

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

March 24, 2025

It is not uncommon to hear the phrase “just a little clean-up bill” around the statehouse, meaning that the bill is supposedly just “cleaning up” language in the law that is out of date, missing a useful element, or imperfect in some way. Of course, at this late point in the session, with my head loaded with hallway conversations, Points of Personal Privilege, Morning Orders, preachers of the day, early morning hearings (like 6am!), late night action alerts and still hundreds of bills and amendments to keep up with, my inner Sunday-Comics-Child cuts loose! That means that when I hear “just a little clean-up bill,” my Cartoon Brain presents to me a vision of the second and third floors of the Capitol, completely littered with phrases, words, numbers, punctuation marks and letters. Some are wooden Scrabble pieces; some are cut from newspapers, magazines or menus; some are those annoying [poetry magnets](#) that were a thing to have on your fridge in the 1990's; some are the letters off an old movie theater marquis, and some are little-kid building blocks. Post-it's are stuck on nearby statues; fonted, typeset and bedazzled banners are hung from the railings; and [conversation bubbles](#) are throwing words from the mouths of portraits along the walls. Well-dressed lobbyists, badge-wearing lawmakers, sneakered legislative aids and frazzled advocates (“Fradvocates”) are painstakingly searching for the right combination of words, ideas and meanings to achieve their professional objectives, address a constituent's problem, dispel a client's consternation or quell their own personal anxiety. Me? I'm sifting through stuff under the Senate Page ladies' desk, looking for dollar signs and numbers to make sure we keep \$10-20 million in the FY26 budget for afterschool and \$5 million for School Social Workers. While I am at it, I think I'll scoot downstairs to look under MLK's portrait to see if there are enough words with strike-through's to keep normally stupid teenagers out of adult court, and maybe a To-Do List (Senate Rules Calendar) for the [Community Health Workers bill \(HB 291\)](#) to get a Senate vote.

But what happens to all those words on April 5-the day after Sine Die? My Cartoon Brain shows me a collection of iconic custodians, sweeping, Hoovering and polishing up the refuse of legislating. [Will Hunting](#), [Mr. Johnson](#), and [Rosey from the Jetson's](#) have their work cut out for them, but they are relaxed, earbuds in and an achievable task at hand, knowing that they have another nine months to fill the Reuse, Recycle, and Repurpose dumpsters with all the residual verbiage, digits and punctuation. And me? I think I am going to check out with a few months-worth of [Peanuts](#) (the cartoon kind!), [Wumbo](#), and some old [Calvin and Hobbes](#) and [The Far Side](#) to restock my gray matter with colorful ideas for next session. But until then, I've still got a hot game or two of [Wordle](#) to go!

See ya' in the funny papers!

--Polly

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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 804 (Holly-116th) Codifies the proclamation by the Office of the President of the United States that would grant a pardon and restore full political, civil, and other rights regarding the offense of simple possession of marijuana.

STATUS: House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee

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. The bill will be heard in committee this WEDNESDAY.

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 committee this TUESDAY.

SB 147 (Rhett-33rd) Allows state correctional institutions to provide for the release of certain criminal history, vocational, and educational information for inmates upon release. The bill provides for the issuance of an identification card, and a Program and Treatment Completion Certificate.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Public Safety & Homeland Security Committee. The bill moves to House Rules Committee.

SB 160 (Kirkpatrick-32nd) Allows the written consent of a DUI offender who has participated in a DUI alcohol or drug use risk reduction program to obtain and transfer their records in an electronic format. The bill also revises the fees for these programs to make the assessment component \$150 and the intervention component \$350. The bill also requires an intelligent speed assistance device to be installed on vehicles belonging to individuals who have a second or subsequent conviction of a violation in regard to reckless driving outlined in O.C.G.A. 40-6-390.1. The maximum speed limit for the device will be no greater than 20 percent above the posted speed limit, and costs relating to installation are incurred by the offender.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Motor Vehicles Committee. The bill moves to House Rules 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": Prohibits any judge to order family reunification treatments or services when hearing the issue of custody for a child custody and visitation. Moreover, no judge shall order a family reunification or unification that result or require the following: court ordered restrictions on contact between a child and parent or legal guardian, overnight stays for a child in an out-of-state facility, hotel, motel, or camp, or the use of private youth transporters or private transportation agents engaged in the use of force, the threat of force, physical obstruction, or coercion against a child, or the attendance of, or participation in, educational or experimental workshops.

