

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

April 9, 2025

Y'all – my brain is so full of pollen that I can barely remember what happened last week. Through the yellow haze, I think I can glimpse some conversation about an FY26 budget getting passed with \$12.5 Million for afterschool and summer learning. I think I remember something about more than \$2.3 Million for school social workers and passage of [House Bill 399](#) to help tenants have a way to contact property managers. If I polish off my gray matter a little I also see that mother and infant services like home visiting and perinatal care had budget wins, and bills for school safety, school attendance, and childcare incentives crossed the finish line too. Best of all, I have a surprisingly vivid recollection of paper being thrown in the air signifying that I could go home, provided I could remember where home is.

Just past the sneezes, watery eyeballs and annoying hack, there is actually a big bucket of gratitude for all the sung and unsung heroes of good policy. Here's a loud shoutout to lawmakers of course, who put their names on votes, dog legislation until it passes and negotiate dollars to help kids learn to read, have good mental health and be in safe places to grow. Let's also raise some toasts to a ton of non-elected folks who work pretty much around the clock to ensure much of the same, namely state agency heads, their government affairs folks, House and Senate Budget Office brainiacs and buckets of state government employees who exemplify the pinnacle of public service, doubling down to ensure that the missions of their agencies are fulfilled. And then there is the likes of us – child and family advocates of all kinds. Working together or apart, we combine to be a force extraordinaire, finding ways to keep each other going whether elated with a win or depressed with a loss. I myself could not do this without all of you, nor would I want to. This audience's tenacity, moments of witty banter, late-night commiserating and pockets of joy are next level. Plus, your attention to all these weeks of information, your advocacy whether large or small, and your apparent and ongoing belief that we can make this world a better place, adds up to make a difference for kids. So, on behalf of all of us at Voices, I offer each of you a pollen-covered, yet extremely sincere thank you.

Until we meet again, please stay safe, stay hopeful, and stay allergy-free!

--Polly

--Polly

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Budget Information

Fiscal Year 2026 Senate Version

Total State Funds: \$37.76 Billion

Key: Yellow Highlight = Conference Committee (CC) agreement

Statewide

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

Judicial Council

Council of Accountability Court Judges

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

Judicial Council

- **\$0 Added** for Civil Legal Services for families of indigent patients and instead the CC directed "Provide a report to the House Budget and Research Office and the Senate Budget and Evaluation Office by February 1, 2026 on the number of people served and outcomes of the program."
- **\$0 Added** for grants to legal self-help centers.
- **\$400,000 Added** to annualize the juvenile court case management contract.

District Attorneys

- **\$1.1 Million Added** for one District Attorney, one Chief Assistant District Attorney, one Drug Court Assistant District Attorney, one Juvenile Court Assistant District Attorney, and one Accountability Court Assistant District Attorney for the West Georgia Judicial Circuit pursuant to SB424 (Session 2024)

Prosecuting Attorneys' Council

- **\$800,000 eliminated** to reflect ongoing maintenance cost of repeat offender gang case management system

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Dept. of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities***Adult Addictive Disease Services***

- **\$1 Million Added** for alcohol use disorder peer support.
- **\$50,000 Added** for Hope House

Adult Developmental Disability Services

- **\$3.5 Million Added** for 150 additional slots for the New Options Waiver (NOW) and the Comprehensive Supports Waiver Program (COMP) for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- **\$0 Added** for Citizen Advocacy to expand services.
- **\$2.33 Million Added** to annualize the cost of 100 New Options Waiver (NOW) and Comprehensive Supports Waiver Program (COMP) slots for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- **\$3.24 Million Added** to annualize the operations of the Macon Crisis Stabilization and Diagnostic Center for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- **\$26.71 Million Added** to annualize the provider rate increases recommended by the New Options Waiver (NOW) and Comprehensive Supports Waiver Program (COMP) provider rate study.

Adult Forensic Services

- **\$1.06 Million Added** to annualize the operations of a 30-bed jail-based competency restoration program pilot in Dodge County.
- **\$1.95 Million Added** to operationalize a new 17-bed forensic unit at the Central State Hospital Allen Building in Milledgeville.
- **\$1.19 Million Added** to operationalize a new 20-bed forensic unit at the Georgia Regional Hospital Skilled Nursing Facility in Atlanta.
- **\$1.62 Million Added** to operationalize a new 30-bed Project New Hope forensic step-down unit at the West Central Georgia Regional Hospital in Columbus.
- **\$100,000 Added** for a jail diversion pilot.
- **\$500,000 Million Reduced** for jail-based competency restoration in Cobb County Jail.

Adult Mental Health Services

- **\$12.53 Million Added** to annualize the provider rate increases recommended by the Community Behavioral Health Rehabilitation Services (CBHRS) provider rate study.
- **\$1.13 Million Transferred** from the DCH to the DBHDD for four licensure programs to match agency roles and responsibilities.
- **\$175,000 Added** to coordinate outreach to address homelessness in the Atlanta area.
- **\$0 Added** for homelessness community action teams.
- **\$1.7 Million Added** for the Georgia Housing Voucher program to support the requirements of the Department of Justice (DOJ) Settlement Agreement.
- **\$9.48 Million Added** for a partnership between a nonprofit and the North Fulton behavioral health crisis center.
- **\$0 Added** for one-time funding for behavioral health and support services at a rehousing facility.
- **\$0 Reduced** for one-time funding for behavioral health services for Georgians experiencing homelessness in the Atlanta area.
- **\$4.03 Million Reduced** funds for state contracted psychiatric beds.

Child and Adolescent Developmental Disabilities

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

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

- **\$1.44 Million Added** to annualize the operations of the new Gateway child and adolescent crisis stabilization unit in Savannah.
- **\$0 Added** for psychiatric residential facility discharge planning.
- **\$0 Transferred** from the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities to the Department of Education to consolidate and streamline funding for school based mental health support services.

Dept. of Community Affairs

- *Budget Direction:* Change program name from Coordinated Planning to Community Services to consolidate statewide community services under one program.
- **Recognize \$64.01 Million transferred of funds** and positions to consolidate statewide community services, align program structure with agency responsibilities, and reduce administrative burden.
- **Recognize \$162.83 Million transfer of funds** and positions to consolidate statewide housing initiatives, align program structure with agency responsibilities, and reduce administrative burden.
- *Budget Direction:* Change program name from Special Housing Initiatives to Housing Initiatives to consolidate statewide housing initiatives under one program.
- **\$750,000 Added** to expand the Accountable Housing Initiative.
- **\$0 Reduced** in the Accountable Housing Initiative - Special Project.
- **\$2 Million Added** in one-time funds to the State Housing Trust Fund to improve homelessness programs and leverage additional federal grants.
- **\$500,000 Added** for special housing assistance programs to address increased demand.

Dept. of Community Health

Departmental Administration

- **\$47,869 Added** for three Katie Beckett Medicaid program caseworkers and operating expenses to address increased workload.
- **\$0 Added** for The Department of Community Health to conduct a multi-year comprehensive study of all Medicaid provider reimbursement rates.
- **\$300,000 Added** to provide that the Department of Community Health shall submit a State Plan Amendment (SPA) to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to change any rules, regulations, or policies necessary to allow for the use of Medicaid funding for Graduate Medical Education slots. The State of Florida applied for a similar State Plan Amendment, and it was approved within 60 days.

GA Board of Dentistry

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

GA Board of Pharmacy

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

Health Care Access and Improvement

- **\$750,000 eliminated** in one-time start-up funding for federally qualified health centers.
- **\$500,000 Added** in one-time grant funds for two federally qualified health centers.

- **\$0 Added** for the Sickle Cell Foundation of Georgia in the Department of Public Health and for one-time genetic treatments funded in the Department of Community Health.
- **\$250,000 Added** in one-time funds for telecare and maternal health programs.
- **\$407,000 Added** in one-time funds to establish a regional vascular center.
- **\$3 Million Added** in one-time matching funds for behavioral and mental health services stabilization and augmentation.
- **\$0 Added** to the Georgia Rural Health Association (GRHA) to support the advancement of access to rural health care.
- **\$0 Added** in one-time funds to expand and sustain labor and delivery services in rural Georgia with necessary infrastructure in order to provide quality care.

Medicaid - Aged Blind and Disabled

- **\$29.5 Million Added** for growth in Medicaid based on projected utilization.
- **\$36.56 Million Added** for new high-cost drugs.
- **\$7.15 Million Added** for skilled nursing centers to reflect 2023 cost reports.
- *Budget Direction:* Replace \$5,415,201 in state general funds with hospital provider fees.
- *Budget Direction:* Replace \$6,108,816 in state general funds with nursing home provider fees.
- **\$2.8 Million Added** for emergency medical services (EMS) transport reimbursement to begin upon patient pickup.
- **\$701,766 Added** for rate increases for neonatologists and maternal fetal medicine specialists.
- **\$0 Added** to increase reimbursement rate for CIS speech therapy code 92507.
- **\$0 Added** to provide an increase for emergency medical services (EMS) reimbursement rates.
- **\$2.88 Million Added** to provide an increase for applied behavior analysis reimbursement rates.
- **\$1.39 Million Added** to increase reimbursement rates for primary care codes 99213 and 99214 (Primary care established patient visits).
- **\$771,385 Added** to increase dental code reimbursement rates.
- **\$0 Added** to increase durable medical equipment reimbursement rates.
- **\$500,000 Added** for a Medicaid rate enhancement for privately-owned intermediate care facilities for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Medicaid - Low Income

- **\$177.12 Million Added** for growth in Medicaid based on projected utilization.
- **\$3.19 Million Added** for emergency medical services (EMS) transport reimbursement to begin upon patient pickup.
- **\$1.21 Million Added** for rate increases for neonatologists and maternal fetal medicine specialists.
- **\$0 Added** to increase reimbursement rate for CIS speech therapy code 92507.
- **\$0 Added** to provide an increase for emergency medical services (EMS) reimbursement rates.
- **\$2.53 Million Added** to provide an increase for applied behavior analysis reimbursement rates.
- **\$2.35 Million Added** to increase reimbursement rates for primary care codes 99213 and 99214 (Primary care established patient visits).
- **\$803.526 Added** to increase dental code reimbursement rates.
- **\$0 Added** to increase durable medical equipment reimbursement rates.
- **\$21.23 Million Added** for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services requirement that the state provide 12 months of continuous eligibility for children under the age of 19 in Medicaid effective January 1, 2024.
- *Budget Direction:* Replace \$47,777,273 in state general funds with hospital provider fees.
- **\$1.75 Million Added** for an additional \$2,000 add-on payment (for a total of \$3,000) for newborn deliveries in rural counties with a population of 35,000 or less.

- **\$2.17 Million Added** to provide a \$1,500 add-on payment for newborn deliveries in rural counties with a population between 35,001 and 50,000.

PeachCare for Kids®

- **\$1.58 Million Added** for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services requirement that the state provide 12 months of continuous eligibility for children under the age of 19 in the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) effective January 1, 2024.
- **\$1.78 Million Reduced** for growth in Medicaid based on projected utilization.
- **\$0 Added** to increase reimbursement rate for CIS speech therapy code 92507.
- **\$53,336 Added** to increase reimbursement rates for primary care codes 99213 and 99214 (Primary care established patient visits).
- **\$22,470 Added** to increase dental code reimbursement rates.
- **\$0 Added** to increase durable medical equipment reimbursement rates.

State Health Benefits Plan

- *Budget Direction:* Increase the employer health care contribution per-member per-month (PMPM) for non-certified school employees to match the PMPM for certified school employees, effective July 1, 2025, to maintain the financial stability of the plan.
- *Budget Direction:* Recognize an increase in formula funds (\$177,130,676) in DECAL, and Georgia Military College, to reflect an increase in the employer healthcare contribution per-member per-month (PMPM) rate for certified school employees and lead and assistant teachers to \$1,885, effective July 1, 2025.
- *Budget Direction:* Utilize existing funds for a \$3 per prescription dispensing fee for independent pharmacists until HB 196 (2025 Session) takes effect January 1, 2026.
- **\$2.9 Million Added** to reimburse a pharmacy for drugs dispensed to a covered person for self-administration in an amount equal to the national average drug acquisition cost (NADAC) on the day of claim administration and a professional dispensing fee.

Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce: Graduate Medical Education

- **\$3.02 Million Added** for 200 new residency slots in primary care medicine.
- **\$319,654 Added** for four child and adolescent psychiatry fellowships and two gastroenterology fellowships.
- **\$150,000 Added** to for year three of the maternal fetal medicine fellowships.
- **\$4 Million Added** and utilize existing funds (\$2,844,122) for grants for graduate medical education programs based on the use of Medicaid Reimbursements for new residency slots pending approval of a State Plan Amendment to support new and expanding residency programs with priority given to rural sites. (Total Funds: \$11,872,959 State and Federal)

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

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

Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce: Physicians for Rural Areas

- *Budget Direction:* Reflect a change in the program name to Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce: Healthcare Practitioner Loan Repayment.

- **\$250,000 Transferred** for the nursing faculty loan repayment program from the Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce: Undergraduate Medical Education program to the Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce: Physicians for Rural Areas program to include all loan repayment funds under the same program.

