

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

March 25, 2024

As much as I love my job, there are nevertheless a few things I will not miss about the daily Capitol grind. One thing is the way it affects my sleep. “Dreaming about bills, resolutions and budgets?” you ask. Nope. My grey matter works in a definitively less academic way. I have tossed and turned to the likes of boot-wearing Subarus (via expired ParkMobile permits), a Sisyphean search for my lobbying badge in the bottomless pit of my backpack, and hearing the [Chimes at Midnight](#) in the Senate Judiciary Committee. My less-than-elysian slumbers also have hosted tales involving a Room 216 bar-b-que clean up without trash bags, a strange and uncomfortable breakfast with Jane Fonda, an elected official named Bill Review Taylor Swift and something that I thought was Mayor McCheese, but turned out to actually be a walking Little Debbie Cake (and boy was I embarrassed when it told me so!). I have testified on bills with no numbers, found myself in the Capitol snack bar where the only items in the vending machines were beets (yuck!), and gave a gold dome tour to a two-headed George Clooney (who was, much to my surprise, NOT twice as handsome as the one-headed version!). Anyway, who on earth could catch a decent 40 after an endless barrage of gavel pounding, bell ringing, and doorkeeper dudes yelling “Voting!” right as your ear passes by? I have tried everything to hit REM, including counting peaches, turning off my omnipresent screens, and reading books about 18th century seafaring captains and the inevitable shipwrecks, mutinies and less than idyllic demises. (OK – so that last one may not have been so calming.) But fortunately, we are about to stumble into days 39 and 40, so the end is near (which I am sure is exactly what Captain James Cook thought right before he got killed and eaten in Hawaii).

With that said, please prop your eyelids up and check out all the end of session changes to bills below and then give one last barrage of calls re our action alerts.

Don't forget to set your alarm!

Polly

Jump to Section:

- [FY25 State Budget – Governor’s Recommendations as modified by the House, and then modified by the Senate Appropriations Committee](#)
- [Justice, Public Safety, and School Discipline](#)
- [Child Welfare and Protection](#)
- [Health & Behavioral Health](#)
- [Maternal & Infant Care](#)
- [Early Childhood Education & Out-of-School Time](#)
- [K-12 Education](#)
- [Higher Education](#)
- [Environmental Safety](#)
- [Shelter & Nutrition](#)
- [Miscellaneous](#)
- [Advocacy Asks](#)

Helpful Resources:

- [Find Your Legislator](#)
- [Contact Your Legislator](#)
- [Voices’ 2\(ish\) Minute Takes](#)
- [Voices’ Factsheets](#)
- [Voices’ Whole Child Primer, 3rd Edition](#)

Fiscal Year 2025 – Governor’s Recommendations as modified by the House as modified by the Senate
Appropriations Committee
Total State Funds: \$36.09 Billion

Key: No color = Governor’s recommendations
Yellow = House changes to the Governor’s recs
Turquoise = Senate changes

Statewide

- Increase funds to provide for a 4% cost-of-living-adjustment for state employees not to exceed \$3,000.
- Increase funds to provide an additional \$3,000 targeted salary enhancement for selected POST certified law enforcement officers
- Reduce funds to reflect an adjustment in the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) from 65.89% to 66.04%. (DBHDD, DCH/Medicaid LIM, DCH/Peachcare, DCH/GBHCW-GME, DHS/Adoption Services,)
- Reduce funds to reflect an adjustment in the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) from 65.89% to 60.04% (DCH/Medicaid ABD, DPH/Infant and Child Essential Health Treatment Services)
- Reduce funds to reflect an adjustment in the enhanced Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (eFMAP) from 76.12% to 76.23%. (DHS/Dept. Admin, DHS/Out of Home Care,)

Judicial Council

- \$32,444 Added to annualize one Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) statewide coordinator position for the Council of Accountability Court Judges.
- \$0 Added for personnel for one project coordinator position. (Governor sought an \$83,807 addition)
- \$209,500 Added for Civil Legal Services for families of indigent patients. (Governor recommended a \$419,000 Add)
- \$299,944 Added for two information technology positions and operations to support the juvenile courts case management system.
- \$0 Added for Department of Human Services Child Support Services contract to support recruitment and retention needs. (Governor sought \$67,864)

Prosecuting Attorneys

- \$1.125 Million Transferred from the Prosecuting Attorney’s Council program for the Prosecuting Attorneys Qualifications Commission program.

Juvenile Courts

- \$25,000 Added for grants to counties for the Atlantic Judicial Circuit
- \$25,000 Added for grants to counties for the Coweta Judicial Circuit
- \$218,000 Added for the Juvenile Court Judges’ salary supplement pursuant to the General Appropriations for FY 2023 (HB 911).

Jump to Agency:

- [State Accounting Office](#)
- [Dept. of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities](#)
- [Dept. of Community Affairs](#)
- [Dept. of Community Health](#)
- [Dept. of Community Supervision](#)
- [Dept. of Corrections](#)
- [Dept. of Defense](#)
- [Dept. of Early Care and Learning](#)
- [Dept. of Education](#)
- [Dept. of Human Services](#)
- [Office of the Commissioner of Insurance](#)
- [Georgia Bureau of Investigation](#)
- [Criminal Justice Coordinating Council](#)
- [Council of Accountability Court Judges](#)
- [Dept. of Juvenile Justice](#)
- [Dept. of Law](#)
- [Dept. of Public Health](#)
- [Dept. of Public Safety](#)
- [University System of Georgia Board of Regents](#)
- [Secretary of State](#)
- [Georgia Student Finance Commission](#)
- [Technical College System of Georgia](#)
- [Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission – Capital Projects Fund](#)

State Accounting Office

Budget Direction: Change program name from Georgia Government Transparency and Campaign Finance Commission to State Ethics Commission pursuant to HB 572 (2023 Session).

Dept. of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities

Adult Developmental Disability Services

- **\$9.38 Million Added** to annualize the cost of 500 New Options Waiver (NOW) and Comprehensive Supports Waiver Program (COMP) slots for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- **\$2.35 Million Added** for 100 additional slots for the New Options Waiver (NOW) and Comprehensive Supports Waiver Program (COMP) for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- **\$79.9 Million Recognized** agency-wide transfers (\$4,947,743) and increase funds (\$74,953,932) to implement the New Option Waiver (NOW) and Comprehensive Supports Option Waiver Program (COMP) provider rate study. (Total Funds: \$161,342,037) (Governor's calculation resulted in total funds of \$316,462,570)
- **\$3.2 Million Added** to operationalize the Macon Crisis Stabilization Diagnostic Center for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- **\$108,000 Added** for adult autism services.

Adult Forensic Services

- **\$3.22 Million Added** to staff and operate a forensic step-down unit to address the statewide waitlist.
- **\$2 Million Added** for an additional 30-bed jail-based competency restoration program pilot in Dodge County
- **\$0 Added** for the expansion of the Cobb County jail-based restoration program. (House sought \$1.25 Million addition)

Adult Mental Health Services

- **\$9.48 Million Added** for a behavioral health crisis center in DBHDD's Region 1.
- **\$11.42 Million Reduced** to reflect decreased demand for core adult mental health services.
- **\$3.79 Million Added** to annualize the operations of a behavioral health crisis center in Fulton County. (Governor's Recommendation = \$3.79 Million, House increased to \$5.69 Million and the Senate returned it to governor's ask)
- **\$1.59 Million Added** to annualize the operations of a behavioral health crisis center for the Community Service Board of Middle Georgia in Dublin.
- **\$1.22 Million Added** to annualize the operations of a behavioral health crisis center for Serenity Behavioral Health Systems in Augusta.
- **\$825,000 Eliminated** (they were one-time funds) to coordinate outreach to address homelessness in the Atlanta area.
- **\$26.66 Million Added** to match rate implementation of the Community Behavioral Health Rehabilitation Services (CBHRS) provider rate study for uninsured Georgians and transfer funds (\$4,227,287) from the Department of Community Health for Georgians covered by Medicaid.) (Governor recommended \$22.43 Added to match rate implementation of the Community Behavioral Health Rehabilitation Services (CBHRS) provider rate study for uninsured Georgian.)
- **\$300,000 Added** to support staffing of the '988' hotline.
- **\$0 Million Added** for the Georgia Housing Voucher program to support the requirements of the Department of Justice (DOJ) Settlement Agreement. (House sought \$2.5 Million addition, but the Senate wants to wait for a response from the US Department of Justice (DOJ) concerning progress towards substantial compliance with the Olmstead Settlement Agreement.)
- **\$0 Added** for behavioral health services for Georgians experiencing homelessness in the Atlanta area. (House sought \$225,000 addition)

- **\$515,000 Added** for behavioral health and support services at a rehousing facility. (House sought \$200,000 addition)

Child and Adolescent Developmental Disabilities

- **\$300,000 Added** to expand enrichment activities, family support, and employment opportunities for children and young adults with developmental disabilities.
- **\$200,000 Added** for autism early screening and care training in rural counties.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

- **\$600,000 Eliminated** (they were one-time funds) for Georgia psychiatric residential treatment facilities receiving less than \$500 per patient day while under current cost report reimbursement methodology.
- **\$0 Added** for operations of the new Gateway child and adolescent crisis stabilization unit in Savannah. (House sought \$225,975 addition)
- **\$1 Million Added** for the Georgia Apex Program to expand mental health services in schools. (House sought \$2 Million addition)

Sexual Offender Risk Review Board

- **\$532,357 Added** for two new evaluator positions to address the growth of the existing caseload backlog. (Governor Recommended = \$212,943)
- **\$3 Million Added** to address sexual offender caseload backlog.
- *Budget Direction:* Change the name of the Sexual Offender Review Board to the Sexual Offender Risk Review Board.