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

HR 611 (Dempsey-13th) Creates a House Study Committee on Abandoned Child Placement Following Hospital Discharge.

STATUS: House Public & Community Health 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) Originally a bill about obscene AI materials, the bill language was replaced by the House to define terms related to artificial intelligence (AI) and establish the offenses of fraudulent election interference and solicitation of fraudulent election interference by using AI-generated media in campaign advertisements. The bill introduces the terms "materially deceptive media" and "AI generated media," and criminalizes the publication of this type of media within 90 days of an election with intent to deceive voters and influence the outcome of an election. The State Election Board is authorized to investigate complaints regarding fraudulent election interference within 90 days of an election and will publicly release the findings of completed investigations. The attorney general is granted concurrent jurisdiction with local district attorneys to criminally prosecute violations regarding fraudulent election interference upon recommendation from the State Election Board. The bill clarifies that the use of AI-generated content in campaign advertisements is not unlawful as long as the proper disclosures are displayed.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Technology & Infrastructure Innovation Committee. The bill moves to House Rules Committee.

SB 27 (Albers-56th) Establishes the offense of 'doxxing' 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. The bill will be heard in committee this TUESDAY.

SB 42 (Hatchett-50th) Repeals 16-6-13(b), which currently is a criminal penalty of between 10 and 30 years of imprisonment and a maximum fine of \$100,000 when anyone violates the crimes of keeping a place of prostitution, pimping, or pandering, when the offense involves someone under the age of 18 years old. This is to correct for a rule of lenity issue with the crime of human trafficking. S

TATUS: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. The bill will be on the House floor for a vote this TUESDAY.

SB 85 (Brass-6th) Creates the 'Georgia Foster Care Scholarship Act.' The act provides grants to eligible students who are current or former foster care children. The total award amount per semester is not to exceed the costs of the eligible student's tuition, room, board, meal plan, and books associated with matriculation at an eligible postsecondary institution, minus any amount covered by federal or other state grants or scholarships. The maximum award per year will not exceed \$30,000. Eligible students will remain eligible for such awards until one of the following events occurs: the student earns a bachelor's degree, a maximum number of hours has been attempted, or the student has received the scholarship for 10 years. The act is subject to appropriations.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Higher Education Committee. The bill moves to House Rules 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. PASSED HOUSE. Awaits transmission to the governor for his consideration.

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. Recommended Do Pass by the House Judiciary Committee. The bill moves to House Rules Committee.

SB 110 (Anavitarte-31st) Defines the term "blatant disregard" within the Juvenile Code as a real, significant, and imminent risk of harm that is so obvious to a legal custodian that a reasonable person would not expose a child to that imminent risk of harm without exercising certain precautionary measures. It also defines the term "independent activity" to be one that is not under the direct supervision of a legal custodian or parent and includes playing outdoors, walking to school, running errands, and traveling to local commercial or recreational facilities. The bill modifies the definition of "neglect" to be when someone fails to provide necessary parental care rather than proper parental care. It also narrows the requirements of when a parent must provide certain supervision necessary for the health and safety of a child to require the parent to avoid creating a real, significant, and imminent risk of harm to the child as a result of blatant disregard for the parent's responsibilities. This further narrows what constitutes abandonment of a child under the definition of "neglect" to exclude when a parent or guardian permits a child to engage in independent activities that reasonably avoid substantial risk of harm. The bill also modifies O.C.G.A. 16-5-60 to amend the crime of when a person causes bodily harm to or endangers the bodily safety of another through conscious disregard of another's safety to explicitly not include when a parent or legal custodian permits a child to engage in one or more independent activities unless doing so constitutes neglect.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Judiciary Juvenile Committee. The bill will be on the House floor for a vote this TUESDAY.

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.