Dept. of Corrections

Across the Agency

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

Detention Centers

- **\$219,573 Added** for an 8% salary increase for behavioral health counselor positions to align with statewide averages to improve recruitment and retention.
- **\$1.57 Million Transferred** from State Prisons program to Detention Centers program for ongoing capital maintenance and repairs.
- **\$3.47 Million Added** to add correctional officer positions to improve staff to offender ratios and reflect increased retention.
- **\$946,660 Added** to annualize 12 correctional officer positions hired in FY2025.

Health

- **\$2.2 Million Added** for the dental health contract to support increased population.
- **\$8.08 Million Added** for the mental health contract to support increased population.
- **\$6.07 Million Added** for the pharmacy services contract to support increased population.
- **\$20.39 Million Added** for the physical health contract to support increased population.
- **\$0 Added** for healthcare contract for McRae Women's Facility to account for additional full time physical health employees.

Private Prisons

- **\$6.39 Million Added** to add 500 private prison beds at Coffee Correctional Institution and 258 private prison beds at Wheeler Correctional Institution.

State Prisons

- **\$39.64 Million Added** for additional correctional officer positions to improve staff to offender ratios.
- **\$2.84 Million Added** for a salary increase for behavioral health counselor positions to align with statewide averages to improve recruitment and retention.
- **\$15 Million Added** to address critical capital maintenance and repairs.
- **\$15.59 Million Added** for additional facility maintenance personnel and regional support staff to address critical facility maintenance needs.
- **\$1.02 Million Added** for a "tiger team" to support existing GDC locking team to address repairs needed on facility locks, locking controls, and security electronics.
- **\$2.6 Million Added** for skilled craftsman "tiger teams" focused on HVAC, plumbing, electrical, and fabrication needs in facilities.
- **\$3.58 Million Added** for ongoing support of body cameras and tasers for increased facility security.

- **\$1.83 Million Added** to implement an off-site mail screening solution to inhibit contraband and ensure the safety of facility staff.
- **\$2.46 Million Added** for software licenses for additional officer tablets to improve documentation and information sharing on offender management.
- **\$176,326 Added** for the Residential Substance Abuse Treatment program contract.
- **\$760,421 Added** for Technical College System of Georgia vocational education contracts.
- **\$4.11 Million Added** to continue operating the digital forensics unit through a contract.
- **\$3.81 Million Added** for personal services for the Over Watch and Logistics (OWL) Unit and ongoing technology fees.
- **\$1.95 Million Added** for the annual operating costs of the Data Intelligence Advanced Integration system.

Transition Centers

- **\$436,048 Added** for a salary increase for behavioral health counselor positions to align with statewide averages to improve recruitment and retention.
- **\$2.71 Million Added for the opening of 100 additional beds at Smith Transitional Center.**
- **\$718,679 Transferred** from State Prisons program to Transition Centers program for ongoing capital maintenance and repairs.

Dept. of Early Care and Learning

Child Care Services

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

Pre-K Program

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

Dept. of Education

Agricultural Education

- **\$94,626 Added** to annualize the \$2,500 salary increase in FY 2025.
- **\$100,350 Added** in formula funds to reflect an increase in health insurance employer contribution per-member per-month (PMPM) rate for certified school employees to \$1,885 effective July 1, 2025.
- **\$100,000 added** for a Young Farmer position in Bibb County.
- **\$183,509 Added** for two education specialist positions at youth camps.
- **\$268,157 Added** for camp-affiliated staff.
- **Budget Direction: The Department of Education shall study and report the elimination of duplicative services and gain of operational efficiencies by combining Young Farmer and FFA programs to the House Budget and Research and Senate Budget and Evaluation Office by November 1, 2025.**

Business and Finance Administration

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

Central Office

- **\$0 Added** for [Plasma Games](#).

Charter Schools

- **\$2 Million Added** for planning grants for state completion special schools.
- **\$500,000 Added** for grants to school systems to encourage the authorization of locally approved charter schools pursuant to SB82 (2025 Session).

Communities in Schools

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

Curriculum Development

- **\$750,000 Added** for college preparatory exams based on increased utilization and recognize base funding of \$4,924,130.
- Budget Direction: Recognize existing funds (\$475,000) for a supplementary secondary math pilot program.
- **\$177,000 Reduced** for one-time funding for Life Sciences industry.

Curriculum Development-Special Project

- **\$0 Added** to sustain supplements for school literacy leads at all 1,343 K-3 schools.

Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS)

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

Information Technology Services

- **\$1.59 Million Added** to sustain 400mbps of state-funded bandwidth for all systems through PeachNet.

Literacy Coach Initiative

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

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

- **\$5.94 Million Added** for Sparsity Grants based on enrollment data.
- **\$543,000 Added** for custodian supplement grants.
- **\$95,812 Reduced** for Residential Treatment Facilities based on attendance. State General Funds.
- **\$2 Million Added** for character education programming.

- **\$3.03 Million Reduced** and **\$2 Million Transferred** to the Governor's Office of Student Achievement: Literacy Initiative Coordination for a free universal reading screener pursuant to HB 538 (2023 Session).
- **\$75,000 Added** for feminine hygiene grants and recognize base funds in Department of Education (\$1,500,000) and in Department of Public Health (\$200,000).
- **\$0 Added** for a 25% match for local education agencies (from historic reserve balances), charities, or local civic organizations to provide school supplies to educators pursuant to SB464 (2024 Session).
- Budget Direction: Recognize funds to fully fund school psychologist ratio at 1:2,420 for all QBE student categories pursuant to HB283 (2013 Session) under growth in the Residential Treatment Facilities formula.
- **\$250,000 Reduced** for one-time funding for mentorship programs.

Nutrition

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

Preschool Disability Services

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

Pupil Transportation

- **\$10.23 Million Added** for pupil transportation formula grants to reflect updated bus counts and operating expenses.
- **\$158,400 Added** for required bus driver safety training.

Quality Basic Education Equalization

- **\$113.14 Million Reduced** for Equalization grants.

QBE Local Five Mill Share

- **\$115.77 Million Reduced** to adjust funds for the Local Five Mill Share.

Quality Basic Education Program

- **\$300.44 Million Added** for enrollment growth and training and experience.
- **\$298,026 Reduced** for differentiated pay for newly certified math and science teachers.
- **\$21.53 Million Added** for the State Commission Charter School supplement.
- **\$1.83 Million Reduced** for the Completion Special Schools supplement.
- **\$1.35 Million Reduced** for the charter system grant.
- **\$172.6 Million Added** to reflect an increase in health insurance employer contribution per-member per-month (PMPM) rate for certified school employees to \$1,885 effective July 1, 2025.
- **\$871,982 Added** to fully fund school psychologist ratio at 1:2,420 for all QBE student categories pursuant to HB 283 (2013 Session).

Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs)

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

School Improvement

- **\$0 Reduced** to align with budget utilization.

School Nurse

- **\$92,301 Reduced** for school nurses.

School Security Grants

- **\$150,000 Added** for a school safety coordinator position.
- **\$0 Added** and budget direction Study and report to the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget, the House Budget and Research Office and the Senate Budget and Evaluation Office on the implementation of the school safety management systems from surrounding states.
- **\$0 Transferred** from the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities to the Department of Education to consolidate and streamline funding for school based mental health support services.
- **\$6.96 Million Added** for qualified student advocacy specialist grants pursuant to HB268 (2025 Session).
- Budget Direction: The purpose of this appropriation is to provide grants to local school systems to support school security needs and to provide for student mental health support.

State Charter School Commission Administration

- **\$449,899 Added and Transferred funds of \$265,501** from the Charter Schools program to implement the provisions of HB 318 (2024 Session).

State Schools

- **\$358,045 Added** for training and experience.
- **\$0 Reduced** to reflect alignment of budget to expenditures and prior usage of funds for hearing officers in Central Office.

Student Support Services

- **\$19.58 Million Added** to establish student mental health support grants.
- **\$2.39 Million Added** for social workers for school systems that, due to system size, do not earn enough QBE funds for a full school social worker position.
- **\$12.5 Million Added** for out-of-school care for statewide and community grantees.
- **\$15.28 Million Added** for one-time pilot funds to districts for targeted support to economically disadvantaged students).
- Budget Direction: The purpose of this appropriation is to provide for additional school-based social workers above what is earned in the Quality Basic Education formula and for grants to providers of out-of-school care.

Technology/Career Education

- **\$0 Added** for 2 full-time and 2 part-time positions and operating costs to sustain Great Promise Partnership operations as a part of work-based learning programs for at-risk students at the Department of Education.
- **\$1.25 Million Added** to establish a high-demand equipment grant program for new and expanding career and technical education labs that support instruction for high-demand careers as identified by the State Workforce Board.
- **\$236,735 Added** to annualize the \$2,500 salary increase in FY 2025.
- **\$100,000 Added** for a government and public administration pathway.

- Budget Direction: Recognize existing funds (\$1,000,000) for construction industry certification.

Employees' Retirement System of Georgia

- **\$10 Million Added** and **\$26.75 Million Recognized** in existing funds for an annual payment to eligible retired members by December 1 each year.

Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency

- **\$1.25 Million Eliminated** for a gang case management system.

Governor's Office of Student Achievement

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

Literacy Initiative Coordination

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

Dept. of Human Services

Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention

- **\$75,000 Added** to expand services for at-risk girls.

Child Support Services

- **\$60,899 Added** to expand participation in the Child Support Lien Network to include real property and lump sum payment matching services.
- **\$191,428 Added** to support the attainment of child support for out of state non-custodial parents. The Senate added an **additional \$371,595** under "Sales and Services Not Itemized."

Child Welfare Services

- **\$1.5 Million Added** in matching funds for the wraparound services pilot due to the denial of federal funds by the Administration for Children and Families.
- **\$125,000 Added** to expand heavy equipment operator certification program for high-risk youth.
- **\$1.72 Million Added** for Court Appointed Special Advocates to replace federal funds deemed ineligible by the Administration for Children and Families.

Federal Eligibility Benefit Services

- **\$5.76 Million Added** to annualize a \$3,000 additional salary enhancement for eligibility caseworkers.
- **\$2.06 Million Reduced** for labor and wage data verification services.

- **\$0 Reduced** overall.

Out-of-Home Care

- **\$19.29 Million Added** for utilization growth and increased costs of care.
- **\$300,000 Added** for essential clothing and supplies for foster youth.
- **\$250,000 Added** to place foster youth closer to their biological families and provide a report to the chairs of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees on success outcomes of the program by December 31, 2025.
- **\$6.14 Million and Title IV-E state match at \$1.4 Million Added** for a 2% provider rate increase for Child Caring Institutions, Child Placing Agencies, foster parents, and relative caregivers.
- **\$371,500 Added** for community action teams to deter child welfare involvement.
- **\$0 Added** to support youth aging out of foster care, but Senate directed the state to “Await recommendations from the Senate Study Committee on additional services and resources for transition age youth in foster care pursuant to SR310 (2025 Session)”

Out-of-School Care Services

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

Residential Child Care Licensing

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

Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Children Fund Commission

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

Office of the Commissioner of Insurance

- **\$60 Million Reduced** for the state reinsurance program and the state healthcare exchange and recognize exchange-generated user fees.

Georgia Bureau of Investigation

- **\$1 Million Added** and recognize \$1,000,000 appropriated in the Amended FY2025 budget (HB67, 2025 Session) for a gang case management system and for gang enforcement efforts across the state in Regional Investigative Services program.
- **\$390,789 Added** to establish a Strategic Threat Assessment Group responsible for addressing threats to public officials, investigating homeland security matters, and partnering with critical infrastructure partners to provide support during major events occurring in the state.
- **\$294,420 Added** to replace federal funds with state funds for three human trafficking positions.
- **\$2.15 Million Added** for one-time costs for the Columbus Gang Task Force positions.
- **\$150,000 Added** for advanced DNA testing and genetic genealogy testing for the cold case unit.
- **\$531,591 Added** for 4 criminal intelligence analysts for Georgia Information Sharing Analysis Center (GISAC).

Criminal Justice Coordinating Council

- **\$400,312 Added** to offset the loss of ARPA funds to continue operations at the Receiving Hope Center.
- **\$421,608 Added** for two advocate positions and ongoing maintenance of the End Human Trafficking Georgia 24/7 Hotline.
- **\$3.13 Million Added** to offset the loss of Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funds to provide core services for victims of crimes.
- **\$0 Added** to implement the Georgia Motor Vehicle Crime Prevention program pursuant to HB 268 (2023 Session).
- **\$250,000 Added** for one-time funding for gang prevention activities in Chatham County.

Criminal Justice Coordinating Council - Council of Accountability Court Judges

- **\$1.06 Million Added** for new and existing accountability courts to support population growth.
- **\$155,375 Added** for one training coordinator position and for the implementation of Juvenile Treatment Courts per HB 873 (2024 Session).
- **\$153,680 Added** for new and existing juvenile treatment courts.

Dept. of Juvenile Justice

Across the Agency

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

Community Service

- **\$351,582 Added** for a 2% provider rate increase for Child Caring Institutions, Child Placing Agencies, foster parents, and relative caregivers.
- **\$0 Reduced** to reflect an adjustment to align the program's budget with expenditures.

Departmental Administration

- **\$0 Reduced** to reflect an adjustment to align the program's budget with expenditures.

Secure Confinement (Youth Detention Centers – YDCs)

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

Secure Confinement (Residential Youth Detention Centers – RYDCs)

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

Dept. of Law

- **\$268,464 Added** for four positions to expand the Gang Prosecution Unit to the Savannah region.
- **\$748,143 Added** to annualize six positions to expand the Human Trafficking Unit to the Macon and Augusta regions.