Dept. of Community Affairs

- **\$500,000 Added** to create the accountable housing initiative. (House sought \$1 Million addition)
- **\$3.8 Million Added** plus existing funds (\$800,000) and transferred funds from State Community Development Programs (\$400,000) for the State Housing Trust Fund to improve homelessness services and pursue new federal grant opportunities. (Total Funds: \$4,597,416)
- Use Existing Funds (\$6 Million) for the Rural Workforce Housing Program.

Dept. of Community Health

Departmental Administration

- **\$1.53 Million Added** for 20 positions to monitor, evaluate, and improve Care Management Organization oversight.
- **\$1.37 Million Reduced** for savings resulting from the implementation of the Medicaid Enterprise System Transformation Program.
- *Budget Direction:* Evaluate reimbursement parity between all children's hospitals in the state and report findings to House and Senate Appropriations Committees by July 1, 2024.
- *Budget Direction:* The department shall submit a State Plan Amendment (SPA) to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to change and rules, regulations, or policies necessary to allow for reimbursement of long-acting injectable medications used in an inpatient setting to improve the coordination of care and reduce inpatient readmission rates for individuals with serious mental illness.
- **\$1.09 Million Transferred** funds from the Medicaid: Aged, Blind and Disabled program to the Departmental Administration (DCH) program to implement a sickle cell managed care pilot program.

Health Care Access and Improvement

- **\$4 Million Eliminated** (they were one-time funds) for grants up to \$1,000,000 for hospitals with graduate medical education programs. (Governor recommended = \$4 Million Eliminated, House cut to \$2 Million eliminated and Senate restored the Governor's ask)
- **\$500,000 Eliminated** one-time start-up funding for federally qualified health centers.

- **\$750,000 Added** for three federally qualified health center start-up grants for primary care in Union County, behavioral health expansion in Cobb County, and a dental service expansion for multiple counties.
- **\$0 Million Added** for continuous glucose monitors (SB 35, 2024 Session). (House sought \$2.81 Million here but the senate moved and increased the amount. See below in ABD Medicaid)
- **\$292,000** Recognized existing funds (\$409,000) and provide additional funds to sustain existing area health education centers (AHEC) housing across the state.
- **\$0 Added** for emergency equipment. (House sought \$250,000)
- **\$0 Added** for rural hospital stabilization grants. (House sought \$2 Million)

Medicaid - Aged Blind and Disabled

- **\$21.59 Reduced** for growth in Medicaid based on projected utilization. (Governor had recommended and ADD of \$68.44 Million)
- **\$137.72 Million Restored** to reflect the termination of temporary Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) increase provided by the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE) Extension through December 31, 2023.
- **\$141.59 Million Added** for skilled nursing centers to reflect 2022 cost reports. (Governor sought an add of \$118.18 Million)
- Replace \$2,541,738 in state general funds with hospital provider fees.
- Replace \$201,221 in state general funds with nursing home provider fees.
- **\$0 State dollars added** but instead, transfer state funds (\$4,227,287) to the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities and recognize federal funds (\$45,509,162) for the implementation of the Community Behavioral Health Rehabilitation Services (CBHRS) provider rate study. (Governor asked for an add of \$4.23 Million for the same purpose.)
- Moved to DBHDD section (see below): Recognize funds for the New Option Waiver (NOW) and Comprehensive Supports Option Waiver Program (COMP) provider rate study. (in federal funds totaling \$155.12 Million)
- **\$15.96 Million Added** for the Georgia Pediatric Program (GAPP). (House sought \$8 Million addition)
- Budget Direction: The department shall evaluate and implement a reimbursement policy for the clinically appropriate administration of long-acting injectable medications used in an inpatient setting, to improve the coordination of care and reduce inpatient readmission rates for individuals with serious mental illness.
- **\$6.25 Million Added** to increase reimbursement rates for speech-language pathology, audiology, physical therapy, and occupational therapy providers. (House sought \$3.13 Million)
- **\$220,084 Added** to increase the dispensing fee to \$11.50 for independent low-volume pharmacies that fill under 65,000 prescriptions per year.
- **\$3.81 Million Added** for adult coverage of dental services.
- **\$0 Million Added** for emergency medical service (EMS) transport reimbursement to begin at mile 0. (House sought \$1.59 Million addition)
- **\$4.58 Million Added** to increase select primary care and OB/GYN codes. (House sought \$2.29 Million addition)
- **\$64,947 Added** rate increases for select optometric codes.
- **\$5.61 Million added** for continuous glucose monitors (SB35, 2024 Session).
- **\$1.09 Million Transferred** funds from the Medicaid: Aged, Blind and Disabled program to the Departmental Administration (DCH) program to implement a sickle cell managed care pilot program.

Medicaid - Low Income

- **\$111.46 Million Reduced** for Medicaid based on projected utilization. (Governor recommended \$104.16 reduction)

- **\$135.04 Million Restored** to reflect the termination of temporary Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) increase provided by the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE) Extension through December 31, 2023.
- Replace \$22,875,637 in state general funds with hospital provider fees.
- **Budget Direction:** The department shall evaluate and implement a reimbursement policy for the clinically appropriate administration of long-acting injectable medications used in an inpatient setting, to improve the coordination of care and reduce inpatient readmission rates for individuals with serious mental illness.
- **\$7.92 Million Added** to increase reimbursement rates for speech-language pathology, audiology, physical therapy, and occupational therapy providers. (House sought \$3.96 Million)
- **\$1.24 Million Added** for reimbursement of Occupational Therapy Assistants (OTAs) and Physical Therapy Assistants (PTAs) providing services for Medicaid members receiving Children's Intervention Services (CIS) and Children's Intervention School Services. (CISS).
- **\$428,745 Added** to increase the dispensing fee to \$11.50 for independent low-volume pharmacies that fill under 65,000 prescriptions per year.
- **\$5.84 Million Added** for adult coverage of dental services.
- **\$0 Added** for emergency medical service (EMS) transport reimbursement to begin at mile 0. (House sought \$1.81 Million addition)
- **\$12.22 Million Added** to increase select primary care and OB/GYN codes. (House sought \$6.11 Million addition)
- **\$327,226 Added** for rate increases for select optometric codes.
- **\$0 Added** to evaluate and, where appropriate, implement a process to allow reimbursement for blood and biomarker testing when clinically indicated so as to provide enhanced surveillance for inpatient pregnant patients between 23-34 weeks with hypertensive disorder of pregnancy. (House sought \$283,995 addition)

PeachCare for Kids

- **\$22.85 Million Added** for growth in Medicaid based on projected utilization. (Governor recommended = \$2.33 Million addition)
- **\$624,566 Restored** to reflect the termination of temporary Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) increase provided by the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE) extension through December 31, 2023.
- **\$93,500 Added** for reimbursement of Occupational Therapy Assistants (OTAs) and Physical Therapy Assistants (PTAs) providing services for Medicaid members receiving Children's Intervention Services (CIS) and Children's Intervention School Services (CISS).

State Health Benefits Plan

- **Budget Direction:** Recognize an increase in formula funds (\$244,147,056) in the Department of Education, Department of Early Care and Learning, and Georgia Military College, and public libraries 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 \$1,760, effective July 1, 2024.
- **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 January 1, 2027 2025.

GA Board of Healthcare Workforce

- \$100,000 of existing funds used for statewide healthcare specialty assessments to evaluate gaps in healthcare services.

Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce: Graduate Medical Education

- **\$2.01 Million Added** for 105 new residency slots in primary care. (Governor recommended = \$1.49 Million Added for 79 new residency slots in primary care medicine.)
- **\$56,757 Added** for a rural public health preventative medicine rotation.
- **\$0 Added** one-time start-up funds for the development of a Pediatric Rural Training Track. (House sought \$50,000)
- **\$150,000 Added** for year two of the maternal fetal medicine fellowship.
- **\$0 Added** for one-time start-up funds for OB/GYN service expansion. (House sought \$750,000, but the Senate suggested using \$3.49 Million in existing funds instead.)
- **\$0 Added** one-time start-up funds for two internal medicine residency programs. (House sought \$550,000, but the Senate suggested using \$3.49 Million in existing funds instead.)
- **\$0 Eliminated** in residency start-up funds for Southern Regional Medical Center. (House sought to eliminate \$150,000)
- **Budget Direction:** Utilize existing funds (\$3,494,140) for start-up grants for hospitals with graduate medical education programs to support new and expanding residency programs with priority given to existing agreements and rural sites.

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

- **\$850,055 Added** for the fifth year of the seven-year plan for Mercer School of Medicine's medical school campus in Columbus.
- **\$1.23 Million Added** to increase the class size of Mercer's Accelerated Track.
- **\$500,000 Added** to provide one-time matching funds to recognize private fundraising for scholarships for year four students committed to practicing primary care for five years in rural Georgia.

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

- **\$250,000 Added** for infant mortality research. (House sought \$500,000)

Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce: Physicians for Rural Areas

- **\$900,000 Added** for additional loan repayment for Dentists in Rural Areas.

Georgia Composite Medical Board

- **\$501,715 Added** for one-time funding to modernize licensure application software.

Dept. of Community Supervision

- **\$1.18 Million Added** for 17 community supervision aide positions (Governor asked for \$1.73 Million Added for 25 community supervision aide positions; the House asked for 12, and the Senate asked for 17.)
- **\$527,905 Added** for 7 community coordinator positions. (Governor's Office of Transition Support and Reentry)

Dept. of Corrections

- **\$3.42 Million Added** across the agency for operational costs at facilities statewide.
- **\$3.55 Million total** from Transfer funds from Offender Management program (\$3,551,094) and ~~Added funds (\$2,574,744)~~ for a recruitment advertising campaign and work culture review. (Governor sought to transfer \$6.13 Million)
- **\$1.23 Million Added** to provide additional meals on weekends
- **\$71.97 Million Added** for physical health and pharmacy service contracts.

Private Prisons

- **\$6.96 Million Added** to provide 200 temporary additional beds at Coffee and Wheeler facilities to allow for maintenance and repairs at state prisons.

State Prisons

- **\$240,427 Added** for Technical College System of Georgia vocational education contracts. (Governor recommended \$172,200 Added)
- **\$1 Million Added** for offender call monitoring at facilities, statewide.
- **\$331,000 Added** for radio communications at facilities, statewide.
- **\$17.54 Million Added** for capital maintenance and repairs.
- **\$1.82 Million Reduced** for closing HR recruitment centers in favor of increased advertising.
- **\$2.93 Million Reduced** for replacing Basic Correctional Officer Training paper books with Chromebooks.
- **\$15.42 Million Added** for safety, security, and technology initiatives to eliminate contraband and provide quarterly updates to the chairs of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, the House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee, and the Senate Public Safety Committee.

Transition Centers

- **\$10 Million Added** for six months of operational cost for the Metro Re-Entry Phase IV to add 400 transition center beds.

Dept. of Defense

- **\$123,930 Reduced** to reflect lower graduation rates.

Dept. of Early Care and Learning

Child Care Services

- **\$9.27 Million Added** to raise Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) reimbursement to the 75th percentile of market rates for childcare providers in accordance with federal regulation. (Governor sought \$4.63 Million and 50th percentile of market rates)

Pre-K Program

- **\$1.26 Million Added** in formula funds for teacher training and experience.
- **\$2.41 Million Added** in formula funds to reflect an increase in health insurance employer contribution per-member per-month (PMPM) rate for certified teachers at public Pre-K providers to \$1,760 effective July 1, 2024.
- **\$24.99 Million Added** to adjust the state base salary schedule to increase salaries for certified Pre-K teachers and assistant teachers by \$2,500. (Governor recommended \$23.56 Million Added)
- **\$9.51 Million Added** for year one of a four-year phase in to reduce classroom size from 22 to 20 students to improve instructional quality. (Governor recommended \$10.97 Million Added)
- **\$7.83 Million Added** to expand the Summer Transition Program with income eligibility requirements. (Governor recommended \$6.14 Million Added, House sought \$8.97 Million)
- **\$383,311 Added** for three Pre-Kindergarten administrative positions.

Dept. of Education

Agency-wide

- Increase funds to annualize the \$2,000 salary increase in FY2024 and increase funds to adjust the state base salary schedule to increase salaries for certified teachers and certified employees by \$2,500 effective September 1, 2024. (Governor originally sought to simply adjust the state base salary schedule to increase salaries for certified teachers and certified employees by \$2,500 effective September 1, 2024.)
- Used formula funds to reflect an increase in health insurance employer contribution per-member per-month (PMPM) rate for certified school employees to \$1,760 effective July 1, 2024

Agricultural Education

- **\$96,000 Added** for one young farmer positions in Barrow and Peach counties. (House sought 1 young farmer position at \$192,000)

Central Office

- **\$50,000 Removed** (it was one-time funding) for study and host meetings with House and Senate committees and stakeholders concerning Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS) formula funding.
- **\$100,000 Added** for adaptive sports program. (House sought \$200,000)

Charter Schools

- **\$1.7 Million Reduced** to align with budget expenditures.
- **\$2.7 Million Reduced** for facilities grants to reflect the full \$100,000 for each locally-approved charter schools, pursuant to HB 430 (2017 Session)

Communities in Schools

- **\$1.58 Million Added** to leverage matching grant funds for program expansion.

Curriculum Development

- **\$0 Added** to support evidence-based reading instruction grants to fund two Literacy Coaches per Regional Education Service Agency (RESA) and provide \$2,000 supplements to Literacy Support Coordinators and Leads at school districts. (House sought \$6.3 Million but the Senate said to recognize funding in Special Project - Curriculum Development.)
- **\$177,000 Added** for life sciences industry certification.
- **\$4.92 Million Transferred** in existing funds for AP and PSAT exams from the Testing program to properly align with department administration.
- **\$319,000 Added** for one STEM International Baccalaureate exam to all students and one International Baccalaureate exam for free and reduced-paying lunch students.
- **\$500,000 Added** for computer science professional development to support SB 108 (2019 Session). (House sought \$1 Million addition)
- **\$475,000 Added** for a supplementary secondary math pilot program.
- **\$1.5 Million Transferred** from the Curriculum Development program to the Non-Quality Basic Education Formula Grants program for Dyslexia Screening pursuant to SB48 (2019 Session).
- **\$6.11 Million** to provide regional literacy coaches to the bottom 25 percent of schools (\$1,989,650); to provide required training for regional literacy coaches (\$32,000), local literacy coaches in the bottom 25 percent of elementary schools (\$245,000), and Kindergarten through Grade 3 teachers in the bottom 25 percent of schools (\$1,720,000); to provide English as a Second Language (ESL) literacy training to Kindergarten through Grade 3 teachers in the bottom 25 percent of schools with more than 5 percent of students in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) (\$135,000).

Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS)

- **\$4.26 Million Reduced** in formula funds for enrollment and training and experience decline. (Governor recommended \$2.07 Million Reduced)

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

- **\$8.5 Million Transferred** from the Quality Basic Education program to provide salary supplements of \$1,000 to all custodians and adjust amount to reflect current count.
- **\$1.52 Million Added** for Dyslexia Screening pursuant to SB 48 (2019 Session).
- **\$389,615 Reduced** in formula funds for Residential Treatment Facilities based on attendance. (Governor recommended \$518,446 reduction.)

- \$255,709 Added in formula funds for Sparsity Grants based on enrollment data.
- \$250,000 Added for a mentorship program to increase teacher retention rates. (House sought \$750,000)
- \$362,000 Added for one-time grant funds for CPR training and equipment for student health and safety.

Nutrition

- \$6.33 Million Reduced to align budget with expenditures.
- \$3.17 Million Added for the cost of breakfast and lunch for reduce-paying students. (House sought \$6.33 Million)
- \$2 Million Added in formula funds for school nutrition.
- \$1.35 Million Added in formula funds to recognize a 4.1% increase to the salary earnings in the nutrition formula.

Preschool Disability Services

- \$7.12 Million Added based on formula earnings.

Pupil Transportation

- \$204.79 Million Added for pupil transportation to provide additional state support for school districts statewide by reflecting updated bus count and 40% of operational costs.
- \$5.01 Million Added in formula funds to recognize a 4.1% increase to the salary earnings in the pupil transportation formula.

Quality Basic Education Equalization

- \$266.97 Million Added in formula funds for Equalization grants.