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. Recommended Do Pass by the House Judiciary Juvenile Committee. The bill moves to House Rules Committee.

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

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Children & Families Committee. The bill will be on the Senate floor for a vote this TUESDAY.

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

STATUS: Senate Children & Families Committee



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. The bill will be heard in committee this TUESDAY.

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. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Finance Committee. The bill moves to Senate Rules Committee.

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

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Health & Human Services Committee. The bill moves to Senate Rules 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 a discounted percentage of the average wholesale acquisition cost on the day of claim administration as determined by the state health plan on current competitive market rates, plus a professional dispensing fee that is not less than \$10.50 for chain pharmacies and \$11.50 for independent pharmacies. The legislation prohibits insurers from 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. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Insurance & Labor Committee. The bill moves to Senate Rules 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. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Insurance & Labor Committee. The bill moves to Senate Rules 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. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Health & Human Services Committee. The bill moves to Senate Rules 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. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Higher Education Committee. The bill moves to Senate Rules 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) sets rules for offering high deductible health plans (HDHPs) and health savings accounts (HSAs) to certain state employees. It defines a "covered employee" as someone identified in parts of Code Section 45-18-1, and it uses the federal definition of an HDHP from Section 223 of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code. By January 1, 2028, the board must make sure that at least two HDHPs are available through the state's employee health insurance program. These plans must be offered by different insurance companies, and each company must have a partner that manages HSAs. These options are only required if they do not increase costs. By January 1, 2026, employees enrolled in an HDHP must be able to make pretax payroll contributions to an HSA linked to their insurance plan. The State Accounting Office or the head of any state agency employing these workers is allowed to handle these payroll deductions to fund the employees' HSAs.

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

HB 473 (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 567 (Dempsey-13th) Adjusts criteria for teledentistry as well as requirements for insurance coverage for such.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the 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. The bill clarifies that rules, regulations, licenses and the like issues by DCH

shall continue to be in effect and shall be enforceable by the DBHDD until such time as such is amended or revoked by DBHDD.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. The bill awaits agreement from the House on changes made by the Senate.

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.

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 73 (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.

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 Health Committee

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

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. The bill will be heard in committee this TUESDAY.

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.

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

SB 131 (Hodges-3rd) Requires the Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce to create the Georgia Health Care Professionals Data System, which will collect nonidentifying data on licensed health care professionals. The data will include age, gender, proficiency in English and other languages, location of practice, license type, birth details, and location of residence.

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

SB 140 (Dolezal-27th) Authorizes a doctor of optometry to dispense and sell pharmaceuticals that are related to the treatment of diseases and conditions of the eye, except those that are controlled substances.

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

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.

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

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. Recommended Do Pass by the House Regulated Industries Committee. The bill moves to House Rules Committee.

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

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

STATUS: Senate Rules 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

SR 427 (Kirkpatrick-32nd) Creates the Senate Study Committee on Intoxicating Cannabinoids in Consumable Hemp Products.

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

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

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

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. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill moves to Senate Rules 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. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Health & Human Services Committee. The bill moves to Senate Rules Committee.

HB 441 (Dunahoo-31st) Bans abortion.

STATUS: DID NOT CROSSOVER but will have a hearing in House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee nonetheless this WEDNESDAY.

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

HB 795 (Cannon-58th) Establishes a 24/7 Infant Wellness Resource Hotline to assist individuals seeking help for infants experiencing health issues or illness. Hotline staff promptly assess calls, identifying emergencies that require immediate warm handoffs to 9-1-1 or referrals to local programs and services. Staff are required to complete emergency response training to ensure effective support.

STATUS: House Public & Community Health Committee. The bill was introduced late and did not cross over.

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

STATUS: House Public & Community Health Committee

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.

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.



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. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Higher Education Committee. The bill moves to Senate Rules 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. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Higher Education Committee. The bill moves to Senate Rules 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. The bill will be heard in subcommittee this MONDAY.

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. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Education and Youth Committee. The bill moves to Senate Rules 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. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Children & Families Committee. The bill will be on the Senate floor for a vote this TUESDAY.

