certificate of Citizenship.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Children & Families Committee. The bill moves to Senate Rules Committee.

HB 303 (Gilliard-162nd) Original 33 Memorial Act - This bill honors the Original 33, the Black legislators expelled from the General Assembly following the end of Reconstruction with a monument on the state capitol grounds.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate State Institutions & Property Committee. The bill will be heard in committee this TUESDAY.

HB 327 (Leverett-123rd) Bill revising various sections of the Georgia Code. Of note to this audience are revisions clarifying various aspects of law regarding in vitro fertilization or other similar method of assisted reproduction. Some examples of law affected include Termination of Parental Rights, legitimation, paternity, inheritance, vital records, physician liability, etc.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to House Judiciary Committee.

[HB 579](#) (Reeves-99th) Georgia House Bill 579 (LC 55 0580S) proposes significant reforms to the state's professional licensing framework by streamlining administrative processes, expanding the Professional Licensing Boards Division director's authority, and enhancing transparency. Currently, licensing decisions require board approval, but HB 579 would allow the director to approve routine applications and exam authorizations, reducing wait times for professionals. It also standardizes a 45-day grace period for license renewals, preventing immediate lapses. The bill mandates that licensing rosters, including individuals issued cease-and-desist orders for unlicensed practice, be published online, improving public access to regulatory information. Additionally, it eliminates the separate standards committees within the Composite Board for Professional Counselors, Social Workers, and Marriage and Family Therapists, consolidating licensing decisions within the full board. HB 579 also limits licensing boards' rulemaking authority to regulations explicitly designed to protect public health, safety, and welfare, preventing unnecessary or anti-competitive rules. The bill grants the Governor clear authority to remove board members for cause and removes the requirement for board meetings to be held at the State Capitol, allowing for greater flexibility.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Regulated Industries & Utilities Committee.

[HR 257](#) (Hugley-141st) Creates the House Special Committee on Oversight of Federal Funds.

STATUS: House Budget & Fiscal Affairs Oversight Committee

[SB 21](#) (Tillery-19th) Waives sovereign and governmental immunities for local governments and their officials and employees for a violation of the prohibition on immigration sanctuary policies; and requires sheriffs, jailers, and deputies to honor immigration detainer requests issued by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Public Safety & Homeland Security Committee.

[SB 36](#) (Setzler-37th) Georgia Religious Freedom Restoration Act-Mandates that the government cannot substantially restrict a person's religious practice unless it can prove the restriction serves a compelling governmental interest and is implemented in the least restrictive way possible. These protections apply specifically to Georgia's state and local governments. Individuals who believe their religious rights have been violated can file a legal claim or defense and seek relief, including attorney's fees. However, the bill clarifies that it does not alter the Establishment Clause, meaning it does not require government funding or benefits for religious activities.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Judiciary Committee.

[SB 46](#) (Harbin-16th) Establishes a State Government Service Delivery Lead to coordinate improvements in public services across Georgia agencies. Each agency must appoint a service delivery official to enhance efficiency, transparency, and accessibility. Agencies will submit annual improvement plans.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Budget & Fiscal Affairs Oversight Committee. The bill will be heard in committee this WEDNESDAY.

SB 55 (Hickman-4th) Phased out the payment of subminimum wage to persons with disabilities and repeals provisions concerning exemptions to the state minimum wage law for persons with disabilities. The bill also states that no employer shall utilize a certificate issued by the United States Department of Labor pursuant to 29 U.S.C. Section 214(c) to pay individuals with disabilities less than the federal minimum wage.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Industry & Labor Committee. The bill moves to House Rules Committee.

SB 68 (Kennedy-18th) Introduces significant changes to civil practice, tort law, contracts, and motor vehicle regulation. Limits owner liability for injuries that occur on their property, prevents foreign adversaries from paying for lawsuits and mandates more disclosure and limits on outside groups paying for civil cases. The bill also prevents plaintiffs' lawyers from suggesting a monetary value to compensate for pain and suffering and allows plaintiffs to show actual medical costs to jurors. It enables trials to be split into multiple stages so that juries can determine liability and damages separately. The bill allows juries to consider whether or not a plaintiff was wearing a seatbelt in injury lawsuits and prevents lawyers from recovering legal fees twice in certain cases.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Rules Committee.

SB 69 (Kennedy-18th) This is part of the Administration's tort reform effort: Requires any third-party entities to be registered with the Department of Banking and Finance and limiting their ability to exert influence over the plaintiffs' legal decisions, such as when and how plaintiffs settle a case, and prevents foreign governments from becoming litigation financiers.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Rules Committee.

SB 74 (Burns-23rd) Provides an affirmative defense to prosecution if the charged person is employed to work in a public library or any library operated as a part of any school, college, or university, and such individual can demonstrate that he or she has made a good faith attempt to identify and remove from access to minors all physical or electronic material harmful to minors.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee.