QBE Local Five Mill Share

- \$183.87 Million Reduced for the Local Five Mill Share (Governor recommended = \$185.1 Million reduction)

Quality Basic Education Program

- \$42.82 Million Added for the State Commission Charter School supplement. (Governor recommended = \$49.5 Million Added)
- \$1.42 Million Reduced in formula funds for differentiated pay for newly certified math and science teachers. (Governor recommended = \$1.73 Million reduced)
- \$6.3 Million Added in formula funds for the Completion Special Schools supplement pursuant to HB 87 (2023 Session). (Governor recommended = \$6.35 Million Added)
- \$301,659 Added in formula funds for the charter system grant.
- \$8.64 Million Transferred to the Non-Quality Basic Education Formula Grants

Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs)

- \$263,137 Added for a 4.1% salary increase for certified staff. (House sought \$396,624)

School Nurse

- \$609,505 Reduced in formula funds for school nurses. (House had asked for a reduction of \$569,505)
- \$1.54 Million Added for a 4.1% salary increase for school nurses.

School Security Grants

- \$104 Million Added to establish school security grants
- \$5 Million Added for safety training for teachers and ability of local school systems to develop school safety plans.

State Schools

- \$263,962 Added in formula funds for training and experience.

- *Budget Direction:* Utilize existing funds (\$2,000,000) for major repairs and renovations.

Technology/Career Education

- **\$711,000 Reduced** to align budget with expenditures.
- **\$1 Million Added** for construction industry certification. (House sought \$2 Million. The senate added the direction, "...and encourage industry partners to provide additional funding.")
- **\$0 Added** for three heavy equipment simulators at ten schools. (The House sought \$1.5 Million, but the Senate reflected the funding in Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission - Capital Projects Fund.)

Testing

- **\$0 Added** to provide a universal reading screener for all K-3 students pursuant to HB 538 (2023 Session). (Governor sought \$5.02 Million, but the Senate said to reflect funds in the Non Quality Basic Education Formula Grants program.)

Governor's Office of Student Achievement

- **\$82,000 Reduced** to reflect current state agreements for erasure analysis.
- **\$250,000 Reduced** to align budget with expenditures.
- **\$500,000 Added** for the Literacy Lab.
- *Budget Direction:* Utilize existing funds (\$500,000) to provide community grants in support of the Georgia Reads Community Partnership.

Dept. of Human Services

Child Support Services

- **\$1.1 Million Added** for a \$3,000 additional salary enhancement for child support workers.
- **\$0 Added** for prosecution to support recruitment and retention needs. (House sought \$203,611)

Child Welfare Services

- **\$214,146 Added** for the full cost of two community action team pilot programs funded by HB 911 (2022 Session).
- **\$1.42 Million Transferred** funds from Elder Abuse Investigations and Prevention (\$590,000) and increase funds (\$828,935) for technology upgrades and improvements to the SHINES child welfare case management system to enhance efficiency.
- **\$4.66 Million Added** to provide a \$3,000 additional salary enhancement for child protection and placement services caseworkers.
- **\$1 Million Added** for the court appointed special advocates (CASA) to enhance statewide capacity.
- **\$1.5 Million Added** for child advocacy centers to expand mental health services and forensic interviewing for children who have experienced abuse, neglect, exploitation, and trafficking.
- **\$1.5 Million Added** to annualize wraparound services pilot. (Additionally, the Senate specified an additional \$1.5 Million add from federal Foster Care Title IV-E funds)

Departmental Administration (DHS)

- **\$1.09 Million Added** for rent for a multi-service building in Coweta County

Federal Eligibility Benefit Services

- **\$2.06 Million Added** for labor and wage data verification services.
- **\$630,057 Added** for 23 county customer service staff to provide staff in every customer service center.

Out-of-Home Care Services

- **\$8.38 Million Added** for a 3% provider rate increase for Child Caring Institutions, Child Placing Agencies, foster parents, and relative caregivers.

Out-of-School Care Services

- **\$2.66 Million Eliminated** for one-time funding to bridge the education gap. (Governor recommended = \$1 Million Eliminated)

Residential Child Care Licensing

- **\$134,618 Added** to establish an application and inspection process for Qualified Residential Treatment Programs.

Family Connection

- **\$596,250 Added** to increase operational support and each county's allocation to \$60,000. (House sought \$1.19 Million)

Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency: Vocational Rehabilitation Program

- **\$2 Million Added** for independent living services. (House sought \$1.09 Million)

Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Children Fund Commission

- **\$4.75 Million Added** for the full cost of the Gwinnett Commercial Sexual Exploitation Recovery Center funded by HB 19 (2023 Session).
- **\$100,000 Added** for a psychiatric nurse to support youth survivors of exploitation and trafficking.

Office of the Commissioner of Insurance

- **\$20 Million Added** for the state reinsurance program. (Governor recommended = \$20 Million Added, the House increased it to \$21.4 Million and the Senate returned to the Governor's rec)

Georgia Bureau of Investigation

- **\$1.33 Million Added** for six death investigation specialists, one forensic photographer, one quality manager, one business support analyst supervisor, and one business support analyst in the Medical Examiner's Office to address increased workload.
- **\$307,746 Added** to add two criminal intelligence analyst positions to support the Criminal Street Gang Database. (Governor recommended = \$221,874 Added)
- **\$4.87 Million Added** for nine special agents, two digital forensic investigators, two criminal intelligence analyst, and one office manager and associated cost for the GBI Gang Task Force in Columbus to combat crime.
- **\$1.15 Million Added** to provide targeted retention initiatives for 229 crime lab scientists.
- **\$680,971 Added** for local law enforcement partnerships to combat crime and gang activity.
- **Budget Direction:** Develop and report back to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees by September 1, 2024 on a grant program to incentivize the consolidation of resources for policing in communities of less than 50,000 people.

Criminal Justice Coordinating Council

- **\$4.73 Million Reduced** to align budget with expenditures.
- **\$1.25 Million Transferred** from Criminal Justice Coordinating Council to the Georgia Public Safety Training Center for School Resource Officer and De-escalation training.
- **\$2.77 Million Added** for personal services and operating expenses to promote the stability of the Georgia Crime Victims Emergency Fund.

Council of Accountability Court Judges

- **\$964,892 Added** for existing accountability courts to support population growth. (Governor recommended = \$964,892 Added, and then the House increased to \$1.92 Million, and the Senate returned to the governor's rec)

- **\$291,901 Added** to add one DUI court, two mental health courts, one drug court, and one juvenile drug court. (Governor recommended = \$246,697 Added for one DUI court and one Mental Health court, then the House asked for \$585,987 Added to add one DUI court, two mental health courts, one drug court, and one juvenile drug court; but the Senate removed one mental health court from the total)

Family Violence

- **\$1 Million Reduced** to align budget with expenditures.
- **\$14.7 Million Added** for domestic violence shelters for administrative personnel and facility costs related to compliance with state standards
- **\$2.07 Million Added** for sexual assault centers for administrative personnel and facility costs related to compliance with state standards.
- **\$4.01 Million Added** for sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE) coordinators and improve access to SANE resources for sexual assault centers.
- **\$895,785 Added** for six sexual assault centers (\$325,740) and 21 satellite sexual assault centers (\$570,045).

Dept. of Juvenile Justice

- Agency-wide: Increase funds to provide a new benchmark for juvenile correctional officers (JCO1) at \$40,040 to create parity with correctional officers. (FYI, the House and Senate do not appear to agree as to how many positions there are to cover and so there is a significant discrepancy in the dollar amounts.)
- **\$4.34 Million Added** to provide an additional \$3,000 targeted salary enhancement for selected POST certified law enforcement officers.
- **\$595,655 Added** to adjust the state base salary schedule to increase salaries for certified teachers and certified employees by \$2,500 effective September 1, 2024.
- **\$3.61 Million Reduced** to reflect regular operating and contract efficiencies.
- **\$558,960 Added** for a 3% provider rate increase to Child Caring Institutions.

Secure Confinement (Youth Detention Centers – YDCs)

- **\$0 Added** for mobile tablets for a new pilot electronic grievance system in one Department of Juvenile Justice Secure Commitment (YDC) and one Secure Detention (RYDC) facility. (Governor recommended = \$3,000 Added)
- **\$600,000 Added** for the creation of new mobile labs at three Secure Commitment (YDC) facilities through the Technical College System of Georgia.
- **\$148,282 Added** for new body cameras.
- **\$4.8 Million Added** for capital maintenance and repairs.

Secure Confinement (Residential Youth Detention Centers – RYDCs)

- **\$427,346 Added** for body cameras.
- **\$0 Added** for mobile tablets for a new pilot electronic grievance system in one Department of Juvenile Justice Secure Commitment (YDC) and one Secure Detention (RYDC) facility. (Governor recommended = \$3,000 Added)
- **\$9.81 Million Added** for capital maintenance and repairs.