GA Public Defender Council

- **\$0 Added** for a Juvenile Conflict Division manager position.

Dept. of Public Health

Adolescent and Adult Health Promotion

- **\$100,000 Transferred** to support lupus research, data collection, awareness, and education from the DCH to the DPH.
- **\$25,000 Added** for feminine hygiene grants and recognize base funds in Department of Education (\$1,500,000) and in Department of Public Health (\$200,000).

Emergency Preparedness/Trauma System Improvement

- **\$0 Added** to the Office of Cardiac Care for grants to hospitals as cardiac complications are the leading cause of maternal mortality.
- **\$0 Added** and no mandate for The Department of Public Health to study the needs of regional emergency transportation and report the findings to the Office of Planning and Budget, the House Budget and Research Office, and the Senate Budget and Evaluation Office.
- **\$3.07 Million Eliminated** from the Georgia Coordinating Council.

Infant and Child Essential Health Treatment Services

- **\$437,000 Added** for the cost of mailing Low THC Oil Patient registry cards pursuant to SB 495 (2024 Session).
- **\$2.98 Million Added** to expand the pilot to provide home visiting in at-risk and underserved rural communities during pregnancy and early childhood to improve birth outcomes, reduce preterm deliveries, and decrease infant and maternal mortality.
- *Budget Direction:* **\$778,239 Added** plus existing funds (\$97,701) for a cardiac obstetric program to increase access to maternal fetal medicine.
- **\$600,000 Added** to support quality improvement at birthing facilities and additional funding to increase the number of birthing facilities with verified maternal and neonatal levels of care.
- **\$550,895 Added** for the retention and recruitment of Babies Can't Wait Service Coordinators and Special Instructors.
- **\$0 Added** to increase reimbursement rate for CIS speech therapy code 92507.
- **\$600,000 Added** for 6 perinatal regional centers to provide for surveillance, training and monitoring of clinical care for high-risk infants and training residents in complex care.

Infant and Child Health Promotion

- *Budget Direction:* Utilize existing funds (\$1,007,109) for newborn screening to include one additional disorder that has been approved by the Georgia Newborn Screening Advisory Committee.
- **\$0 Added** for a two-year pilot program to study the impact of Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy on the newborn screening panel.
- **\$50,000 Added** for Reach Out and Read Georgia to provide children with books during well-visit appointments.

Infectious Disease Control

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

Dept. of Public Safety
Field Offices and Services

- **\$1 Million Added** for protection of communities.

GA Public Safety Training Center

- **\$253,202 Added** for additional training for jailers in accordance with SB 37 (2024 Session).
- **\$237,583 Added** for two training instructors and supplies for increased basic law enforcement training.

Office of Highway Safety

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

University System of Georgia Board of Regents
Across the System

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

Public Libraries

- **\$1.83 Million Added** to reflect an increase in health insurance employer contribution per-member per-month (PMPM) rate for certified school employees from \$1,580 to \$1,885.
- **\$334,446 Added** for the public libraries' formula based on an increase in the state population

Teaching

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

Payments to Georgia Military College Preparatory School

- **\$93,000 Added** to reflect an increase in health insurance employer contribution per-member per-month (PMPM) rate for certified school employees to \$1,885.
- **\$425,081 Added** for enrollment, training, and experience.

Georgia Student Finance Commission
Dual Enrollment

- **\$17.44 Million Added** to meet projected need.

Georgia Foster Care Scholarship

- Budget Direction: Establish the Georgia Foster Care Scholarship pursuant to SB85 (2025 Session)
- Budget Direction: The purpose of this appropriation is to provide postsecondary education grants to eligible students who are current or former foster youth.

HERO Scholarship

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

HOPE Grant

- \$17.22 Million Added to meet projected need.

HOPE Scholarships – Private Schools

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

HOPE Scholarships – Public Schools

- \$49.91 Million Added to meet projected need.

Promise Scholarships

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

Service Cancelable Loans

- \$100,000 Added for veterinary student loan repayment pursuant to SB20 (2025 Session)

Technical College System of Georgia***Technical Education***

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

Technical Education: High-Cost Programs - Special Project

- \$15.81 Million Added to reflect growth in aviation, commercial truck driving, and nursing program enrollment at targeted supplemental credit hour rates.
- \$8.47 Million Transferred from Technical Education program to recognize all state funds budgeted to fully fund supplemental earnings for high-cost programs.

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

- \$0 Added for capital projects statewide.

Dept. of Education

- \$143.56 Million Added for Capital Outlay Program – Regular for local school construction, statewide.
- \$14.9 Million Added for Capital Outlay Project - Low Wealth for school construction, statewide.
- \$17.6 Million Added for Capital Outlay Project - Additional Low Wealth for local school construction, statewide.
- \$7.35 Million Added for Purchase vocational and agriculture education equipment, statewide.
- \$20 Million Added for Purchase school buses, statewide.

University System of Georgia Board of Regents

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

Technical College System of Georgia

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

Dept. of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities

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

Dept. of Public Health

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

Dept. of Community Supervision

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

Dept. of Corrections

- **\$6.2 Million Added** for design and construction of a long term, acute care unit at Johnson State Prison, Wrightsville, Johnson County.
- **\$15.5 Million Added** for additional construction at McRae State Prison, McRae-Helena, Telfair County.

Dept. of Juvenile Justice

- **\$3.5 Million Added** for additional construction funds for a 56-bed facility expansion, Columbus, Muscogee County.
- **\$3.63 Million Added** for Construction and additional design of a 80-bed facility expansion, Macon, Bibb County.
- **\$5 Million Added** for upgrades to safety and security systems at facilities, statewide.

GO Bonds New

Senate said **“NO; Reflect funds in Capital Projects Fund program”** to the following House adds:

Department of Education

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

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

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

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

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

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

Department of Corrections

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

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

Department of Juvenile Justice

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

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

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



Justice, Public Safety, & School Discipline

HB 123

(Werkheiser- 157th) Changes the standard, in a capital case for which the death penalty is being sought, for determining when the accused has an intellectual disability (ID) from beyond a reasonable doubt to preponderance of the evidence. When the death penalty is sought, the defendant can file a pretrial notice of intent to raise a claim of ID, so long as they provide information to the prosecutor at least 60 days prior to the hearing. The hearing may be conducted upon motion of the defendant, which is at the discretion of the court or upon joint consent motion of the defendant and the state. The pretrial determination of ID will be made by the court sitting as the finder of fact. If the court does not find that the defendant has an ID, then the defendant is not precluded from raising it again in further proceedings. Either party may seek immediate review of the trial court's determination regarding the ID ruling. When the death penalty is sought and the defendant contends that they have ID, after finding the defendant guilty, the court will allow the defendant to present evidence of the ID and will then instruct the jury on the procedure. If the jury agrees with the defendant, then they will enter a separate finding of "intellectual disability" and can be sentenced to life imprisonment or life imprisonment without parole.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

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. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Judiciary Committee but the bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

HB 804

(Holly-116th) Establishes the House Study Committee on Exploring the Potential for Humanoids and Robotics in Georgia Workforce Development. The committee will consist of five members of the House of Representatives appointed by the speaker of the House.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Technology & Infrastructure Innovation Committee. The bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

HB 920

(Roberts-52nd) Prohibits any person who voluntarily associates (participation, formal affiliation, financial support, or public endorsement) with a hate group within the past ten years to serve as a peace officer or in a state militia role. Any person who currently serves as a peace officer

or in a state militia role to have been a hate group member within the past ten years is subject to immediate investigation and potential removal from his or her position.

STATUS: House Public Safety & Homeland Security Committee. The bill was introduced too late to crossover but remains viable for consideration next year.

SB 102

(Robertson-29th) Adds definitions for "fighting related objects," "game cock," and "minor," which is defined as an individual under the age of 18 years old. The bill makes it illegal to own, possess, train, transport, or sell a game cock with the intent that such game cock being used in fighting with another fowl. The bill also makes it illegal to cause these gamecocks to fight one another and broadens the existing crime of promoting these fights to also include those who charge an admission fee for an exhibition. The crime is a felony offense with punishment of between one and five years on a first offense, a minimum fine of \$5,000, or both. On a second conviction, the penalty is between one and 10 years, a minimum fine of \$15,000, or both. Further, the bill allows the court to prohibit the offender from owning or possessing an animal within the species for which the conviction is based. It also makes it a crime for allowing a minor to be present at one of these fights. This is a high and aggravated misdemeanor on the first offense. After a violation, the game cock at issue is to be impounded. This also makes it a crime to knowingly possess, purchase, or sell fighting-related objects with the intent that they will be used to promote, facilitate, train for, or participate in one of these fights. This is a high and aggravated misdemeanor. The bill amends O.C.G.A. 4-8-27(f) (Certificates of Registration/Responsible Dog Ownership) to include the felony of game cock fighting. This subsection lists crimes for when a "certificate of registration for a vicious dog" cannot be issued.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee but the bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

SB 132

(Strickland-42nd) Modifies Georgia's legal procedures for evaluating the mental competency of accused individuals to stand trial, introducing several key changes. The bill requires a court hearing before ordering a mental competency evaluation, with provisions for both the accused and prosecuting attorney to submit information, which can be filed under seal. For individuals charged with nonviolent misdemeanors, the bill establishes expedited and more lenient evaluation procedures, including a shorter 45-day evaluation period and an automatic dismissal of charges if the accused remains mentally incompetent after 120 days of treatment. The bill also allows for different treatment options, such as inpatient treatment in a secure facility or a jail-based competency restoration program, with special considerations for cases involving children. Additionally, the legislation amends provisions related to the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities' ability to receive and handle conviction data for employment screening purposes, expanding the department's authority to conduct criminal history checks and retain fingerprints. The bill will become effective on July 1, 2025, and will apply to motions, hearings, and trials commenced on or after that date, with the aim of providing a more nuanced and compassionate approach to handling mental competency evaluations in the criminal justice system.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

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. PASSED HOUSE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

SB 160 (Kirkpatrick-32nd) 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 related to installation are incurred by the offender. The bill revises Code relating to DUI Alcohol or Drug Use Risk Reduction Programs by allowing the completion credit of any DUI Alcohol or Drug Use Risk Reduction Program to be acceptable in applying for a limited driving permit and requiring written consent to obtain and transfer electronic records in relation to the program. No fees may be charged in the electronic transfer of assessment component results. Additionally, online or remote courses that provide in-person instruction are prohibited. Certified DUI Alcohol or Drug Use Risk Reduction Programs are authorized to charge an assessment component fee of \$100, an intervention component fee of \$275, and a course enrollment fee that includes a materials fee of up to \$25, a state administration fee of \$30, and an additional assessment fee of \$10. Further Code is amended to change driver improvement clinic fees from \$95 to \$125.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Motor Vehicles Committee but the bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

SB 185 (Robertson-29th) Prohibits the use of state funds or resources for sex reassignment surgeries, hormone replacement therapies, or sex characteristic altering cosmetic procedures or prosthetics for state inmates. Exceptions may be considered for medically necessary treatments when the condition is not related to sex reassignment or gender dysphoria, treatment for those with a sex development disorder, treatment for partial androgen insensitivity syndrome, and hormone replacement therapy for those receiving such treatment prior to the effective date of the bill for the purpose of transitioning off of treatment.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

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

SB 61

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

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee but the bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

SR 429

(Burns-23rd) Creates the Senate Addressing Felony Disenfranchisement in Georgia's Constitution Study Committee.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Since it is a Senate study committee, it does not require approval from the House or the governor and can therefore be enacted.

SR 533

(James-28th) Creates the Senate Study Committee on Enhancing Public Safety and Civic Health

STATUS: Senate Rules Committee. The bill was introduced too late and therefore DID NOT PASS.