SB 207 (Strickland-42nd) Creates a preclearance process in the licensing of individuals with criminal records who make an application to or are investigated by certain licensing boards and commissions. The bill also requires certain licensing authorities to provide evidence to support adverse licensing decisions based on criminal convictions and requires a hearing prior to denying certain applicants on the basis of an individual's criminal record. the bill also allows an applicant to submit his or her own criminal record when applying for certain licenses, among other provisions.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. The bill will be heard in committee this WEDNESDAY.

SB 212 (Still-48th) Prohibits the disclosure of public student directory information to political candidates, campaign committees, political action committees, political organizations, or persons or groups acting on their behalf. The bill also requires that each person who, while located on public school property, appries any public school students of their right to register as an elector and to vote in elections or of their obligation to register with the Selective Service System or who arranges for or assists one or more public school students to register to vote shall attest in writing that he or she is not acting directly or indirectly on behalf of any candidate, political party, PAC or political organization. The requirements of

this subsection shall not apply to a public school administrator, teacher, or other school personnel while engaged in the performance of official duties.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Education Committee.

[SB 213](#) (Kirkpatrick-32nd) Bans commercial cheating services that target students and examinees seeking a professional license as unfair or deceptive practices in consumer transactions. The bill states "it shall be unlawful for any person, for a commercial purpose, to provide or otherwise cause to be provided any work product to a student or examinee in a substantially completed form that could, under the circumstances, reasonably be considered as being, or forming a part of, an assessment task."

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Regulated Industries Committee. The bill will be heard in subcommittee this WEDNESDAY.

[SR 386](#) (Moore-53rd) Creates the Senate State Fair Tax Study Committee.

STATUS: Senate Finance Committee



Advocacy Ask

[Ask #1: Out-of-School Time Funds](#)

[Ask #2: School Social Workers](#)

[Ask #3: Community Health Workers](#)

Ask #1: Out-of-School Time Funds

The Ask:

Ask members of the Senate Appropriations Education & Higher Education Subcommittee to **maintain or increase the House's funding for BOOST afterschool and summer learning grants in the FY26 budget.**

The Why:

What is BOOST? For the last three years, GaDOE, in partnership with GSAN, used a total of \$85 Million in COVID relief funding to create the Building Opportunities in Out-of-School Time (BOOST) grant program, which has funded evidence based afterschool and summer learning programs. The federal funds for the program have expired, but the BOOST outcomes for kids have been amazing!

State funding for BOOST will:

- Create a statewide framework that expands access to and assures quality of afterschool and summer learning opportunities.

- Prioritize funding support to OST programs that serve vulnerable youth, such as those who are economically disadvantaged, have a disability, and English language learners.
- Use existing state infrastructure to provide training and technical assistance to OST providers fiscal administration, quality measurement, program effectiveness, and provider leadership.

What to Say:

Dear Senator _____,

Please maintain or increase the House's funding for afterschool and summer learning grants in the FY26 budget for BOOST (Building Opportunities in Out-of-School Time) grants, which have been critical to student success and are no longer funded by federal COVID relief dollars. These dollars have supported afterschool and summer learning in 115 of Georgia's 159 counties and served about 80,000 kids K-12 year-round. BOOST supports working parents while enhancing student literacy, mental health, and career-ready skills.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests and thank you for all you do every day on behalf of Georgia's children and families.

The How (a.k.a. Who to Contact):

Contact members of Senate Appropriations Education & Higher Education Subcommittee

[Sen. Billy Hickman](#), Chair, 404-463-1371

[Sen. Max Burns](#), 404-463-1376

[Sen. Gail Davenport](#), 404-463-5260

[Sen. Greg Dolezal](#), 404-656-0040

[Sen. Steve Gooch](#), 404-656-9221

[Sen. Kim Jackson](#), 404-656-6882

[Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick](#), 404-656-0508

[Sen. Nan Orrock](#), 404-463-8054

[Sen. Elena Parent](#), 404-656-5109

[Sen. Freddie Powell Sims](#), 404-463-5259

[Sen. Larry Walker, III](#), 404-656-0095

Ask #2: School Social Workers

The Ask:

Ask members of the Senate Appropriations Education & Higher Education Subcommittee to fund School Social Workers (through grants) with an additional \$5 Million in the FY 2026 Budget (under the Dept. of Education).

What Do School Social Workers Do?

School Social Workers (SSWs) are essential in managing issues such as truancy, bullying, mental health, and crises like family instability - all of which directly impact student performance and well-being. Social workers play a vital role in supporting students' mental health, addressing behavior issues, and connecting families with essential resources.