Dept. of Law

- **\$822,411 Added** to expand the Gang Prosecution Unit to Columbus, Macon, and Savannah regions. (Governor recommended = \$807,312 Added)

Dept. of Public Health

Adolescent and Adult Health Promotion

- **\$908,522 Added** to expand the visiting hematologist program.

- **\$796,000 Added** for outreach and breast cancer screening services.

Epidemiology

- **\$765,528 Added** for the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program to monitor the prescribing and dispensing of controlled substances.
- **\$130,000 Added** for the Georgia Poison Center. (House sought \$358,931)

Infant and Child Essential Health Treatment Services

- **\$1.07 Million Added:** Utilize existing funds (\$685,903) and increase funds 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. (Total Funds: \$1,752,000) (Governor recommended = \$314,097 Added plus existing funds (\$685,903), The House sought an add of \$1.75 Million and the Senate reduced that add)
- **Budget Direction:** Utilize existing funds (\$118,939) for one epidemiologist position for surveillance and data analysis for the Low THC Oil Registry Program
- **\$912,936 Added** to increase reimbursement rates for speech-language pathology, audiology, physical therapy, and occupational therapy providers in the Babies Can't Wait program. (House sought \$456,468)

Infant and Child Health Promotion

- **\$978,639 Added** for newborn screening to include two additional disorders that have been approved by the Georgia Newborn Screening Advisory Committee.

Infectious Disease Control

- **\$150,611 Added** for one congenital syphilis and HIV case manager position to link cases identified during pregnancy and delivery to testing and treatment resources.

Inspections and Environmental Hazard Control

- **\$235,074 Eliminated** (they were one-time funds) for lead inspection start-up costs and testing machines.

Georgia Trauma Care Network Commission

- **\$6 Million Added** to initiate a multi-year plan to stabilize the trauma network. (House sought \$2.5 Million)
- **\$4.12 Million Added** pursuant to passage of [SB 515](#) (2024 Session) regarding an ambulance pilot program

Dept. of Public Safety

Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council

- **\$647,000 Added** for the Georgia POST Resiliency Program previously funded through the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council Law Enforcement Training Grant.
- **\$0 Added** for system maintenance support and onboarding for an online gang and human trafficking training system. (Governor recommended = \$20,000 Added)

University System of Georgia Board of Regents

Public Libraries

- **\$141,350 Added** for the public libraries' formula based on an increase in the state population. (Governor sought \$177,605)

Public Service/Special Funding Initiatives

- **\$1.45 Million Added** for legal clinics to increase law student exposure and involvement in public defender and prosecuting attorney work.

- **\$1.5 Million Added** to establish the David Ralston Center for Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities at the University of Georgia to build the workforce of professionals and provide a clearinghouse for research.

Teaching

- **\$2.92 Million Added** to reflect a 0.8% decrease in enrollment with an increase in higher cost program areas (\$2,256,373) and 0.2% increase in square footage (\$658,999).
- **\$66 Million Restored** FY 2024 formula funds for Teaching.
- **\$2.35 Million Added** for Medical College of Georgia expansion at Georgia Southern University's Armstrong campus.

Payments to Georgia Military College Preparatory School

- **\$148,613 Added** for enrollment, training, and experience.
- **\$45,000 Added** for a school security grant.

Secretary of State

Investigations

- **\$405,434 Added** for four criminal investigators due to increased volume of elections and licensing board investigations.

Professional Licensing Boards

- **\$1.8 Million Added** for 16 licensing technicians, one process improvement analyst, one licensing and renewal assistant, two IT positions, one administrative assistant, and one business analyst, as well as related equipment and hourly temporary employees to address backlogs while onboarding new employees. (House sought \$2.13 Million Added for 21 licensing technicians, etc.).

Georgia Student Finance Commission

Adult Learner High-Demand Field Scholarship

- **\$500,000 Added** to establish an adult learner scholarship program assisting Georgia residents of two years or more to complete their bachelor's degree in a high-demand field utilizing competency-based learning models or other such models designed to meet the needs of the working adult learner.

College Completion Grants

- \$2 Million Reduced for College Completion Grants.

Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IPSE) Grant

- **\$1.64 Million Added** to meet projected need.

Dual Enrollment

- **\$15.09 Million Added** to meet projected enrollment.

HERO Scholarship

- **\$300,000 Reduced** funds and utilize surplus funds to meet the projected need.

HOPE Grant

- **\$20.73 Million Reduced** to reflect expected program expenditure.
- **\$16.7 Million Transferred** from the HOPE Scholarships - Public Schools program to the HOPE Grant program.

HOPE High School Equivalency Exam

- **\$845,510 Reduced** to reflect expected program expenditure.

HOPE Scholarships – Private Schools

- **\$16.44 Million Reduced** to reflect expected program expenditures at a HOPE Private Award rate at \$2,496 and a HOPE Zell Private Award rate at \$2,985.

HOPE Scholarships – Public Schools

- **\$11.15 Million Reduced** to reflect expected program expenditures at a 100% factor rate. (Governor recommended = \$9.11 Million Reduced, then the House reduced \$12.29 and the Senate decreased the reduction)

Low Interest Loans

- *Budget Direction:* Reduce funds and eliminate program to reflect cessation of further loan originations.

Service Cancelable Loans

- *Budget Direction:* Recognize existing funds (\$3,200,000) to provide up to \$20,000 maximum loan repayments across five years of service to support recruitment and retention of public law enforcement officers.

Technical College System of Georgia

Quick Start

- **\$46 Million Reduced** (they were one-time funds) for construction to complete Rivian training center.
- **\$4.75 Million Added** to meet existing training obligations.

Technical Education

- **\$9.85 Million Added** to reflect a 3.0% increase in enrollment (\$8,988,608) and 0.7% increase in square footage (\$444,954). (Governor sought \$9.43 Million)
- **\$1.1 Million Reduced** to align budget with expenditures.
- *Budget Direction:* In conjunction with the Office of Planning and Budget and House and Senate budget offices, the Technical College System of Georgia shall conduct a review of the current formula rates and program expense for the Technical Education program to ensure that the funding formula reflects costs to provide instruction and determine whether additional clusters are needed to better reflect needs of high-cost programs.

Workforce Development

- **\$322,000 Added** for two new positions to provide regionally based consultation and technical assistance to healthcare partners across the state.

Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission – Capital Projects Fund

Dept. of Education

- **\$25.47 Million Added** for Low Wealth for local school construction.
- **\$21.19 Million Added** for Additional Low Wealth for local school construction. (Governor recommended = \$22.2 Million added)
- **\$181.76 Million Added** for Regular for local school construction. (Governor recommended = \$182.08 Million added)
- **\$6.91 Million Added** for Regular Advance for local school construction.
- **\$10.66 Million Added** for Purchase vocational and agriculture education equipment. (Governor recommended = \$10.96 Million added; then the House sought \$7.32 Million, and the Senate increased it.)
- **\$7.08 Million Added** for Major repairs and renovations for state schools.

- \$20 Million Added for Purchase school buses.
- \$5 Million Added for one-time funding for construction of the Middle Georgia STEM Academy, Houston County. (House sought \$2.5 Million)

Dept. of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities

- \$8.75 Million Added Hospital Campus Urgent and Significant Needs Prioritized According to the GSFIC Campus Survey

GA Bureau of Investigation

- \$40.1 Million Added for construction of Medical Examiner Annex Addition, Decatur, DeKalb County.

Dept. of Juvenile Justice

- \$1.8 Million Added for additional design fees for a 56-bed facility expansion, Macon, Bibb County.
- \$1.8 Million Added for additional design fees for a 48-bed facility expansion, Milledgeville, Baldwin County.
- \$52 Million Added for construction of 48-bed facility expansion, Milledgeville, Baldwin County.
- \$2.3 Million Added for major repair and renovation.
- \$3.8 Million Added for Land acquisition and design for new 56-bed facility, Gwinnett County.

Georgia Environmental Finance Authority:

- \$15 Million Added for the state match for the federal Clean Water and Drinking Water Revolving Loan Programs.

University System of Georgia Board of Regents-Public Libraries

- \$3 Million Added for one-time funding for major repairs and renovations, statewide. (House sought \$1.5 Million)
- \$900,000 Added for one-time funding for renovation of Douglas-Coffee County Library, Satilla Regional Library System, Douglas, Coffee County. (House sought \$450,000)
- \$450,000 Added for one-time funding for renovation of the Cedartown Library, Sara Hightower Library System, Cedartown, Polk County.
- \$250,000 Added for one-time funding for renovation of the Dawson County Public Library, Chestatee Regional Library System, Dawsonville, Dawson County. (House sought \$302,000)
- \$250,000 Added for one-time funding for renovation of Westtown Library, Dougherty County Library System, Albany, Dougherty County. (House sought \$450,000)
- \$2 Million Added for one-time funding for Technology Grants to Public Libraries, statewide. (House sought \$1 Million)
- \$900,000 Added for one-time funding for renovation of Appleby Branch Library, Augusta-Richmond County Public Library System, Augusta, Richmond County.
- \$1.11 Million Added for one-time funding for construction of Morgan County Library, Azalea Regional Library System, Madison, Morgan County.
- \$1.5 Million Added for one-time funding for construction of Cleveland-White County Public Library, Northeast Georgia Regional Library System, Cleveland, White County.