Child Welfare & Protection

HB 36

(Leverett-123rd) Revises Georgia guardianship law by adding physician assistants, nurses, and professional counselors to the types of approved professionals authorized to participate in appointments of guardians or conservators, as well as those who evaluate the state of a ward or proposed ward. An adult shall not be presumed to be in need of a guardian solely because of a finding that the adult has a developmental disability. A proposed ward or proposed ward's legal counsel may challenge the sufficiency and weight of the results and conclusions of the evaluation. Additionally, definitions for "gross settlement" are provided with respect to applicable financial arrangements.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

HB 136 (Newton-127th) Increases the amount of a tax credit based on the federal tax credit for certain child and dependent care expenses to 50 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 creates a tax credit for employers who make payments directly to a child care facility in the name and for the benefit of an employee whose child is enrolled in such facility and is under the age of six, which total at least \$1,000.00 per taxable year for each employee for which such payments are made; and that are made for an employee in addition to, and not in lieu of, any other compensation and benefits for such employee. Relating to tax credits for contributions to foster child support organizations, the bill expands qualified expenditures for the credit to include wraparound services for aging foster children and justice involved youth who meet one of the following criteria: are enrolled in a public or private postsecondary education institution; enrolled in a program to obtain a high school diploma or equivalent; enrolled in a vocation school; or participating in a registered and compliant apprenticeship program. The bill adds to the definition of "aging foster children" former foster children between 16 and 25 years old who were in foster care for at least six months after the age of 14. HB 136 defines "justice involved youth" as those between the ages of 18 and 25 who are currently or previously committed to the Department of Juvenile Justice and were placed, or are currently placed, in a non-secure facility or community setting. The bill includes mentorship services provided to justice involved youth as a qualified expense and limits the number of contributions that can be used for expenses other than qualified expenses to no more than 10 percent. The annual compensation threshold to receive the credit is increased from \$500 to \$1,200 per year, and payments made to employees of a qualified mentorship organization that provide services other than mentorship are a qualified expense. Corporations contributing under this program are limited to credits totaling no more than 30 percent of the entity's income tax liability. The bill further adds business enterprises, defined as an insurance company required to pay the tax provided for in O.C.G.A. 33-8-4, to be eligible for the credit for qualified expenditures related to wraparound services. The bill raises the aggregate cap for credits under this program from \$20 million to \$30 million and eliminates the ability to carry forward any unused tax credit. The bill allows for the Division of Family and Children Services to decertify an organization that does not meet program requirements or has violated any other law. An organization seeking to be certified, but isn't a licensed child-placing agency, must demonstrate it has operated an aging out program, and provided services to at least 50 aging foster children or justice involved youth over the course of at least two calendar years. After receiving certification, the organization must annually demonstrate that it is continually providing these services. The bill adds that each qualified organization is required to post on its website a certification, signed by the organization's chief executive officer, that contains language provided for in the bill, to include a description of how qualified contributions were utilized. The bill is effective on July 1, 2025 and applicable to all taxable years beginning on January 1, 2026.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

HB 171 (Thomas-21st) Prohibits the ownership or operation of a computer-based program or application of computer-generated obscene material depicting a child or obscene description of conduct to a child and provides penalties and probation for such obscenities. If a person who commits the offense is under 18, he or she shall be guilty of a misdemeanor upon conviction if the child depicted would realistically appear to be at least 14 years of age to an average observer. Additionally, within the court's discretion, the defendant violation of such offense was not for the intent to harass, intimidate, or embarrass any person or for any commercial purposes. Otherwise, any adult who commits the offense, upon conviction, is guilty of a felony and will be subject to imprisonment for one to fifteen years.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill failed to secure a vote on the Senate floor and therefore DID NOT PASS.

HB 253 (Clark-100th) "Ethan's Law": Prohibits a superior court judge from ordering family reunification or unification treatments, programs, or services that as a condition of enrollment require or result in: A) a violation of a court order requiring a child to have no contact with their parent or legal guardian; B) the use of private youth transporters or private transportation agents engaged in the use of force, the threat of force, physical obstruction, acutely distressing circumstances, or circumstances that place the safety of the child at risk; C) a no-contact period between the child and their parent or legal guardian; or D) an out-of-state stay. The bill also authorizes ambulance services to accept physical custody of a newborn. The legislation allows placement of newborn safety devices, which are enclosed, locked, monitored receptacles in which a newborn can safely be placed, at medical facilities, fire stations, police stations, and ambulance services. These devices must be in a conspicuous place, visible to employees, agents, or staff members of the facility or station. The facility or station must have an emergency medical services provider on staff 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. The bill failed to receive final agreement to most recent changes made to it and therefore DID NOT PASS.

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. PASSED SENATE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

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. PASSED SENATE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

HB 465 (Gilliard-162nd) 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. TABLED in Senate and therefore DID NOT PASS.

HB 582 (Gunter-8th) "Georgia Survivor Justice Act"-Allows defendants charged with crimes against persons to present evidence that they were subjected to family violence, dating violence, or child abuse by the alleged victim in support of a justification defense. This includes evidence such as seeking help from law enforcement, medical professionals, or counselors, and effects like PTSD. The bill narrows immunity for malice murder to cases involving coercion or imminent threat to another's life. It also limits prosecution of peace officers for violating their oath to instances involving felonies or high misdemeanors. Defendants sentenced before July 1, 2025, may petition for re-sentencing under the new provisions, with a presumption that a hearing should be granted. At sentencing, courts may consider whether such abuse significantly contributed to the offense and may impose reduced sentences. The Act establishes a new evidentiary privilege for communications made during victim-centered practices or victim-offender dialogues, shielding them from discovery. Facilitators of these programs are protected from civil liability except in cases of gross negligence or malice. Lastly, the Act mandates a specific oath for officers beginning July 1, 2025, and clarifies that aspirational language in oaths carries no legal effect.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

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

STATUS: House Judiciary Committee. The bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

HR 611 (Dempsey-13th) Creates the House Study Committee on Abandoned Child Placement Following Hospital Discharge, which will study the abandonment of children after psychiatric hospitalization and other types of out-of-home care. The committee will be comprised of five members of the House of Representatives appointed by the speaker of the House.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Since it is a House study committee, it does not require approval from the Senate or the governor and can therefore be enacted.

HR 816 (Hilton-48th) Creates the House Study Committee on Evaluating Funding for Public Health. The committee will be comprised of five members of the House of Representatives appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Since it is a House study committee, it does not require approval from the Senate or the governor and can therefore be enacted.

SB 5 (Kirkpatrick-32nd) Requires health insurers to implement a program that reduces prior authorization requirements for providers based on quality metrics. The bill also requires that all health benefit policies administered by the State Health Benefit Plan (SHBP) in Georgia provide coverage for healthcare services related to Pediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorders Associated with Streptococcal Infections (PANDAS) and Pediatric Acute Onset Neuropsychiatric Syndrome (PANS). Coverage must align with nationally recognized clinical practice guidelines and apply to diagnosis, treatment, management, and monitoring of these conditions. The bill prohibits special deductibles, coinsurance, or copayments beyond those generally applicable to other covered healthcare services.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

SB 8 (Kirkpatrick-32nd) Provides various clarifications regarding the role of juvenile court judges and the procedure in juvenile court. Section 1 notes that an arrest warrant must provide the same information as required under Title 17, and can be issued in any county, even if the crime was committed in another county. That warrant does not require a judge in that other county to also endorse the warrant. Section 2 clarifies that O.C.G.A. 15-18-6.1, which involves representation of the government in juvenile court cases, does not restrict or limit a district attorney or solicitor general to represent the state in a criminal case in juvenile court involving a felony or misdemeanor. Section 3 clarifies that a juvenile court judge may issue a warrant for the arrest of an offender, except when issuing a warrant for the arrest of a law enforcement officer, Division of Family and Children Services case manager, teacher, or school administrator. Section 4 clarifies that a juvenile court judge, who has criminal jurisdiction, may hold trial over someone who is arrested and accused.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. LOST HOUSE VOTE. Motion to reconsider pending, but the bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

SB 9 (Albers-56th) Defines terms related to artificial intelligence (AI), and establishes 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. PASSED HOUSE. The bill failed to receive final agreement to most recent changes made to it and therefore DID NOT PASS.

SB 27 (Albers-56th) "Georgia Anti-Doxing Act" - Provides definitions for "close relation," "mental anguish," "personally identifiable information," "post," "significant economic injury," "social media platform," and "stalking." The bill creates the crime of doxing, which is committed by a person they, with reckless disregard, post personally identifiable information of another knowing that a third party could read the post and then cause actual fear of stalking, serious injury, or death or suffer a significant economic injury or mental anguish due to the post. The crime of aggravated doxing is also created, which has the same elements as doxing, although it requires that the act intentionally cause harm to the individual. Doxing is a misdemeanor on a first offense, although a second or subsequent offense is a felony offense with punishment of between one and two years, a fine of \$5,000, or both. Aggravated doxing is a felony offense with punishment of between two and five years, a fine of \$5,000, or both, although a second or subsequent offense is punished by imprisonment of between five and 10 years, a fine of \$10,000, or both. A person who commits the crime of aggravated doxing, when the offense results in serious bodily injury or death, will be punished as a party to the crime. The bill also includes a venue provision that determines where a defendant will be tried.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee but the bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

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.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

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. PASSED HOUSE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

SB 98 (Cowsert-46th) Changes various references in the Juvenile Code to reflect "county conservators" rather than "county guardians," and adds references to "county conservators" to various other sections of the Code. After July 1, 2025, in matters related to a conservatorship when an individual designated as a county guardian is serving as a county conservator, the designation of that individual will be county conservator.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

SB 100 (Robertson-29th) Allows an adult who had been adopted to request and receive a copy of their original Georgia birth certificate following payment of a fee. The copy will indicate it is not a certified copy. A parent, sibling, or descendant of a deceased person may receive a copy of the decedent's birth certificate under the same procedure.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

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. PASSED HOUSE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

SB 245 (Hodges-3rd) Permits grandparents who have been granted visitation rights to their grandchild following the death, incapacitation, or incarceration of the parent of the child to petition the court for revocation or amendment of the visitation rights, as long as the petition has not been filed more than once during any two-year period.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

SB 259 (Brass-6th) "Ridge's Law"-Requires a physician holding a child in temporary protective custody to make reasonable efforts to inform the child's parents of their right to obtain an independent medical evaluation or pediatric specialty consultation. The bill also requires the physician to inform the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) of the basis of their determinations regarding suspected abuse or neglect and whether a physical examination was conducted and what medical records were reviewed. The bill defines pediatric specialty consultation as a consultation with a physician with specific experience in the listed fields. A parent of a child who is taken into temporary protective custody has the right to obtain an independent medical evaluation of the child at their own expense unless prohibited by court order. If an independent evaluation is obtained, the court will consider the results in any dependency proceeding that occurs due to alleged abuse. No hearing can be continued solely because the results from the independent evaluation are unavailable.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

SB 268 (Robertson-29th) Section 1, adds a step-grandparent and step-grandchild to O.C.G.A. 16-6-22(a)(4), which is a list of people prohibited from having "sexual intercourse or sodomy" with one another. Section 2 defines first responder as a person or agency that provides on-site care until the arrival of a licensed ambulance service. This includes law enforcement, firefighters, rescue agencies, and others. A person commits the offense of interference with a first responder when they receive a verbal warning not to approach from a person that they know, or reasonably should know, is a first responder engaged in the performance of a legal duty and knowingly and willfully violates the warning and approaches within 25 feet of that first responder with the intent to: A) impede or interfere with the first responder's ability to perform the duty; B) threaten the first responder with physical harm; or C) harass the first responder. This offense is a high and aggravated misdemeanor.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee but the bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

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

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Since it is a Senate study committee, it does not require approval from the House or the governor and can therefore be enacted.

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

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Since it is a Senate study committee, it does not require approval from the House or the governor and can therefore be enacted.



Health & Behavioral Health

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. The bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

HB 54 (Clark-100th) Authorizes an advanced practice registered nurse or a licensed physician assistant to order home health care under the supervision of a licensed physician.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

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. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

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. The bill failed to move beyond the Senate committee and therefore DID NOT PASS.

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 but failed to secure further action and therefore DID NOT PASS.

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. PASSED SENATE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

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

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. TABLED in Senate and therefore DID NOT PASS.

HB 196 (Kelley-16th) Requires health insurers to reimburse a pharmacy for a drug dispensed to a covered person on the State Health Benefit Plan (SHBP) based on the national average drug acquisition cost (NADAC). Additionally, the bill requires a professional dispensing fee that is not less than the professional dispensing fee paid by the state under the Social Security Act.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

HB 197 (Hawkins-27th) Implements a callback telecommunications system for peer to peer communications in the event a clinical peer is not available upon first contact effort. Additionally, this bill addresses prior authorization practices.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

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 but the bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

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. TABLED in Senate and therefore DID NOT PASS.

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. PASSED SENATE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

HB 352 (Seabaugh-34th) "Georgia Gestational Diabetes Management Act"-Includes patients with gestational diabetes to the list of those eligible for Medicaid covered continuous glucose monitors.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

HB 370 (Gaines-120th) Creates O.C.G.A. 48-7-40.10, which allows for a tax credit for small employers, defined as having 50 or fewer employees, that contribute to an individual coverage health reimbursement arrangement for employees. The maximum tax credit allowable is \$600 per covered employee during the first three years of the program's existence, \$400 per covered employee in the fourth year of the program, and \$200 per covered employee in the fifth year of the program. The aggregate amount of tax credits allowed is limited to \$5 million per year. The employer must contribute at least \$200 per month toward an employee's coverage. Any amount of a tax credit that is unused may not be carried forward to be used against future tax liabilities.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. The bill failed to receive final agreement to most recent changes made to it and therefore DID NOT PASS.

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) Creates the Senate Study Committee on Higher Education Affordability.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Since it is a Senate study committee, it does not require approval from the House or the governor and can therefore be enacted.

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

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. TABLED in Senate and therefore DID NOT PASS.

HB 567 (Dempsey-13th) Authorizes teledentistry by licensed dentists, while establishing requirements and restrictions. The bill allows for the coverage of teledentistry healthcare services under dental benefits plans.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

HB 577 (Gaines-120th) "Georgia Nicotine Vapor Products Directory Act" - 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 but the bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

HB 584 (Petrea-166th) Reassigns licensing and oversight of drug abuse treatment and education programs, narcotic treatment programs, community living arrangements, and adult residential mental health programs from the Department of Community Health (DCH) to the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD). Community service boards will be the governing bodies. Rules and regulations created and implemented by December 31, 2025 will remain in effect until revoked. All issued and provisional licenses provided by DCH on December 31, 2025 will be valid until they are revoked, renewed, surrendered, or terminated. The reassignment will be effective January 1, 2026.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

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 but the bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

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 but the bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

HB 872 (Cooper-45th) Provides the right to any means of contraception for females.

STATUS: House Public & Community Health Committee. The bill was introduced too late to crossover but remains viable for consideration next year.