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. Requires that for each new elementary school constructed on or after July 1, 2027, which includes a playground, such playground shall meet certain standards such as a sensory-diverse environment, enables all students to benefit from state mandated recess time and is accessible via a sidewalk or pathway from the school.

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

(Lupton-83rd) Revises the QBE program formula weights based on recommendations of the 2015 Education Reform Commission.

HB 796 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 (Anavitate-31st) Requires local school systems to implement a mobile panic alert system capable of connecting disparate emergency services technologies to ensure real-time coordination between multiple state and local first responder agencies in the event of a school security incident. The bill authorizes the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency to adopt rules and regulations for the requirements for school mapping data.

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

SB 63 (Dixon-45th) Amends O.C.G.A. 20-2-324.8, which requires that local school systems allow home study students to take the PSAT/NMSQT, SAT, PreACT, ACT or Advanced Placement exams offered by the school system to resident students. The local school system may require home school students to pay for such an exam if the school is requiring all students to pay a fee to take the exam.

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

SB 82 (Dixon-45th) Requires the Office of Charter School Compliance to prepare guidelines for local boards of education for the evaluation of charter school petitions and revises reporting. Local boards of education must provide a written statement of denial to the charter petitioner, the state board, and the office within 10 days of denial by the local board. Local school boards of education which deny charter schools which are later approved by the Charter Schools Commission could face the loss of the current charter system contract or strategic waivers school system contract. The bill also provides for the State Board of Education, in collaboration with the State Charter Schools Commission, to establish a program for the purposes of promoting and supporting the approval of new local charter school petitions by local boards of education, and to provide \$250,000 incentive grants to local boards of education that approve new local charter school petitions.

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

SB 93 (Kemp-38th) Provides for the Professional Standards Commission to adopt rules to require that the content standards align with the science of reading for core curricula for state-approved educator preparation programs.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Education Committee. The bill moves to House Rules 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. Recommended Do Pass by the House Education Committee. The bill moves to House Rules 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 military students to enroll in a public school when the parent receives their military orders regardless of whether the student's parent or guardian has entered into a lease, purchased a residence, or otherwise secured housing within such attendance zone.

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

SB 252 (Halpern-39th) Allows municipalities with a population 300,000 or higher to lease out, grant easements over, or convey property to an independent school system within its boundaries. Property conveyed will be replaced with other property(s) that the governing authority deems to be of equivalent or greater value.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. The bill awaits agreement from the Senate to changes made by the House.

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. Recommended Do Pass by the House Higher Education Committee. The bill moves to House Rules Committee.

SB 154 (Hatchett-50th) Amends multiple Code sections by adding the words "or its successor" across Georgia Code after references to the U.S. Department of Education. The bill updates dated language by replacing a reference to student aid reports with Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. Awaits agreement by the Senate to changes made by the House.

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. Recommended Do Pass by the House Higher Education Committee. The bill moves to House Rules Committee.

SB 193 (Brass-6th) Authorizes the Technical College System of Georgia to establish the adult workforce high school diploma program, which has a sunset date of July 1, 2031.

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

SR 432 (Harrell-40th) Creates the Senate Higher Education in Prison Study Committee.

STATUS: Senate Rules Committee



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 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. Designates the fourth Friday in November each year as "National Sugarcane Syrup Day in Georgia." Designates cornbread as the official Georgia state bread. Prohibits companies owned or operated by a foreign country of concern or adversary from directly submitting a proposal for a state agency contract for goods or services related to an office environment, whether independently or through a third-party seller.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Economic Development & Tourism Committee. The bill moves to Senate Rules 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. Allows tenants, at the request of a code enforcement officer, to provide the name, license number, and contact information of the property manager if there is probable cause to believe a violation or violations of property management has occurred.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Economic Development & Tourism Committee. The bill moves to Senate Rules Committee.

HB 779 (Neal-79th) Requires landlords and managers of apartment buildings or complexes to provide local police and fire department with after hours maintenance telephone numbers and after hours management telephone numbers. Landlords or managers out of compliance will be fined \$2,000 per violation.

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

HB 797 (Petrea-166th) Creates the Interagency Council on Homelessness for Chatham-Savannah.