The Why:

- Georgia averages one SSW per 1,911 students!
- While Georgia has approximately 14,300 licensed social workers across various fields, a shortage exists in K-12 settings because many school districts are unable to meet the recommended social worker-to-student ratio of 1 for every 250 students. This limits the ability of social workers to provide individualized

attention and comprehensive services and leaves students without sufficient access to mental health and social support.

What to Say:

Dear Senator _____,

Please support this request to maintain or increase the House's addition of \$5 million in the FY 2026 budget to fund grants for School Social Workers under the Georgia Department of Education. School Social Workers play a critical role in promoting school safety by addressing truancy, bullying, mental health crises, and family instability—issues that can escalate into safety concerns if left unaddressed. Currently, Georgia averages only one School Social Worker per 1,911 students, far below the recommended ratio of 1:250. This shortage hinders the ability to identify and intervene in potential safety risks, leaving students and schools vulnerable. By increasing funding, we can ensure more robust support systems that contribute to safer and more secure learning environments for all.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests and thank you for all you do every day on behalf of Georgia's children and families.

The How (a.k.a. Who to Contact):

Contact members of Senate Appropriations Education & Higher Education Subcommittee

[Sen. Billy Hickman](#), Chair, 404-463-1371

[Sen. Max Burns](#), 404-463-1376

[Sen. Gail Davenport](#), 404-463-5260

[Sen. Greg Dolezal](#), 404-656-0040

[Sen. Steve Gooch](#), 404-656-9221

[Sen. Kim Jackson](#), 404-656-6882

[Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick](#), 404-656-0508

[Sen. Nan Orrock](#), 404-463-8054

[Sen. Elena Parent](#), 404-656-5109

[Sen. Freddie Powell Sims](#), 404-463-5259

[Sen. Larry Walker, III](#), 404-656-0095

Ask #3: House Bill 291 - Community Health Workers

The Ask:

Call members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee and ask that they hear and recommend Do Pass House Bill 291, which creates a certification process for Community Health Workers.

What the Bill Does:

House Bill 291 creates a certification process for community health workers (CHWs) in Georgia, ensuring they are recognized, trained, and equipped to serve communities effectively. The bill:

- Establishes the Georgia Community Health Worker Certification Committee to oversee standards, training, and certification.
- Defines the role of certified CHWs as frontline public health workers who provide education, outreach, and advocacy for individuals in their communities.
- Ensures that CHWs receive appropriate training and certification to improve healthcare access and outcomes.

The Why:

1. CHWs bridge the gap between children and families and healthcare providers by connecting them to vital health services and supports, including prenatal supports, nutrition programs, and early childhood development resources.
2. A formal certification process standardizes training and qualifications, ensuring CHWs are well-equipped to serve their communities.
3. Strengthening CHW certification helps expand access to healthcare, particularly in underserved areas.

What to Say:

Dear Senator _____,

Please ask for a hearing by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee of House Bill 291 and recommend it Do Pass. This bill establishes a certification process for community health workers in Georgia. CHWs are trusted members of their communities and play a critical role in connecting people with healthcare and support services. This bill ensures proper training and certification, leading to improved health outcomes across the state and also helping ensure that patients are able to have success with things like maintaining doctor's appointments, getting help in effective and timely ways and ensuring children have a medical home and important well child care. Thank you for all you do daily for Georgia's children and families, and for your thoughtful consideration with regards to H.B. 291.

The How (a.k.a. Who to Contact):

Call members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee:

[Sen. Ben Watson](#), Chair, 404-656-7880

[Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick](#), Vice Chair, 404-656-0508

[Sen. Ed Setzler](#), Secretary, 404-656-0256

[Sen. Matt Brass](#), 404-656-0057

[Sen. Bill Cowser](#), 404-463-1366

[Sen. Sonya Halpern](#), 404-656-9644

[Sen. Sally Harrell](#), 404-463-22060

[Sen. Bo Hatchett](#), 404-651-7745

[Sen. Mike Hodges](#), 404-463-1309

[Sen. Chuck Hufstetler](#), 404-656-0034

[Sen. John F. Kennedy](#), 404-656-6578

[Sen. David Lucas](#), 404-656-0150

[Sen. Randal Mangham](#), 404-657-4640

[Sen. Nikki Merritt](#), 404-463-1310

[Sen. Nan Orrock](#), 404-463-8054

[Sen. Brian Strickland](#), 404-463-6598

[Sen. Larry Walker, III](#), 404-656-0095



Upcoming Events

April 2025

Friday, April 4th

Sine Die (Last Day of Legislative Session)

Tuesday, April 8

- Justice Reform Project: Avoiding Burnout – Surviving Triumph
 - Time: 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM (Virtual)
 - RSVP: [Talk Justice Tuesday](#)



Resources You May Find Helpful

- [Find Your Legislator](#)
- [Contact Your Legislator](#)