HB 897 (Au-50th) Allows pharmacies to dispense a one-time, 30-day emergency supply of insulin to eligible individuals who provide proper identification, a valid insulin prescription, and a completed, signed application form. States that the maximum out-of-pocket cost for the 30-day supply is \$35. Pharmacies must notify the prescribing healthcare provider within 72 hours of dispensing the insulin. Eligible individuals include those who have applied for medical assistance, Georgia Medicaid, or PeachCare for Kids but have not yet been determined eligible or have not yet received coverage. The Department of Community Health must provide information on applying for medical assistance, details about the program, and guidance on accessing healthcare providers participating in drug discount programs. The bill establishes administrative penalties ranging from \$200,000 to \$600,000 for insulin manufacturers that fail to comply with procedures for making insulin available to eligible pharmacies. Fraudulent activity which may include false statements, failure to disclose information or impersonation, or obtains or attempts to obtain any assistance benefit may be guilty of a misdemeanor unless if the value of assistance exceeds \$1,500 and will therefore be guilty of a felony.

STATUS: House Public & Community Health Committee. The bill was introduced too late to crossover but remains viable for consideration next year.

HB 898 (Au-50th) Mandates that each drug manufacturer to make a patient assistance program that is made available to eligible individuals, provides a 90 day supply of insulin at no charge to an eligible individual or pharmacy and can be recorded for up to one year and is renewable annually if an individual still meets eligibility.

STATUS: House Public & Community Health Committee. The bill was introduced too late to crossover but remains viable for consideration next year.

HR 72 (Hawkins-27th) Creates the House Study Committee on Cancer Care Access. The committee is to be comprised of 12 committee members appointed by the speaker of the House.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Since it is a House study committee, it does not require approval from the Senate or the governor and can therefore be enacted.

HR 304 (Au-50th) Creates the House Study Committee on the Costs and Effects of Smoking. The study committee will consist of five members of the House of Representatives to be appointed by the speaker of the House.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Since it is a House study committee, it does not require approval from the Senate or the governor and can therefore be enacted.

HR 368 (Sainz-180th) Creates the House Study Committee on Intoxicating Cannabinoids in Consumable Hemp Products. Five members of the Georgia House of Representatives appointed by the speaker of the House will serve on the study committee. The committee will stand abolished on December 31, 2025.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Motor Vehicles Committee. The bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

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

STATUS: House Health Committee. The bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

HB 512 (Hagan-156th) Creates a House Study Committee on the Addiction Epidemic and Solutions for Recovery. This resolution is amended to include a certified peer specialist on the committee.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Health Committee. The bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

HR 592 (Newton-127th) Creates the House Study Committee on Non-Compete Clauses in Physician Contracts. The committee will be composed of five members of the House of Representatives to be appointed by the speaker of the House, who will also designate a chairperson. This committee will be abolished December 1, 2025.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Health Committee. The bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

HR 685 (Sainz-180th) Creates the House Study Committee on Mental Health Workforce Development.

STATUS: House Health Committee. The bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

HR 753 (Donatucci-105th) Establishes the House Study Committee on Improving Access to Internal Medicine in Rural Areas. The committee will examine the conditions, needs, issues, and challenges related to healthcare access in rural Georgia, particularly in communities facing shortages in health transportation.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Since it is a House study committee, it does not require approval from the Senate or the governor and can therefore be enacted.

HR 847 (Taylor-173rd) Creates the House Study Committee on Evaluating Funding for Public Health.

STATUS: House Public & Community Health Committee

HB 948 (Stephens-164th) Creates the House Study Committee on Pharmacy Benefits Managers and Consumer Access to Prescription Medications.

STATUS: House Health Committee. The bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

SB 30

(Watson-1st) Limits the prescription and administration of puberty-blocking medications or therapies for the purpose of altering the appearance of or affirming a minor's perception of their sex if it is inconsistent with their biological sex. Such medication may be used if a minor has been diagnosed with gender dysphoria by two behavioral health professionals including one psychiatrist or psychologist; authorized parents or legal guardians have given written informed consent; and the minor undergoes quarterly psychological counseling throughout treatment. The licensed prescribing physician must be board certified in pediatrics and either pediatric endocrinology or adolescent medicine. The physician must assess the patient's medical history, mental health, and any underlying conditions as well as submit treatment progress reports to the Georgia Composite Medical Board annually. Minors being treated with puberty-blocking medication before July 1, 2025 may continue treatment without such requirements. A legal guardian or parent with the authority to consent to such treatment may bring civil action against an institution that provided treatment if it is within two years and violates the aforementioned provisions. The bill also provides definitions for "hormone therapy," "puberty-blocking medication," "sex," and "sex reassignment surgery."

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Public & Community Health Committee but the bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

SB 39

(Tillery-19th) Excludes expenses for any transition-related intervention for individuals on the state health plan, by a physician or other healthcare provider employed by the state, in a state owned or operated facility, or in a correctional facility. The bill provides for certain exceptions, and does not prohibit an individual from obtaining a secondary policy for such treatment or restrict any non-state health benefits provider from offering such care.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Health Committee but the bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

SB 72

(Brass-6th) Allows for a terminally ill patient's right to try investigational drugs, biological products, and devices to expand their access to individualized treatments.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

SB 79 (Goodman-8th) Amends O.C.G.A. 16-13-31 (Manufacture, Delivery, Distribution, Possession, or Sale of Non Controlled Substances) to strike the references that cite to fentanyl (in Schedule II) and fentanyl analogue structural class. If a person sells, manufactures, delivers, brings into the state, or has possession of at least four grams of fentanyl, a fentanyl analog structural class, or any mixture containing these substances, then they are guilty of trafficking in fentanyl. The penalty for at least four grams but less than eight grams is a mandatory minimum of eight years and a fine of \$75,000. The penalty for at least eight grams but less than 14 grams is a mandatory minimum of 15 years and a fine of \$150,000. The penalty for at least 14 grams but less than 28 grams is a mandatory minimum of 25 years and a fine of \$250,000. The penalty for 28 grams or more is a mandatory minimum of 35 years and a fine of \$750,000. The bill also revises the penalties that can be imposed once the individual meets the requirements for a judge, and the judge agrees to depart from the mandatory minimums. New sentencing ranges are also added to the Code. Further, the bill responds to a court case and ensures that mandatory minimums cannot be suspended, stayed, probated, deferred, or otherwise withheld by the court.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

SB 91 (Tillery-19th) Originally dealing with pharmacy benefits manager policy, the bill was completely replaced by content which requires insurance providers to provide coverage for annual prostate cancer screenings for men with a high risk for prostate cancer. It also allows for Medicare policies to be issued and renewed for individuals under 65 years of age who are eligible due to disability or end stage renal disease.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Health Committee but the bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

SB 130 (Hodges-3rd) Expands the ability for a resident or fellow to be taught in a teaching hospital or a medical facility that meets the stated criteria. This bill also allows a resident or fellow to apply for the service cancelable loan program through the Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

SB 131 (Hodges-3rd) Adds the insurance commissioner to the Behavioral Health Coordinating Council and establishes a parity compliance review panel within the council to be composed of six members.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. The bill failed to receive final agreement to most recent changes made to it and therefore DID NOT PASS.

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. PASSED HOUSE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

SB 162 (Hufstetler-52nd) Requires the Georgia Composite Medical Board to implement an automated licensing data management software system for physicians, physician assistants, and anesthesiologist assistants. The system will allow a single verification process for state-wide authorization, and be accessible to other state medical boards, providers, and facilities. Completed applications will be processed within 30 days and reappointments within two weeks. The system will be created no later than October 1, 2025 and be fully operational by January 1, 2026. The bill also requires the Georgia Composite Medical Board to establish rules and regulations for the administration of psychedelic-assisted treatment and therapy in clinics that provide such services. The board and other healthcare professional boards can also create minimum standards for related continuing education credits for clinic providers of psychedelic-assisted treatment. Clinics will be licensed by the board by July 1, 2026 and be renewed biennially, and licenses are not transferable to different clinic locations. Administration of psychedelic-assisted treatment in a clinic will only be performed by licensed physicians with advanced airway management training, and certified registered nurses and licensed anesthesia assistants that are under a licensed physician. Anyone administering treatment without a medical license is deemed to be engaged in unlawful practice of medicine. The bill will not prohibit the use of psychedelic treatment in hospital settings or clinical trials approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Public & Community Health Committee but the bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

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 but the bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

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 but the bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

SB 233 (Jones II-22nd) Increases the number of members of the Behavioral Health Reform and Innovation Commission from 24 to 30. The six members added must be: a certified addiction recovery specialist with lived experience; an intellectual and developmental disabilities provider; an individual that has lost an immediate family member to a drug overdose; a leader of an intellectual and developmental disabilities advocacy organization; an executive director of an addiction and recovery nonprofit; and someone with or a parent of someone with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The bill also replaces the Involuntary Commitment and Workforce and System Development subcommittees of the commission with Addictive Diseases and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Lastly, the commission's abolishment date is extended from June 30, 2025 to December 31, 2026.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

SB 254 (Cowser-46th) Includes gummies and consumable base oils within the definition of "food products" and allows those products to be sold or distributed as consumable hemp products within the state. The bill also allows licensed retail dealers in distilled spirits to obtain a retail consumable hemp establishment license and to sell consumable hemp products to consumers.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Regulated Industries Committee, but the bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

SB 371 (Strickland-42nd) Creates grants programs that implement certified peer specialists, under the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, into hospitals or addiction recovery support centers. Requires DBHDD to require each grantee to share program information data with the contracted organization, entity, or consultant. Requires the Department of Corrections and Department of Community Services to establish forensic peer mentor programs in every state prison, county jail, and municipal jail.

STATUS: Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill was introduced too late to crossover but remains viable for consideration next year.

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

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Since it is a Senate study committee, it does not require approval from the House or the governor and can therefore be enacted.

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

STATUS: Senate Health & Human Services Committee. The bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

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

STATUS: Senate Health & Human Services Committee. The bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

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

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Since it is a Senate study committee, it does not require approval from the House or the governor and can therefore be enacted.



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. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

HB 94 (Lumsden-12th) Requires every health benefit policy renewed or issued after January 1, 2026 to include coverage for expenses related to starting fertility preservation when a medically necessary treatment may cause infertility.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

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. PASSED SENATE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

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. TABLED in Senate and therefore DID NOT PASS.

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

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

HB 441 (Dunahoo-31st) Creates the Senate Civil Rights Protections Study Committee.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Since it is a Senate study committee, it does not require approval from the House or the governor and can therefore be enacted.

HB 471 (Cheokas-151st) Expands the list of Schedule 1 controlled substances.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

HB 884 (Cannon-58th) Creates a grant program for perinatal facilities in low-access maternity care areas and maternity care deserts to recruit and retain obstetric providers, upgrade facilities, and establish partnerships with larger medical centers for training, resources, and support.

STATUS: House Public & Community Health Committee. The bill was introduced too late to crossover but remains viable for consideration next year.

HB 885 (Cannon-58th) Creates a program under the Department of Community Health and the Commissioner of Insurance a program to assist pregnant women who reside in low access to maternity care areas and maternity care deserts and who are uninsured or underinsured in obtaining obstetric care and other related medical services. The program will cover or reimburse costs for obstetric care, mental health services, telehealth services, transportation to and from appointments, and child care for pregnant women.

STATUS: House Public & Community Health Committee. The bill was introduced too late to crossover but remains viable for consideration next year.

HB 925 (Cannon-58th) "Georgia Maternal Health Omnibus Act"-Establishes pilot programs to provide prenatal care and postpartum care through telemedicine and mobile health clinics for women residing in limited maternity care counties and maternity care deserts.

STATUS: House Public & Community Health Committee. The bill was introduced too late to crossover but remains viable for consideration next year.

HR 593 (Newton-127th) Creates the House Study Committee on Maternal, Prenatal, and Pediatric Care Access and Funding. The committee will be comprised of five members of the House of Representatives appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Public & Community Health Committee. The bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

SB 101 (Robertson-29th) Originally a bill about Duchenne muscular dystrophy, the content was completely replaced by language stating that all benefits policies renewed on or after January 1, 2026 will include coverage for orthotic devices and prosthetic devices that are medically necessary for the following: activities of daily living, essential job-related activities, personal hygiene-related activities, and physical activities. Coverage will be provided for no more than three orthotic devices or prosthetic devices per affected limb per covered person during any three-year period. Coverage considered as habilitative or rehabilitative benefits will be comparable to coverage for other medical and surgical benefits, may be subject to the same cost-sharing requirements that apply to other medical devices, and may be limited for out-of-network providers. The bill requires the commissioner to submit a report to the House Committee on Insurance and the Senate Insurance and Labor Committee regarding implementation of coverage by July 1, 2032.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.



Early Childhood Education & Out-of-School Time

HB 175 (Jones-25th) Revises 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. PASSED SENATE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

HR 711 (Erwin-32nd) Establishes the House Study Committee on Student Attendance in Pre-K-12 Education. The study committee will conduct a comprehensive review of student attendance in pre-K through grade 12. The study committee will be composed of six members of the House of Representatives appointed by the speaker of the House.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Since it is a House study committee, it does not require approval from the Senate or the governor and can therefore be enacted.

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 but the bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS. Some similar provisions are found in HB 136, which did pass.