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

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

HR 656 (Olaleye-59th) Creates the House Study Committee on Expanding Home Ownership Opportunities for Georgians.

STATUS: House Rural Development 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. PASSED SENATE. Awaits transmission to the governor for his consideration.

HB 123 (McDonald III-26th) Provides a one-time tax credit to individuals who filed on time tax returns for 2023 and 2024.

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

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. PASSED SENATE. The bill awaits agreement from the House on changes made by the Senate.

- HB 177** (Cooper-45th) Provides protection for household pets in both family violence and dating violence protective orders.
- STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill moves to Senate Rules 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. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate State Institutions & Property Committee. The bill moves to Senate Rules Committee.
- HB 579** (Reeves-99th) Amends Title 43, related to professions and business, to make broad changes to the duties and responsibilities of the Office of the Secretary of State's Professional Licensing Division and the division's director. Section 1-1 grants the Professional Licensing Division the ability to allow applicants to take necessary examinations before starting an application, when appropriate. The bill requires the division director to maintain a roster of names and addresses for individuals that have received a cease-and-desist letter from a professional licensing board for practicing a profession without a license. An exception is provided for persons that fail to renew a license in a 45-day period. Section 1-2 adds the ability to grant applications for license issuance, renewal, or reinstatement to the duties of the secretary of state's Professional Licensing Division director. Section 1-3 of the bill grants the director of Professional Licensing Division the ability to approve applications for licensing, renewal, or reinstatement on behalf of professional licensing boards. The director will only approve applications if the applicant satisfies all requirements for licensure. If the director is unable to make a determination or an application is deficient, the director will forward the application to the relevant licensing board. The licensing board must approve or deny the application in a timely manner. A licensing board may still approve or deny a license before any review or determination has been made by the division director. The division may utilize other methods of confirming required educational achievements in addition to receiving or requesting an applicant's official transcript. Section 1-4 codifies the division director's ability to set expiration, renewal, and penalty dates with approval from the related professional licensing boards. The division director is also instructed to set renewal dates over a two-year period in a manner that, within reason, evenly distributes renewal dates. A license shall remain renewable for up to 45 days after the expiration of a licensing, provided that the license holder meets all requirements of the license and has paid all fees due. Section 1-5 allows the governor to remove a licensing board member for cause without a hearing. Section 1-6 limits licensing boards to promulgating rules and regulations that solely protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public. Sections 2-1 strikes provisions establishing separate standards committees for the Composite Board Professional Counselors, Social Workers, and Marriage and Family Therapists and eliminates a requirement for multiple board members to review and approve an application. Section 3-1 sets the bills effective date as July 1, 2026.
- STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Regulated Industries & Utilities Committee. The bill moves to Senate Rules 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. Recommended Do Pass by the House Budget & Fiscal Affairs Oversight Committee. The bill moves to House Rules Committee.

[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. PASSED HOUSE. The bill awaits transmission to the governor for his consideration.

SB 68

(Kennedy-18th) Revises civil practice, motor vehicle, and tort laws. It limits arguments regarding noneconomic damages, alters discovery timelines, and modifies dismissal rules. The recovery of attorney's fees is restricted, and the admissibility of seatbelt evidence has been updated. Additionally, the bill establishes a new framework for claims related to negligent security, limiting property owners' liability in specific circumstances. It also changes how medical expense damages are calculated and allows for bifurcated trials. Section 1 of the bill amends O.C.G.A. 9-10-184, stating that if counsel is entitled to make the opening and concluding arguments, they may not argue the worth or monetary value of noneconomic damages during the concluding argument unless they have claimed this during the opening argument. Counsel is not permitted to discuss the worth or monetary value of noneconomic damages in the concluding argument if it differs from what was argued in the opening argument. However, this section does not prohibit counsel from asking potential jurors during voir dire if they could return a verdict that does not award damages or one that exceeds an unspecified amount, as long as such questions are supported by evidence. Section 2 amends Code Section 9-11-12, indicating that the court must decide on a motion to dismiss within 90 days after the conclusion of the briefings on that motion. If the court fails to rule on the motion to dismiss within this 90-day period, a party may file a motion to terminate or modify, but this remedy does not prevent other available remedies for the court's failure to rule timely, including, but not limited to, a writ of mandamus. Section 3 amends Code Section 9-11-41, allowing for filing a written notice of dismissal at any time before the 60th day after the opposing party serves an answer. Section 6 amends Code Section 51-3-51, stipulating that a property owner or occupier is liable for negligent security if the plaintiff can prove, by clear and convincing evidence, that prior occurrences of similar wrongful conduct by a third person led to an injury. This is contingent upon the owner or occupier knowing or having reason to know that the third person was or would be on the premises, and having actual knowledge of such prior wrongful conduct. Section 8 amends Code Section 51-12-15, stating that if the plaintiff is the legal guardian of a minor who has been injured by an alleged sexual offense and is likely to suffer severe psychological or emotional distress from testifying more than once in a bifurcated proceeding, or if the amount in controversy is less than \$150,000, the provisions apply.