Justice, Public Safety, & School Discipline

BILLS THAT HAVE PASSED BOTH CHAMBERS, AWAITING TRANSMISSION TO THE GOVERNOR

[SB 63](#)

(Robertson-29th) Prohibits a local jurisdiction from creating a bail schedule, or policy, that mandates releasing a person from jail on unsecured judicial release. It also modifies the definition of "bail" in the code section. The bill modifies the list of crimes under "bail restricted offenses" to include various crimes, including misdemeanors and second or subsequent violations of certain crimes. No person is eligible to be released on unsecured judicial release if they were charged with a bail-restricted offense. Those individuals are only eligible for release through the use of secured means, professional bondsmen, and approved property. Any person arrested for any offense who has previously been convicted of a felony within the past seven years is not eligible for an unsecured judicial release. The bill removes the exemption for those who were deported from the country by the federal government, meaning that a judgment can be made by a court on a forfeiture of an appearance bond if the person at issue was deported and could not attend court for that reason. A surety is now released from liability if, prior to a judgment, the person at issue participates in an accountability court or enters into a pretrial release program. The bill increases the amount that bail recovery agents can charge for continuing legal education programs, the timeline for when sureties are relieved from liability due to a failure to timely file a bench warrant and forfeiture of bond, and the amount of remission of a bond to be paid to the surety.

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

[SB 232](#)

(Kennedy-18th) Modifies the types and dollar amounts of fees charged and collected by probate court judges and clerks contained in O.C.G.A. 15-9-60. These fees are charged for filings such as petitions, motions, claims, and certificates, as well as for different applications, licenses, and certified copies. Conforming language in other sections of the Code relating to filing fees, license fees, and fireworks applications is contained in the bill.

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

SB 421

(Dixon-45th) Increases the penalties for a third or subsequent conviction of the offense of making an unlawful request for emergency services assistance in O.C.G.A. 16-10-28 to between 10 and 15 years imprisonment, a minimum fine of \$25,000, or both. If the location of response is a person's home or a place of worship, then a first violation is now treated as a felony with imprisonment of between one and 10 years, a minimum fine of \$5,000, or both. A person who is convicted of this crime is now automatically liable for restitution to any affected natural person or public or private entity for reasonable costs or damages associated with the offense, including damage to property and expenses to treat bodily injuries. Part II of SB 421 broadens the crime of aggravated assault to include when someone discharges a firearm, without legal justification, after immediately exiting a vehicle towards another vehicle or an occupied building. The crime of criminal damage to property in the first degree is broadened to include when someone discharges a firearm, without legal justification, while inside a vehicle or after immediately exiting and when that person causes damage to a building. The bill creates a new crime of drive-by shooting when a person who is either in a motor vehicle or is close to a motor vehicle that they used to drive to the location, discharges a firearm at another person, motor vehicle, occupied dwelling, or dwelling that the person should have known to be occupied, with the intent to injure or damage the property of another. The penalty is imprisonment of between five and 20 years. The crime of drive-by shooting is added to the list of crimes within the definition of "racketeering activity" under the criminal gang statute.

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

SB 453

(Payne-54th) Transfers probation and intake services of the Juvenile Court of Gordon County to the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice.

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

SB 465

(Goodman-8th) Creates the crime of aggravated involuntary manslaughter that occurs when a person intentionally manufactures or sells a controlled substance that contains fentanyl, or a fentanyl analog, and a person who takes or uses that substance dies, in whole or in part, from the fentanyl overdose. In a prosecution for this crime, the government will not need to prove that the defendant knew fentanyl was in the drug. A person who violates this offense will be guilty of a felony, and subject to imprisonment of between 10 and 30 years. The bill also creates a felony crime for unlawfully possessing, purchasing, delivering, selling, or possessing with intent to sell or deliver a pill press or tableting machine when the "unregulated person" knows, intends, or has reasonable cause to believe that the item will be used to manufacture a controlled substance or counterfeit substance. A person who commits this crime will be subject to imprisonment of between one and 10 years.

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

SB 533 (Strickland-17th) Allows the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) to restore an accused person back to mental competency, so that they can stand trial in an appropriate facility within a jail. In order to use these facilities, DBHDD must have a mutual agreement with the local sheriff's office.

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

HB 873 (Gunter-8th) Codifies the ability of juvenile courts to establish a juvenile treatment court division as an alternative to the traditional judicial system for juvenile delinquency cases or child in need of services (CHINS) cases. A case may be assigned to these new courts: 1) if the prosecutor or other petitioner consents prior to the entry of adjudication or disposition; 2) as part of a disposition in a case; or 3) upon modification or revocation of probation or a new petition. Each new juvenile treatment court division must establish a planning group to develop a work plan. Planning groups are required to include: judges, prosecutors, sheriffs, public defenders, community supervision officers, and probation officers. The Council of Accountability Court judges must establish standards and practices for these divisions taking into account current research and findings published by experts on children's health needs/treatment options. The council will also create and manage a certification/peer review process to ensure local divisions are adhering to standards/practices. Further, they will create a waiver process that divisions will need to apply for if they want an exception to standards/practices. The council will also create a certification process to allow a court to demonstrate a need for additional state grant funds for one or more part-time judges to operate these divisions. Divisions established on and after July 1, 2026, will be certified or receive a waiver if they have good cause. The council is also required to develop and manage an electronic system for performance measurement that accepts data in a consistent manner. On or around July 1, 2026, and every three years afterward, the council must conduct a performance peer review of the divisions to improve the policies/practices. The court that institutes the division can request that one or more prosecutors and one or more defense attorneys serve in the division, and the clerk of the juvenile court will serve as the clerk of the division.

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

BILLS THAT HAVE PASSED BOTH CHAMBERS, BUT NEED AGREEMENT FROM THE FIRST CHAMBER DUE TO CHANGES

HB 1201 (Gaines-120th) Allows a victim of human trafficking to have their sentence vacated when sentenced pursuant to O.C.G.A. 42-8-60, relating to probation, or O.C.G.A. 16-13-2, relating to conditional discharge of possession of controlled substances as a first offense, so long as the crime was a direct result of being a victim of human trafficking, and defines a commercial sexual exploitation recovery center' to mean a child-caring institution certified as a victim assistance program which provides full-time residential care and support services to youth through 18 years of age who are victims of sexual exploitation.

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

[SB 169](#) (Payne-54th) Amends O.C.G.A. 20-2-754, which revises the hearing dates for suspensions. A hearing should be held no later than 10 school days from the beginning of the suspension unless there is an agreement between the parents and school system, in which case the hearing must be no later than 15 days after the beginning of the suspension. A hearing can be held later than 15 days upon written request to the school system by a parent or guardian.

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

BILLS THAT CROSSED OVER, WAITING FOR SECOND CHAMBER PASSAGE

[HB 500](#) (Silcox-53rd) Creates the offense of arson of a law enforcement vehicle. Any person convicted of the offense is punished by a fine up to \$100,000 or by imprisonment for a minimum of five years with a maximum of 20 years, or both.

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

[HB 505](#) (Cheokas-151st) The amendments to Georgia's legal code include provisions defining and penalizing rioting under Chapter 11 of Title 16, establishing felony charges for those providing material support for terrorism, and introducing civil liability immunity for motor vehicle operators fleeing from riots under Title 51. Rioting constitutes a felony when it involves ten or more individuals and poses grave danger to persons or property, obstructs governmental functions, or intimidates governmental employees. Individuals providing material support for terrorism face up to 20 years' imprisonment or a \$100,000 fine. Motor vehicle operators are immune from civil liability during riots if they reasonably believe fleeing is necessary to protect themselves or their vehicle from harm, unless their actions demonstrate intentional disregard for life or property. Civil actions against these operators are stayed during related criminal prosecutions, and the statute of limitations for tort actions related to crimes is tolled until the prosecution is finalized, with a maximum of six years. These amendments aim to address issues of rioting, terrorism, and civil liability in a precise and comprehensive manner in Georgia's legal framework.