SR 493 (Mallow-2nd) Constitutional Amendment that authorizes the General Assembly to create the Georgia's Children First Trust Fund which will provide financial assistance for child care services in the state, and authorizes the General Assembly to make a one-time funding of \$3 Billion.

STATUS: Senate Children & Families Committee. The bill was introduced too late to crossover and therefore DID NOT PASS.



K-12 Education

HB 37 (Leverett-123rd) Provides for payment of the costs of health insurance coverage for family members of local boards of education. Section 2 amends O.C.G.A. 20-2-219.1, to require local school systems to notify new hires whether Social Security taxes are withheld from employee's paychecks beginning July 1, 2025. Every five years and upon separation of employment, the school system must remind employees whether Social Security taxes are withheld from the employee's pay during employment.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

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. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

HB 105 (Wade-9th) Requires the State Board of Workers' Compensation to investigate and notify the Department of Administrative Services when a peace officer is awarded benefits and suffered catastrophic injury under certain circumstances. Law enforcement agencies must notify peace officers of the existence of the Georgia State Indemnification Fund within 10 days of a temporary or permanent disability suffered in the line of duty. Section 4 amends O.C.G.A. 45-9-78, which increases the indemnification award from \$75,000 to \$150,000 for certain state public school personnel in the event of death.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

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. Prohibits public schools, local education agencies, and public postsecondary institutions from promoting, supporting, or maintaining any programs or activities that advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion. Any postsecondary institution that violates this shall be subject to the withholding of state funding or state administered federal funding which includes scholarships, loans, and grants.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. The bill failed to receive final agreement to most recent changes made to it and therefore DID NOT PASS.

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. PASSED SENATE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

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. States that school systems of public elementary and secondary schools shall allow access to patriotic societies like the Boy Scouts of America if requested by such an entity. If access is denied, a written explanation must be provided to the requesting entity.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. TABLED in Senate and therefore DID NOT PASS.

HB 217 (Hong-103rd) Updates provisions related to local school system enrollment counts as they relate to local board of education elections. The bill authorizes the Education Savings Authority to submit the income information of Promise Scholarship applicants to the Department of Revenue for verification. The bill extends the Dual Achievement pilot program sunset date to July 1, 2031. It also provides for the distribution of QBE formula earnings from the State Board of Education to the TCSG board based on the number of eligible students participating in the program.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

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 but the bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

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. PASSED SENATE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

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 but the bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS. (Though it was amended to another bill which did pass.)

HB 268 (Persinger-119th) A comprehensive bill to ensure the safety, health, and wellbeing of students and school communities. Part I: Panic Alert Buttons Section 1-1 enacts 'Ricky and Alyssa's Law,' requiring local school systems to implement a mobile panic alert system for real-time coordination between emergency services during school security incidents. Sections 1-2, 1-3 authorize the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency to adopt rules for school mapping data, to be procured by July 1, 2026. Part II: Student Records Section 2-1 mandates student records be requested within five school business days of notification by the custodian of a child in state custody. Section 2-7 requires local boards of education to provide an electronic copy of a student's complete education record within three business days of the request. Section 2-8 necessitates parents or legal custodians to attest to the existence or non-existence of certain non-educational data when enrolling a new student above third grade. Section 2-14 allows courts to intervene if a parent or custodian fails to authorize the release of student education records. Section 2-2 provides reimbursement for qualified student advocacy specialists based on enrollment totals. Section 2-4 designates a student affairs officer in Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs) to provide dispute resolution services related to data-sharing concerns. Section 2-6 requires the chief privacy officer to create a guidance document on data privacy laws for agencies holding student education data. Section 2-10 mandates officials to notify school officials and parents of the outcome of the disposition of children taken into custody. Section 2-12 requires local boards of education to implement Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Response to Intervention (RTI) initiatives in high needs elementary and middle schools. Section 2-15 mandates public schools serving grades six through 12 to provide one hour of suicide awareness and prevention training, and one hour of youth violence prevention training each school year. Section 2-16

requires schools to refer students absent for 30 consecutive days to DFCS for assessment and to the RESA student affairs officer to determine withdrawal status. Section 2-18 mandates the Department of Education to publish model language for agreements between local school systems and law enforcement officers by August 1, 2025. Sections 2-19, 2-20 require school safety plans to include provisions for behavioral health needs and a behavioral threat assessment management (BTAM) plan by January 1, 2027. Section 2-21 requires GEMA/HS to establish an emergency alert response system for schools to communicate threats and emergency procedures. Part III Section 3-1 amends the juvenile code to revise the definition of assault with a deadly weapon. Section 3-2 gives superior courts concurrent and original jurisdiction over certain violent crimes committed by children aged 13 to 17. Section 3-4 clarifies situations considered disrupting or interfering with the operation of public schools and requires progressive discipline systems. Section 3-5 creates the offense of a terroristic threat of a school. Part IV Section 4-1 states the Act becomes law upon the Governor's approval or upon becoming law without such approval. Sections 2-8, 3-3, and 3-4 are applicable to offenses committed on or after the effective date of the Act.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

HB 307 (Ballard-147th) "Georgia Early Literacy and Dyslexia Act" - Include provisions for students significantly at risk of not achieving grade level reading proficiency or with characteristics of dyslexia to align instruction with the science of reading principals. The bill prevents using three-cueing instruction as the primary means of providing literacy instruction. This Code section creates the Georgia Literacy Plan Coordination Council, which will support coordination of state literacy efforts to ensure training is standardized across the state. The bill repeals O.C.G.A. 20-2-159.6, relating to screening for dyslexia and related disorders, and joins the dyslexia Code section with the literacy act.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

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 but the bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

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. PASSED SENATE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

HB 371 (Corbett-174th) This bill revises the "Charter Schools Act of 1998" by allowing the conversion of existing charter schools into completion charter schools and requiring the State Board of Education to establish rules, regulations, policies, and procedures to govern the content of a charter school petition.

STATUS: Senate Education & Youth Committee. The bill was introduced too late to crossover but remains viable for consideration next year.

HB 451 (Cannon-172nd) 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 but the bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

HB 873 (Townsend-179th) Allows the Department of Education to employ retired teachers who receive benefits from the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia.

STATUS: House Retirement Committee. The bill was introduced too late to crossover but remains viable for consideration next year.

HB 893 (Hilton-48th) Replaces the terms "charter system" and "charter systems" with "performance contract system" and "performance contract systems" throughout the Official Code of Georgia Annotated.

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill was introduced too late to crossover but remains viable for consideration next year.

HB 907 (Jones-47th) Requires certain local school systems to either be a party to a collaborative operating agreement with a completion special school or provide certain education programs and services to students in grades nine through 12. The bill also requires local school systems to provide to completion special schools the contact information for students who stop attending or withdraw from the local school system.

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill was introduced too late to crossover but remains viable for consideration next year.

HB 908 (Smith-41st) Prohibits public schools, private schools, or home school program from requiring a child who has successfully completed all requirements for a high school diploma to take or attend classes for any additional courses in their final semester of high school.

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill was introduced too late to crossover but remains viable for consideration next year.

HB 912 (Wilkerson-38th) Provides matching grant funding from the State Board of Education to an eligible home reading program for students in kindergarten through fourth grade.

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill was introduced too late to crossover but remains viable for consideration next year.

HB 917 (Jones-25th) Provides generally for open enrollment processes for students to transfer between local school systems and between schools within local school systems and prohibits charging tuition for transfers between local school systems, with some exception. The bill also provides for appeals of denials of transfer requests and revises the calculations for equalization grants, among other provisions.

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill was introduced too late to crossover but remains viable for consideration next year.

HB 918 (Hilton-48th) Permits private school students, home study students, and nonresident public school students to enroll as part-time students in any public school in this state, subject only to enrolling school capacity and academic and grade level prerequisites.

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill was introduced too late to crossover but remains viable for consideration next year.

HB 921 (Park-107th) Requires the Georgia Department of Education to conduct an impact study within 90 days of any federal action that reduces the scope, workforce, or budget of the **U.S. Department of Education by more than 20%. The study will assess the effects on **public primary and secondary education in Georgia, including **academic performance, program access, staffing resources, and school operations. A report of the findings must be provided to each local education agency and made publicly available on the department's website in a clear and accessible format.

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill was introduced too late to crossover but remains viable for consideration next year.

HB 929 (Lupton-83rd) Provides for a three-year pilot program for dietetics services for public elementary and secondary school students and patients at federally qualified health centers.

STATUS: House Public & Community Health Committee. The bill was introduced too late to crossover but remains viable for consideration next year.

HR 711 (Erwin-32nd) Establishes the House Study Committee on Student Attendance in Pre-K-12 Education. The study committee will conduct a comprehensive review of student attendance in pre-K through grade 12. The study committee will be composed of six members of the House of Representatives appointed by the speaker of the House.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Since it is a House study committee, it does not require approval from the Senate or the governor and can therefore be enacted.

HR 859 (Lim-98th) Creates the House Study Committee on Inclusive Educational Settings for Students with Disabilities.

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

HR 882 (Hatchett-155th) Constitutional Amendment that can allow local school systems to levy and collect sales and use tax for educational purposes of a school district.

STATUS: House Ways & Means Committee. The bill was introduced too late to crossover but remains viable for consideration next year.

HR 887 (Blackmon-146th) Establishes the House Study Committee on Reducing and Prioritizing Mandates for Public School Administration. The study committee will be composed of six members of the House of Representatives appointed by the speaker of the House.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Since it is a House study committee, it does not require approval from the Senate or the governor and can therefore be enacted.

SB 1 (Dolezal-27th) Provides for separate restrooms and changing areas for males and females during athletic events in schools and postsecondary institutions. Schools and postsecondary institutions must provide reasonable accommodations for individuals unwilling or unable to use a restroom or changing area designated for such an individual's sex. The bill provides for separation according to sex for sleeping arrangements on school trips. All public schools, local school systems, and private schools participating in competitions or athletic events must designate each team, competition, or athletic event as for males, females, or coed. The bill provides for legislative findings on the importance of certain distinctions between the sexes and student athletes deserve to have a competitively fair and safe opportunity to participate and succeed in sports. The term "gender" is replaced with "sex" throughout the Code.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

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 but the bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

SB 17 (Anavitarte-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. PASSED HOUSE. The bill failed to receive final agreement to most recent changes made to it and therefore DID NOT PASS.

SB 44 (Watson-11th) Revises the definition of the "qualified local school system" by reducing the minimum required or equivalent millage rate from 14 mills to 10 mills. This bill provides for a 25% reduction of equalization grant awards for local school systems whose millage rate or equivalent millage rate does not meet the minimum requirement. A report created by the Department of Education will be sent to certain members of the General Assembly, the House Budget and Research Office, Senate Budget and Evaluation Office, and Office of Planning and Budget each year by September 1. The report will show systems that received an equalization grant the previous fiscal year, the total amount of equalization earned over the past 10 years, and list any systems with a millage rate less than 10%.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

SB 63 (Dixon-45th) 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. PASSED HOUSE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

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. PASSED HOUSE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

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. PASSED HOUSE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

SB 123 (Kennedy-18th) Updates and revises provisions of the state's compulsory school attendance laws. The bill provides that no student will be expelled by a public school due solely to absenteeism. Beginning in 2026, and every other year after, the Department of Education will submit a county-by-county report of compliance by local school systems with provisions related to the student attendance and school climate committee to the chairpersons of the House Committee on Education and the Senate Education and Youth Committee. If a school system has a chronic absenteeism rate of 10% or higher, the system must create an attendance review team. If one or more schools has a school chronic absenteeism rate of 15% or higher, the system will establish an attendance review team for each such school.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

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 but the bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

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 but the bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

SB 148 (Hatchett-50th) Allows local school boards to offer hunting safety instruction for students in grades six through 12. Each local board of education is also authorized to establish a curriculum for hunter safety instruction based on the hunter education courses offered by the Department of Natural Resources. The State Board of Education will adopt instructional standards no later than April 1, 2026. Section 2 creates O.C.G.A. 20-2-590, which establishes an outdoor learning spaces pilot program beginning in the 2025-2026 school year. Private, nonprofit, and local school system funding may be utilized for design and construction costs. Section 3 removes the requirement of involvement from a licensed physician or other person authorized by the Georgia Composite Medical Board in automated external defibrillator programs. Section 4 increases the number of personal days school personnel may utilize accumulated sick leave for from three days to five days.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. The bill failed to receive final agreement to most recent changes made to it and therefore DID NOT PASS.

SB 152 (Dolezal-27th) Amends O.C.G.A. 20-2B-5, to allow the education savings authority to submit the names of applicants to the state revenue commissioner to verify income thresholds related to eligibility as necessary to enforce the provisions of the Promise scholarship. The education savings authority may also submit to the Department of Human Services the names of foster parents for verification related to eligibility. Section 2 amended O.C.G.A. 20-2B-22 by clarifying enrollment eligibility is based on the student's primary residence, the school the student is currently enrolled in, or will be eligible to be enrolled in for the following school year. Section 3 creates O.C.G.A. 20-2B-22.1, to allow biological children of foster parents to be eligible for the Promise scholarship.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Education Committee but the bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

SB 179 (Dixon-45th) Implements a new graduation requirement. Beginning in the 2031-2032 school year, students must have completed a computer science course or a career, technical, and agricultural education (CTAE) course embedded with computer science in grades eight through 12 in order to graduate. The computer science course will be in-person, virtual, or through remote instruction. Section 2 amends O.C.G.A. 20-2-319.1, to increase the payment by local school systems to Georgia Virtual School from \$250 per student per semester course to \$350 per student per semester course. Section 3 amends O.C.G.A. 20-2-690, to require private online virtual schools to report enrollment of students to the student's home school district.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. The bill failed to receive final agreement to most recent changes made to it and therefore DID NOT PASS.