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

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. The bill will be heard in committee this TUESDAY.

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. Recommended Do Pass by the House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. The bill moves to House Rules Committee.

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, apprises 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. Recommended Do Pass by the House Regulated Industries Committee. The bill moves to House Rules Committee.

SB 343 (Hatchett-50th) Prohibits providers of social media platforms from permitting a minor aged 14 years or younger to be an account holder.

STATUS: Senate Children & Families Committee

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

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

SR 431 (Harrell-40th) Creates the Senate Impact of Social Media and Artificial Intelligence on Children and Platform Privacy Protection Study Committee.

STATUS: Senate Rules Committee



Advocacy Ask

[Ask #1: Community Health Workers](#)

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

Ask #1: House Bill 291 - Community Health Workers

The Ask:

Call members of the Senate Rules Committee to put House Bill 291 on the Senate floor for a vote as soon as possible. This bill 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 put House Bill 291 on the Senate floor for a vote as soon as possible. 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 of H.B. 291.

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

Call members of the Senate Rules Committee:

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

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

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

[Sen. John Albers](#), 404-463-8055

[Sen. Jason Anavitate](#), 404-656-0085

[Sen. Lee Anderson](#), 404-656-5114

[Sen. Brandon Beach](#), 404-463-1378

[Sen. Clint Dixon](#), 404-656-6446

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

[Sen. Frank Ginn](#), 404-656-4700

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

[Sen. Ed Harbison](#), 404-656-0074

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

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

[Sen. Harold Jones, II](#), 404-656-0036

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

[Sen. Michael "Doc" Rhett](#), 404-656-0054

[Sen. Randy Robertson](#), 404-656-0045

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

[Sen. Rick Williams](#), 404-656-0082

Ask #2: School Social Workers

The Ask:

Ask members of the Senate to ask Appropriations Committee members to maintain the \$5 Million House addition for School Social Worker grants in the FY 2026 Budget.

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 the House's addition of \$5 million in the FY 2026 budget to fund grants for School Social Workers. 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):

Call members of the Senate Appropriations Committee:

[Sen. Blake Tillery](#), Chair, 404-656-5038

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

[Sen. Clint Dixon](#), Secretary, 404-656-6446

[Sen. John Albers](#), 404-463-8055

[Sen. Jason Anavitate](#), 404-656-0085

[Sen. Lee Anderson](#), 404-656-5114

[Sen. Tonya Anderson](#), 404-463-2598

[Sen. Brandon Beach](#), 404-463-1378

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

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

[Sen. Frank Ginn](#), 404-656-4700

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

[Sen. Russ Goodman](#), 404-463-1318

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

[Sen. Ed Harbison](#), 404-656-0074

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

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

[Sen. Donzella James](#), 404-463-1379

[Sen. Emanuel Jones](#), 404-656-0502

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

[Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick](#), 404-656-3932

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

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

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

[Sen. Sheikh Rahman](#), 404-463-5261

[Sen. Randy Robertson](#), 404-656-0045

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

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

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

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

[Sen. Sam Watson](#), 404-656-0065



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](#)