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

[HB 508](#) (Ballinger-23rd) Provides for changes to existing licensing requirements for applicants to specified licensing boards, specifically pertaining to use of criminal history records, and also with records restrictions and petitions for the sealing of records. Section 1-1 of SB 157 adds a definition of "covered misdemeanor" as a misdemeanor conviction in the last five years prior to the application and an offense listed in O.C.G.A. 35-3-37(j)(4)(B), which provides for family violence offenses, offenses against children, sexual offenses, and serious traffic offenses. The section also defines "conviction" and "felony". Section 1-2 replaces the "crime of moral turpitude" standard and requires the professional licensing board to bear the burden of denying an applicant for a license due to their criminal record by the standard of "substantially more likely than not". An applicant is also entitled to a hearing before the professional licensing board per the 'Georgia Administrative Procedure Act'. Section 1-3 makes a denial of a request for reinstatement of a revoked license and the refusal to issue a previously denied license a

contested case under the 'Georgia Administrative Procedure Act'. Section 1-4 permits license denial only if a direct relationship is found between a criminal record and the licensed occupation, and the applicant's licensure would pose a direct and substantial risk to public safety because they have not been rehabilitated to safely perform the licensed duties and responsibilities. This section clarifies what rehabilitation evidence will be considered and the disclosure of criminal records to those that are serious, recent, and relevant convictions that have not been expunged or pardoned. A list of specific crimes must always be disclosed, while others must be excluded. Requirements related to character standards are modified to require individualized consideration of applicants, and boards are required to provide a procedure, including written findings that it uses to justify a license denial due to a criminal record. Further, the section requires boards to allow an applicant to apply for a predetermination procedure to determine whether their criminal history record will lead to a denial in the future. Boards are also required to post public information on their websites and application about the criminal record consideration, including the legal standard, disclosure rules, predetermination process, and appeal. By March 31st of each year, the occupational licensing board will be required to file with the Office of the Secretary of State an annual report containing required information on licensing and criminal records, including the racial and ethnic distribution of applicants who were denied. Section 1-5 changes a referenced definition for the term "felony". Section 1-6 and 1-7 change references to be consistent with the new definitions, and they restrict records when there has been a conviction that has been restricted, sealed, annulled, dismissed, vacated, or pardoned. A plea in which someone is still fulfilling requirements as a first offender will still be visible to the Georgia Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors Board when making determinations. These sections add requirements for when the board can consider convictions in its determination, and provides for a predetermination procedure to determine whether a petitioner's conviction would disqualify them from obtaining a relevant license prior to applying for the license. Parts II, III, IV, and VI replace the "crime of moral turpitude" standard, require the review of an applicant's criminal history to be directly related to the profession, require a denial on criminal history records grounds to be due to a substantial risk to public safety standards, and regulate disclosure of criminal records to serious, recent, and relevant convictions, for the following boards: Georgia State Board of Accountancy, Georgia Board of Dentistry, Georgia Composite Medical Board, Georgia Real Estate Commission and Appraisers Board, Structural Pest Control Commission, Professional Standards Commission, and Georgia Board of Pharmacy. Only some of the provisions are applied to requirements of the insurance commissioner due to conflicts with federal law. Part V applies to long-term care facilities and modifies the definition of "criminal record" to exclude certain parties who received a general pardon from the State Board of Pardons and Paroles for their convictions, starting from the date of their conviction or adjudication rather than the completion of their sentence. Part VII 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. Parts VIII and IX revise O.C.G.A. 35-3-37 to make those who commit the crime of theft eligible for a record restriction. The bill removes the limitation that only two misdemeanor convictions, or a series of misdemeanors arising from one incident, could be requested to be restricted through a petition. It increases eligibility for who can petition the court to seal records to those who have had records restricted pursuant to O.C.G.A. 17-10-21 (vacating of sentence for trafficking victim defendants), and an individual cited for a criminal offense that later had the charge dismissed, nolle prossed, or reduced to a violation of a local ordinance. The court is required to order all records held by the clerk to be restricted and unavailable to the public if the record has been restricted through a pardon by the Board of

Pardons and Paroles. The bill allows restricted information to always be available to criminal justice agencies for law enforcement or criminal investigative purposes. It removes the requirement that the prosecutor must agree with a petition to the court for a retroactive grant of first offender status. The bill does not allow a court to provide retroactive first offender status for a conviction that was used as the underlying conviction pursuant to 16-11-131 (possession of firearms by convicted felons and first offender probationers) or if the conviction was used to enhance a sentence pursuant to 17-10-7 (punishment of repeat offenders). Part X makes the bill effective on January 1, 2025, and applies to all applications for licensure submitted on or after that date.

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

[HB 509](#) (Ballinger-23rd) Expands the crime of burglary in the first and second degrees to include when a person enters the house, or other specified building or structure, of another person with the intent to commit an act of family violence.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Children and Families Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

[HB 909](#) (Hagan-156th) Automatically restricts and seals the record of an offense by an individual after July 1, 2024 who was sentenced to Title 42, Chapter 8, Article 3 ('First Offenders Act'). If first offender status is revoked, then a court will unseal the records, and courts, law enforcement agencies, jails, and detention centers may disseminate the records. Those who were exonerated of guilt and discharged as a first offender prior to July 1, 2024 may petition the court to have the records sealed, and those records will be automatically sealed.

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

[HB 926](#) (Reeves-99th) Provides for issuance of certificates ("Program and Treatment Completion Certificate") by a court for purposes of demonstrating rehabilitation and good moral character. The bill also sets out certain provisions regarding driver's licenses. The bill also includes battery of a healthcare worker or emergency health worker as a serious delinquent act in the juvenile code.

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

[HB 996](#) (Vance-133rd) States that in any case in which a person has been arrested for, charged by accusation or indictment with, or alleged by petition for delinquency to have committed an AIDS transmitting crime or other crime which involves the transmission of body fluids from one person to another or significant exposure to HIV, upon request by the victim or the parent or legal guardian of a minor or incompetent victim the agency responsible for the arrest or the prosecution of the alleged offense shall request that the person arrested for such offense submit to an HIV test and consent to the release of the test results to the victim. The bill also authorizes jailers who have been certified by the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Council as having successfully completed the course of training required by the 'Georgia Peace Officers Standards and Training Act' to arrest any person in violation of a criminal law which occurs in the jail or within the perimeter of jail guard lines. The jailer may also arrest anyone who has a complaint or arrest warrant pending and surrenders themselves.

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

[HB 1283](#) (Persinger-119th) Clarifies that aggravated assault with a firearm is included within the definition of "Class A designated felony act" in the Juvenile Code.

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

[SB 10](#) (Jones-10th) Increases penalties for drag racing.

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

[SB 37](#) (Robertson-29th) Provides for a sheriff who serves in more than one court to receive a salary for up to two courts, and that salary would not be increased by any state cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) or general performance-based increase. The bill prohibits the use of flashing or revolving blue lights by emergency vehicles outside of the jurisdiction of their agency, except when responding to an emergency call or when in pursuit of an actual or suspected violator of the law. SB 37 authorizes jailers who have been certified by the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council as having successfully completed the course of training require by the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Act to arrest any person who is in violation of a criminal law that occurs in the jail or within the perimeter of the guard lines of the jail. The jailer may also arrest anyone who has a complaint or arrest warrant pending and surrenders themselves.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee.

[SB 110](#) (Walker-20th) Outlines the procedures bicyclists will take when approaching a stop sign at an intersection or junction of a highway with two or fewer lanes.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Motor Vehicles Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

[SB 407](#) (James-35th) When documenting incidents of family violence, requires law enforcement officers to prepare an incident report that includes whether any party to the incident involving actual or alleged family violence is the subject of an active or expired protective order in the Georgia Protective Order Registry; and, to the extent reasonably obtainable, the number and nature of prior incidents involving law enforcement between the parties to the incident involving actual or alleged family violence.

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

[SB 490](#) (Cowsert-46th) Increases the penalties for the felony offense of fleeing or attempting to elude a police officer.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

[SB 517](#) (Robertson-29th) Allows for certain uses of force by a law enforcement officer to be considered for immunity from prosecution. The bill adds references to the immunity statute for O.C.G.A. 16-3-20, relating to justification, and O.C.G.A. 17-4-20, relating to authorization of arrests with and without warrants and use of deadly force. The same references are added into the O.C.G.A. 51-11-9, which provides for immunity for civil liability.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. The bill has been postponed on the House Floor.

[SB 570](#) (Kennedy-18th) Articulates the intent required for certain offenses of simple assault as such: "With the intent either to inflict injury upon or arouse the apprehension of another person commits an act which places such person in reasonable apprehension of immediately receiving a violent injury."

STATUS: Senate Judiciary Committee but since the bill was dropped after Crossover Day, it will not advance as its own bill.