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 but the bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

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. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

SR 217 (Kennedy-18th) Makes it unlawful to provide, for a commercial purpose, work product for students in a substantially completed form. A violation of this provision will constitute a violation of the 'Fair Business Practices Act of 1975,' and enforcement will be by the attorney general and not by a private right of action. This bill exempts tutoring, as well as certain automated systems.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Since it is a Senate study committee, it does not require approval from the House or the governor and can therefore be enacted.

SR 237 (Hickman-4th) A resolution urging the Professional Standards Commission, in collaboration with the Department of Education, Department of Early Care and Learning, Office of Student Achievement, University System of Georgia, Technical College System of Georgia, and Georgia Student Finance Commission, to develop data-driven, evidence-based recommendations to strengthen the state's K-12 education workforce and the teacher and school leader pipeline. These recommendations should address strategies to attract individuals into early childhood and K-12 teaching professions through innovative programs; collect and analyze data on the success of teaching graduates; and build partnerships with postsecondary institutions and other stakeholders to improve teacher preparation programs. Additionally, the recommendations must evaluate the adequacy of funding for student teacher compensation and consider reinstating HOPE access to support the teacher workforce. They should also include ways to increase public awareness of the teaching profession's benefits—such as the Teacher Retirement System—to recruit a diverse and talented pool, and improve teacher and school leader retention through expanded mentorship and professional development. The final recommendations, including any legislative, policy, or budget proposals, must be submitted to the Governor and the Senate by December 1, 2025, following a timeline set by the Office of Planning and Budget.

STATUS: ADOPTED BY SENATE.

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

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Since it is a Senate study committee, it does not require approval from the House or the governor and can therefore be enacted.

SR 476 (Halpern-39th) Creates Senate Study Committee on Local School System Flexibility Options.

STATUS: Senate Rules Committee

SR 489 (Dixon-45th) Creates Senate Study Committee on Inclusive Educational Settings for Students with Disabilities.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Since it is a Senate study committee, it does not require approval from the House or the governor and can therefore be enacted.

SR 545 (Kemp-38th) Creates the Senate Study Committee on Paid Student Teaching.

STATUS: Senate Education & Youth Committee. The bill was introduced too late and therefore DID NOT PASS.

SR 553 (Halpern-39th) Creates the Senate Study Committee on Funding for Charter School Capital Improvements.

STATUS: Senate Education & Youth Committee. The bill was introduced too late and therefore DID NOT PASS.



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. PASSED SENATE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

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. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Higher Education Committee. The bill failed to receive a vote on the Senate floor and therefore DID NOT PASS.

HB 150 (Fleming-114th) Creates the 'Combating Threats from Foreign Countries of Concern Act of 2025 - Higher Education.' The bill requires the university system to submit a semiannual report to the governor and the chairs of the House and Senate higher education committees detailing the funding received by the system from a foreign country of concern, a foreign entity of concern, or a foreign individual of concern.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

HB 867 (Barnes-86th) Establishes a pilot financial aid program that provides grants to eligible students enrolled in an approved school of barbering, school of cosmetology, school of esthetics, school of hair design, or school of nail care with a lifetime maximum amount of \$10,000 with a commission cap of no more than \$50,000 in grants per year.

STATUS: House Higher Education Committee. The bill was introduced too late to crossover but remains viable for consideration next year.

HB 888 (Carpenter-4th) Expands the definition of noncitizen students eligible for in-state tuition at institutions within the University System of Georgia and the Technical College System of Georgia to include those who have earned a high school diploma or state-approved high school equivalency in Georgia; have legal authorization to work in the state; have independently maintained domicile in Georgia since January 1, 2020, or are dependents of a parent who has done so; have no felony or high and aggravated misdemeanor convictions; and have applied to or are enrolled in a University System of Georgia institution or Technical College System of Georgia that admitted all academically qualified applicants in the past two academic years.

STATUS: House Higher Education Committee. The bill was introduced too late to crossover but remains viable for consideration next year.

HR 752 (Barnes-86th) Creates a Joint Study Committee on Cosmetology and Barbering Education.

STATUS: House Regulated industries Committee. The bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

SB 20 (Kirkpatrick-32nd) Expands eligibility for the Public Safety Memorial Grant to include spouses of law enforcement officers, firefighters, prison guards, emergency medical technicians, or highway response operators who have died or been permanently disabled in the line of duty. The bill increases the maximum award amount from \$2,000 per academic year to \$18,000 per academic year and increases the lifetime award amount from \$8,000 to \$72,000. The bill provides for the distribution of grants to the child or spouse of a public school teacher or public school employee who has been killed or permanently disabled by an act of violence in the line of duty. Eligible students attending an approved school will receive no more than \$18,000 per academic year, with a maximum total award amount of \$72,000. The bill expands membership of the State Veterinary Education Board to include: an executive director of an animal shelter or a nonprofit pet sterilization clinic in this state and a veterinarian employed full time in the practice of shelter medicine or pet sterilization services in this state, both to be appointed by the governor. The bill provides for a loan repayment program for veterinarians who have been practicing for less than 10 years and who practice shelter medicine or practice full time at a nonprofit pet sterilization clinic. The maximum award amount for repayment is \$75,000, to be paid in increments of \$25,000 per 12 months of service.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

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. PASSED HOUSE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

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. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

SB 180 (Dixon-45th) Allows apprenticeship sponsors to perform specific tasks related to conducting an apprenticeship program.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

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. PASSED HOUSE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

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

STATUS: Senate Rules Committee. The bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

SR 474 (Orrock-36th) Creates Senate Study Committee on Local School System Flexibility Options.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Since it is a Senate study committee, it does not require approval from the House or the governor and can therefore be enacted.



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. Creates sales tax exemptions for the purchases of firearms, ammunition, gun safes, and related accessories will be for four days beginning on the second Friday of October of each year.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. TABLED in Senate and therefore DID NOT PASS.

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. PASSED SENATE. The bill failed to receive final agreement to most recent changes made to it and therefore DID NOT PASS.

HB 651 (Powell-33rd) Pertains to automated traffic enforcement safety devices. These devices are required to have yellow flashing lights when the device is operable to issue citations. The bill provides penalties for local governing authorities who are found to be violating their permit to use the device; violators may be issued a civil fine of \$2,500 for a first violation and \$5,000 for a second violation. If this does arise, the Commissioner of Public Safety may suspend their automated traffic enforcement safety device permits and must notify the Department of Transportation of the suspension. The suspended is allowed to have a hearing within ten days of the effective date of their suspension and, if disagreeing with the hearing's decision, may appeal it within 30 days. Unless otherwise stated through local ordinance or resolution, the device must be active one hour before and after classes are scheduled to begin and end. Violation occurs when an individual is going ten miles over the posted reduced speed limit. Further language is provided to give courts, where the recorded images from the devices are taken, jurisdiction over cases that may arise.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. The bill failed to receive final agreement to most recent changes made to it and therefore DID NOT PASS.

HB 879 (Parsons-44th) Reduces the penalty for failing to yield to an operating school bus from a high and aggravated misdemeanor to a misdemeanor, with fines ranging from \$500 to \$1,000 upon conviction. Requires each notice to inform drivers of their right to contest the penalty in court. Directs all collected fines to be evenly distributed among local schools for school safety purposes.

STATUS: House Motor Vehicles Committee. The bill was introduced too late to crossover but remains viable for consideration next year.

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 but the bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

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. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

SB 204 (Jones II-22nd) Prohibits counties and municipalities from regulating the storage of firearms. Lawful weapons carriers who have been aggrieved by a rule in violation of this preemption are provided the right to bring an action for an injunction or a civil cause of action. A plaintiff in a civil case is provided the ability to sue for either: A) actual damages or \$25,000, whichever is greater, and collect reasonable attorneys' fees and any other costs associated with the action, or B) liquidated damages of three times the expenses of litigation and reasonable attorneys' fees. There is a one-year statute of limitations for these actions. The bill also allows prosecutors to accuse an individual, rather than indict that person through the grand jury process, unless the charge includes a serious violent felony, a sexual felony, the 'Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act' (RICO), criminal street gang activity, or a violation of local law involving firearm preemption (16-11-173).

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. The bill failed to receive final agreement to most recent changes made to it and therefore DID NOT PASS.



Shelter & Nutrition

HB 14 (Carpenter-4th) Originally a bill about cornbread, the bill now only creates the Georgia Music Office.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. The bill failed to receive final agreement to most recent changes made to it and therefore DID NOT PASS.

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. PASSED SENATE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

HB 399 (Oliver-84th) Requires out-of-state landlords owning or operating 25 or more rental properties in the state to employ a licensed broker, that may or may not reside in this state, and at least one person located within the state for purposes of managing and responding to communications from the landlord's tenants related to property issues.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

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

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

HB 876 (Flournoy-74th) Allows tenants to repair a material defect if the landlord fails to do so within 14 days and may deduct up to 50% of the repair cost from their rent. Tenants may also terminate the lease if the landlord does not fix the material defect within 60 days, provided they give notice at least 30 days in advance.

STATUS: House Judiciary Committee. The bill was introduced too late to crossover but remains viable for consideration next year.

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

STATUS: House Special Rules Committee. The bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

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

STATUS: House Special Rules Committee. The bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

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

STATUS: House Rural Development Committee. The bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

HR 712 (Park-107th) Creates the House Study Committee on Protecting Working Families.

STATUS: House Special Rules Committee. The bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

SB 170 (Jackson-41st) Establishes a grant program to acquire and install backup generators in certain rural hospitals. The Department of Community Health will work with the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency to set the criteria for these grants. Funding for the program will depend on appropriations from the General Assembly, and the amount awarded to each recipient will be determined individually. The bill also adds "affected rural hospital," which means an acute care hospital located in a rural county that contains fewer than 100 beds and is located in any region of the state in which the governor declared a state of emergency after July 1, 2024.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. The bill failed to receive final agreement to most recent changes made to it and therefore DID NOT PASS.



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. PASSED SENATE. The bill failed to receive final agreement to most recent changes made to it and therefore DID NOT PASS.

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. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

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

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

HB 147 (Thomas-21st) Requires the Georgia Technology Authority (GTA) to conduct and publish an annual inventory of artificial intelligence (AI) usage by state agencies, ensure public disclosure of ongoing assessments of AI systems, and maintain records of these disclosures. Additionally, GTA oversees the development, procurement, implementation, utilization, and data management of AI within state agencies. The bill also designates the Attorney General as an elected representative that may approve the issuance of one or more private activity bonds to finance or refinance a state charter school facility after a public hearing within 60 days of a written request.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Science & Technology Committee, but the bill failed to secure a vote on the Senate floor and therefore DID NOT PASS.

HB 161 (Crowe-118th) Revises the statute that allows the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) to subpoena computers or electronic devices to include investigations of Title 16, Chapter 9, Article 8 (Identity Fraud) and O.C.G.A. 16-9-93 (Computer Crimes), 16-10-28 (Transmitting a False Public Alarm), 16-11-37 (Terroristic Threats and Acts), 16-11-39.1 (Harassing Communications), and 16- 11-221 (Domestic Terrorism - Penalties). The bill allows a court to find someone in contempt if they fail to obey these subpoenas and restricts the subpoena from becoming public during the investigation or prosecution beyond the extent necessary for the issuance and compliance of the subpoena. This also removes the specific references to Code sections when the GBI can provide information in furtherance of a federal, local, or state criminal investigation so that it applies to all criminal investigations. The bill also adds a

definition of assassination for purposes of the crime of domestic terrorism. Assassination is defined as the intentional killing of an elected public official by an individual who is acting to prevent the performance of their official duties.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

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

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

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. TABLED in Senate and therefore DID NOT PASS.

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. PASSED SENATE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

HB 483 (Prince-132nd) Removes the exemption for librarians regarding the sale or distribution of harmful materials to minors. Knowingly violating this law results in a misdemeanor for the first offense and a high and aggravated misdemeanor for subsequent offenses. Provides an affirmative defense for library employees who make good-faith efforts to restrict minors' access to harmful physical or electronic materials.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. TABLED in Senate and therefore DID NOT PASS.

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 decide 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. PASSED SENATE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

[HB 902](#) (Jones-25th) Provides for transparency and accountability in insurance rates and rate regulation after the enactment of tort reform law and for the publication of certain information. The bill also extends the time for data collection and analysis related to tort reform law and provides for findings on savings from tort reform law.

STATUS: House Insurance Committee. The bill was introduced too late to crossover but remains viable for consideration next year.

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

STATUS: House Budget & Fiscal Affairs Oversight Committee. The bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

[HR 659](#) (Lumsden-12th) Establishes the House Study Committee on Insurance Market Reform. The committee will consist of eight members of the House of Representatives appointed by the speaker of the House as well as three non-legislative members with expertise or qualifications as determined by the speaker.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Insurance Committee. The bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

[HR 757](#) (Clark-100th) Creates the House Study Committee on Civil Rights Protections.

STATUS: House Special Rules Committee. The bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

[HR 884](#) (Gaines-120th) Urges the President of the United States and Congress to grant an increase in state autonomy to allow for the creation of innovative solutions to work disincentives and the reform of social safety net programs and innovative pilot programs.

STATUS: House Special Rules Committee. The bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

[HR 815](#) (Jones-25th) Creates the House Study Committee on an At-Risk Populations Abuse Registry, which will review the substantiated abuse registries of other states, the feasibility and logistics of implementing such a registry in Georgia and solicit input from relevant stakeholders. The committee will consist of eight members including five members of the House of Representatives and three non-legislative members to be appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Human Relations & Aging Committee. The bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

[SB 12](#) (Ginn-47th) Requires public agencies to act as custodians of public records and to produce specified public records on behalf of a private entity when necessary.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

[SB 21](#) (Tillery-19th) Waives sovereign and governmental immunities for local governments and their officials and employees for a violation of the prohibition on sanctuary policies.

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

[SB 36](#) (Setzler-37th) "Georgia Religious Freedom Restoration Act" - Permits state and local governments to substantially burden a person's exercise of religion only if the entity demonstrates that the application of the burden to the person is in furtherance of a compelling governmental interest and it is the least restrictive means of furthering that compelling governmental interest. A person who has been burdened in violation of law may assert the violation in a judicial proceeding and obtain appropriate relief, including a reasonable attorney fee in particular circumstances. Nothing in this bill will be construed to affect the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR KEMP.

SB 46 (Harbin-16th) “Government Serves the People Act”- Directs the Georgia Technology Authority (GTA) director to appoint a State of Georgia Government Service Delivery Lead within GTA to improve state government service delivery. To improve service delivery, the appointed lead will collect and report qualitative and quantitative information and measures, evaluate the quality-of-service delivery through the creation of performance metrics, engage with service delivery and design experts to identify effective practices, and advise agency directors concerning improvements. The bill requires state agency heads to appoint a lead agency service delivery official to improve service delivery in their agency. Beginning in 2026, the GTA director must submit to the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the House an annual report on current and future governmentwide efforts to improve service delivery.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

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. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

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 seat belt 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 non-economic 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. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

SB 69 (Kennedy-18th) "Georgia Courts Access and Consumer Protection Act" - Regulates third-party litigation financing in Georgia. This legislation requires litigation financiers to register with the Department of Banking and Finance and to disclose pertinent information. It also includes specific restrictions, such as a prohibition on foreign affiliations. The bill outlines contract requirements, disclosure obligations, and cancellation provisions to protect consumers. It also allows for the discovery of litigation financing agreements and establishes penalties for law violations.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

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 but the bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

SB 111 (Albers-56th) Defines several terms and establishes regulations regarding the protection of consumer personal data in the state. Known as the 'Georgia Consumer Privacy Protection Act,' the bill gives consumers the right to invoke various privacy rights, including confirming the processing of their personal information, deleting personal information, and opting out of certain processing activities. The bill applies to businesses operating within the state that generate over \$25 million in revenue and meet certain criteria related to the processing of personal information. Criteria includes controlling or processing personal information of at least 25,000 consumers and deriving more than 50 percent of gross revenue from the sale of personal information or controlling or processing personal information of at least 175,000 consumers in a calendar year. "Controllers" of personal data are entities that determine the purpose and means of processing personal information. Controllers are required to establish a process for consumers to appeal decisions related to their privacy rights. Controllers must limit the collection and processing of personal information, implement data security practices, provide clear privacy notices, and are prohibited from processing sensitive data without consent from the consumer. Controllers must respond to consumer requests within specified timeframes and provide information free of charge, with certain exceptions. "Processors" of personal data are entities that process personal information on behalf of a controller. The bill outlines the obligations of processors, the handling of de-identified data, and various exemptions for lawful processing, such as cooperating with law enforcement. It specifies that contracts limiting consumer privacy rights are void and unenforceable. The bill does not conflict with specific health record management requirements or federal law mandates. It provides the

attorney general with investigatory authority and establishes an affirmative defense for controllers and processors with compliant privacy policies based on the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) or comparable privacy framework.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. TABLED by the House Technology & Infrastructure Innovation Committee. The bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.

SB 125 (Walker III-20th) Updates the licensing code for electrical contractors, plumbers, conditioned air contractors, low voltage contractors, and utility contractors. These parts make numerous changes, including: 1) revising requirements for State Construction Industry Licensing Board members; 2) revising what plumber classifications can install, maintain, alter, or repair medical gas piping systems; 3) exempting any licensed conditioned air contractor who also is a registered professional engineer from certain continuing education requirements; 4) removing the cap on continuing education that both the Division of Electrical Contractors and the Division of Master Plumbers and Journeyman Plumbers can require; 5) requiring each division to make all reasonable efforts to provide continuing education online or through home study courses; 6) clarifying that any licensed master plumber, or company that holds a valid utility contractor license, can construct, alter, or repair any plumbing system that extends from the property line up to five feet of any building; and 7) allowing for applicable licensee's partners, officers, and employees to continue operating for 60 days after the death of a licensee, in addition to allowing the applicable division to provide one additional 60-day grace period. These parts also revise dates and timelines, add references to internet advertising, and revise fine amounts. Section 1-2 removes a requirement for licensure as a professional engineer that requires a person to subsequently pass an exam after obtaining required educational experience. Part II requires the Office of the Secretary of State to institute a unified system for tracking continuing education credits completed by licensees of the various boards under the secretary of state's purview. Beginning on January 1, 2026, a professional licensing board will not renew a license until the applicant has complied with all applicable continuing education requirements.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

SB 207 (Strickland-42nd) Allows a person who plead guilty as a first offender and successfully completed the terms to be certified and employed as a firefighter, at the council's discretion, upon meeting the requisite qualifications.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. The bill failed to receive final agreement to most recent changes made to it and therefore DID NOT PASS.

SB 212 (Still-48th) Prevents the disclosure of confidential voter registration record information to unauthorized persons and prohibits the disclosure of public student directory information for political use. The bill amends O.C.G.A. 21-5-16 to prevent students from being solicited to organize political events on school property when such event is otherwise prohibited by law or by policy of the local school system or school.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

SB 213 (Kirkpatrick-32nd) Makes it unlawful to provide, for a commercial purpose, work product for students in a substantially completed form. A violation of this provision will constitute a violation of the 'Fair Business Practices Act of 1975,' and enforcement will be by the attorney general and not by a private right of action. This bill exempts tutoring, as well as certain automated systems.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

SB 255 (Cowser-46th) Establishes a process for granting investigatory powers to General Assembly committees. Section 1 amends 28-1-17, allowing: (a) The Senate or the House of Representatives to authorize committees to exercise investigatory powers per Code Section 45-15-19 through rules or resolutions. They may also approve joint committees to exercise powers outlined in Code Section 45-15-9. (b) Authorized committees can administer oaths, compel testimony, require witness attendance, demand document production, and take depositions. They may also issue subpoenas for witnesses and documents, which can be served statewide as allowed by Code Section 24-13-24. (c) If someone refuses to comply with a subpoena, the committee can seek assistance from the superior court in the relevant jurisdiction. The court can compel attendance and impose contempt of court penalties for noncompliance. (d) Confidentiality of materials and information during investigations is protected by law. If a subpoena application seeks confidentiality, the court will act to preserve it. The chairperson may either abandon the request or proceed based on the court's determination regarding privacy. (e) This section and related provisions do not limit any authority, privilege, or power of the General Assembly or its committees. Additionally, it does not affect investigations or subpoenas issued by committees before this amendment effective date.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. Is currently under consideration by Governor Kemp.

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

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Since it is a Senate study committee, it does not require approval from the House or the governor and can therefore be enacted.

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

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Since it is a Senate study committee, it does not require approval from the House or the governor and can therefore be enacted.

SR 444 (Halpern-39th) 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. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Education and Youth Committee but the bill failed to advance and therefore DID NOT PASS.



Advocacy Asks

Here are some bills that may be of interest to you. If you support any of the items on this list, consider reaching out to the sponsor to express your appreciation for their efforts.

What to Say:

Dear [Legislator's Name], Thank you for your leadership on passage of [NAME OF BILL]. This legislation is important to me because [briefly mention what the bill does and why it matters to you]. Such good policy is sure to make a difference for Georgia's next generation! Most sincerely, [YOUR NAME]

Who to Contact:

House Bill 136, Childcare Tax Credit & Foster Care Tax Credit

House Bill 136 increases the state tax credit for child and dependent care expenses to 50% of the federal credit and creates a \$250 per child state child tax credit. It establishes a new employer tax credit for direct child care payments of at least \$1,000 per year per employee for children under six. It expands foster child support tax credits to include services for aging foster children (ages 16–25) and justice-involved youth (ages 18–25), raises the annual credit cap from \$20 million to \$30 million, and adds business enterprises as eligible contributors. The bill takes effect July 1, 2025, and applies to tax years starting January 1, 2026.

Who to Contact:

Sponsored by [Rep. Mark Newton](#), 404-656-7853

Carried in the Senate and Child Care Provisions Added by [Sen. Brian Strickland](#), 404-463-6598

Senate Bill 123, Support for Chronically Absent Students

Senate Bill 123 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.

Who to Contact:

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

Carried in the House by [Rep. Matt Dubnik](#), 404-463-2246

House Bill 268, Omnibus School Safety Bill

This bill establishes safety, health, and student wellbeing measures across Georgia schools, including the implementation of a mobile panic alert system under "Ricky and Alyssa's Law" and school mapping data standards by July 1, 2026. It mandates timely transfer and access to student education records, introduces procedures for data-sharing disputes, and requires schools to implement behavior support programs in high-needs schools. The bill also outlines training requirements for suicide and youth violence prevention, sets procedures for handling prolonged student absences, and updates school safety planning to include behavioral threat assessments. Additionally, it revises juvenile code provisions related to school safety and juvenile crimes, and sets an effective date contingent on gubernatorial approval.

Who to Contact:

Sponsored by [Rep. Holt Persinger](#), 404-656-0213

Committee Chaired by [Rep. Chris Erwin](#), 404-656-7850

Championed by:

- [Speaker Jon Burns](#), 404-656-5020
- Lt. Gov. Burt Jones, 404-656-5030

Carried in the Senate by [Sen. Bill Cowser](#), 404-463-1366

Additional Provisions Added by [Sen. Jason Anavitar](#), 404-656-0085

[House Bill 291](#), Community Health Workers

House Bill 291 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. **NOTE THAT THIS BILL DID NOT PASS THE SENATE YET, BUT REMAINS VIABLE FOR PASSAGE NEXT YEAR.**

Who to Contact:

Sponsored by [Rep. Darlene Taylor](#), 404-463-2246

[House Bill 399](#), Landlord-Tenant Communications

House bill 399 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.

Who to Contact:

Sponsored by [Rep. Mary Margaret Oliver](#), 404-656-0265

Carried in the Senate by [Sen. Max Burns](#), 404-463-1376

[House Bill 81](#), School Psychologists Interstate Compact

House Bill 81 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.

Who to Contact:

Sponsored by [Rep. Bethany Ballard](#), 404-656-0325

Carried in the Senate by [Sen. Larry Walker, III](#), 404-656-0095

[House Bill 177](#), Including Pets in Temporary Protection Orders Related to Family and Dating Violence

House Bill 177 provides protection for household pets in both family violence and dating violence protective orders.

Who to Contact:

Sponsored by [Rep. Sharon Cooper](#), 404-656-5069

Carried in the Senate by [Sen. Brian Strickland](#), 404-463-6598

[House Bill 38](#), Completion School Grants

HB 38 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.

Who to Contact:

Sponsored by [Rep. Chuck Martin](#), 404-656-5146

Carried in the Senate by [Sen. Max Burns](#), 404-463-1376

Senate Bill 5, Improved Prior Authorization Process

Senate Bill 5 Requires health insurers to implement a program that reduces prior authorization requirements for providers based on quality metrics. The bill also requires that all health benefit policies administered by the State Health Benefit Plan (SHBP) in Georgia provide coverage for healthcare services related to Pediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorders Associated with Streptococcal Infections (PANDAS) and Pediatric Acute Onset Neuropsychiatric Syndrome (PANS). Coverage must align with nationally recognized clinical practice guidelines and apply to diagnosis, treatment, management, and monitoring of these conditions. The bill prohibits special deductibles, coinsurance, or copayments beyond those generally applicable to other covered healthcare services.

Who to Contact:

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

Carried in the House by [Rep. Lee Hawkins](#), 404-656-7855

Senate Bill 85, Foster Care Scholarship Act

Senate Bill 85 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 amount of hours has been attempted, or the student has received the scholarship for 10 years. The act is subject to appropriations.

Who to Contact:

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

Carried in the House by [Rep. Trey Kelley](#), 404-656-0188

Senate Bill 170, Interagency Council for Homelessness

Senate Bill 170 establishes the Georgia Interagency Council for Homelessness to ensure a coordinated statewide approach to addressing homelessness. **NOTE THAT THIS BILL DID NOT PASS THE HOUSE YET, BUT REMAINS VIABLE FOR PASSAGE NEXT YEAR.**

Who to Contact:

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

Senate Bill 195, PrEP and PEP Access

Senate Bill 195 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. **NOTE THAT THIS BILL DID NOT PASS THE HOUSE YET, BUT REMAINS VIABLE FOR PASSAGE NEXT YEAR.**

Who to Contact:

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

**Resources You May Find Helpful**

- [Find Your Legislator](#)

- [Contact Your Legislator](#)