STUDY COMMITTEES DO NOT REQUIRE BOTH CHAMBERS' PASSAGE

[HR 1416](#) (Neal-79th) Creates the five-member House Study Committee on Felony Sentencing and Punishment in Georgia to evaluate existing sentencing and punishment for both juveniles and adults. Allowances are authorized for five meeting days, and the study committee will stand abolished on December 1, 2024.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

[SR 570](#) (Robertson-29th) Creates the Senate Supporting Safety and Welfare of All Individuals in Department of Corrections Facilities Study Committee.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. This is a Senate Study Committee and therefore does not need House approval.

 **Child Welfare & Protection****BILLS THAT HAVE PASSED BOTH CHAMBERS,
AWAITING TRANSMISSION TO THE GOVERNOR**

- SB 335** (Albers-56th) The 'Safeguarding Adopted Children from Sexual Violence Act' and expands the crime of incest to include those whose familial relationships are created by adoption.
- STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. The bill awaits transmission to the governor for his consideration.
- SB 342** (Robertson-29th) Allows the Department of Human Services to use records of child abuse or neglect from the child abuse and neglect registry, or from another state, to locate, recover, or provide services to a child who is determined by the department to be missing or a victim of sexual exploitation. It also amends who can have reasonable access to records of child abuse to include the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.
- STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED. HOUSE. Awaits transmission to the governor for his consideration.
- SB 370** (Hodges-3rd) Adds convenience stores, body art studios, manufacturing facilities, and medical offices to the list of establishments that must post a notice containing the human trafficking hotline information. The bill also requires that each board member of the Georgia Board of Massage Therapy complete at least 30 minutes of training on human trafficking awareness.
- STATUS: PASSED SENATE. PASSED HOUSE. Awaits transmission to the Governor for his consideration.

SB 376

(Tillery-19th) Amends various Code sections related to dependency proceedings to require that a court determine whether the parent has made substantial progress towards completion of the case plan at the initial 75-day periodic review. During a review that is after an initial 75-day review, the bill requires the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) to develop a case plan within 14 days of the review. The bill would also require that the court review and adopt the revised case plan within 45 days of the review or at a previously-scheduled hearing. O.C.G.A. 15-11-232 is revised to correct a reference involving a court's written findings during a permanency plan hearing involving a child who has attained the age of 14. The bill revises O.C.G.A. 15-11-233, relating to termination of parental rights, to narrow one of the situations in which termination of parental rights may not be in the best interests of a child adjudicated as a dependent. The bill limits that situation to only include when a relative intends to be a permanent placement for that child as part of a permanency plan and in which the timeline is consistent with the developmental needs of the child. SB 376 requires the court, at least 30 days prior to the 15th month that a child has been in foster care and when the court deems appropriate, to review DFCS's determination that terminating the parental rights would not be in the best interests of the child. The court can appoint an attorney guardian ad litem who can file a petition to terminate parental rights on behalf of the child. The court is also permitted to make additional rulings at its own discretion.

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

SB 387

(Kirkpatrick-32nd) Allows an eligible child who is between the ages of 14 and 17 and who does not have an address or is in the custody of the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) to apply for an identification card without having a parent, guardian, or other adult sign or verify the application. The bill the Department of Driver Services (DDS) from collecting a fee for an identification card from a child who is in DFCS custody or who is receiving extended care youth services from DFCS. The bill authorizes the Department of Human Services (DHS) to provide each child who has entered foster care with a photo of themselves within 90 days of entrance. If the child is under 14 years old, then the foster parent or placement will be provided with the photograph of the child. DFCS is required to ensure that each child receives a photograph, and each child is also required to receive an identification card.

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

SB 401

(Kirkpatrick-32nd) Requires each juvenile court to collect data on all cases in which a child is alleged or adjudicated to be a dependent child placed in foster care. This data will be incorporated into the Georgia Juvenile Data Exchange, and the form of entry will be specified by the Administrative Office of the Courts. This data will include various dates related to the disposition of cases and deadlines imposed by statute. The bill requires each juvenile court to maintain a "ready-accessible docket" that is accessible by the parties and to utilize its local case management system to collect required data. By April 15, 2025, the Administrative Office of the Courts must put together a report for the General Assembly. Further, a petition to terminate parental rights must be immediately filed and docketed when presented to the clerk of a juvenile court.

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

[SB 483](#)

(Hatchett-50th) Enters Georgia into the updated version of the 'Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children Act' and replaces existing language of the previous version of the compact if at least 35 states total join the compact. Sixteen states have currently joined the revised compact, which provides a streamlined procedure for coordinating the placement of juveniles in different states, whether from public or private child placing agencies.

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

[SB 520](#)

(Cowsert-46th) Adds definitions for "income withholding" and "income withholding notice", and replaces previous terms within the Code. It also requires that an income withholding notice be provided to the payor to initiate income withholding. In cases involving Title IV-D child support withholding through an income withholding notice, all objections will be placed on the calendar for a hearing before an administrative law judge. The notice will remain in effect until the objection is heard and a decision is rendered.

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

BILLS THAT HAVE PASSED BOTH CHAMBERS, BUT NEED AGREEMENT FROM THE FIRST CHAMBER DUE TO CHANGES

[HB 499](#)

(Hitchens-161st) Provides a court the discretion to require either one spouse, or both spouses, to pay child support for a disabled child who has become an adult but lacks the ability to take care of themselves independently. The spouses can be in a divorce proceeding, living separately, or in a state of separation. A "disabled child" is defined to be an individual who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities and that meets a disability under state or federal law. The bill allows for modification of the award for child support if there has been a substantial change in the child's or parent's ability to provide support for themselves. The court can direct one or both parents to maintain life insurance for the benefit of a disabled child who has become an adult but lacks the ability to take care of themselves independently.

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

[HB 1090](#) (Newton-127th) Updates and expands the Fostering Success Tax Credit for aging foster children and justice involved youth that meet one of the following: revising eligibility to include former foster children up to age 21, youth in foster care at least six months after reaching age 14 who have not been adopted or reunited with family before age 18, and youth in foster care at least six months after reaching age 14 who are homeless or qualify for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); expanding the types of programs that can participate to include those that support justice involved youth by providing wraparound services for youth aging out of foster care enrolled in a public postsecondary educational institution, a program to obtain a high school diploma or equivalent, a nationally accredited vocational school, or participating in a registered apprenticeship program; and to allow a "business enterprise" -- defined to mean insurance companies -- to claim the credit. (Thanks to Barton Child Law and Policy Center for help with this summary.)

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

[SB 230](#) (Brass-28th) Adds a new item to the bill of rights for foster parents, which says that they have the right to a reasonable and prudent parent standard when determining the ability of a child in foster care to engage in certain extracurricular activities. This clarifies that foster parents have the right to a certified volunteer advocate of the foster parent's choosing during an investigation and also during meetings, as well as the right to a fair, timely, and impartial investigation. It also changes the date that the Department of Human Services must develop a grievance procedure for dealing with grievances of foster parents from 2007 to 2024.

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

[SB 324](#) (Jackson-41st) Prohibits courts from issuing or approving mutual protective orders in certain instances. The bill provides for the issuance of dating violence protective orders. The bill creates a victim-centered address confidentiality program within the Office of the Secretary of State. The program allows certified participants to utilize an address confidentiality card in lieu of disclosing their address to governmental entities to prevent the publication of a confidential address.

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

[SB 454](#) (Strickland-17th) Revises the child support award calculation worksheet and the rates, clarifies that the definition of custodial parent applies to the parent who earns the lesser amount of gross income, and changes the process of editing child support awards to include a low-income adjustment system rather than a deviation. The bill allows disability benefits received by the child from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to count against the noncustodial parent's final child support amount.

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

[SB 493](#)

(Hatchett-50th) Section 1 of SB 493 adds a defined minimum fine of \$1,500 for the crime of intentionally photographing a minor without the consent of the parent or guardian, if the court elects to impose a fine. On a second or subsequent violation, the penalty will be a felony with imprisonment of between one and 30 years and a fine of between \$5,000 and \$100,000. A conviction will also encompass a plea of nolo contendere. Further, a person who is on the sex offender registry is prohibited from knowingly owning or operating an unmanned aircraft system with the intent to photograph or observe any person in a manner that violates that person's reasonable expectation of privacy. Section 2 allows a court to add a term of probation for someone who is subject to O.C.G.A. 42-8- 35(b) that prohibits a sex offender from possessing, owning, or operating an unmanned aircraft system. Section 3 allows an individual on the sex offender registry to petition the superior court to be released from the registry when they have reached the age of 80 years old and have completed all prison, parole, supervised release, and probation for the offense that required registration. A person can also petition the superior court to be released from the registry when they: 1) were convicted and required to register under the laws of another jurisdiction and have been removed from that other jurisdiction's registry; 2) have completed all prison, parole, supervised release, and probation requirements for the offense that required registration, and 10 years have elapsed since the requirements have been met; and 3) the individual has been classified by the board as a Level I risk classification. When a person petitions the court to be removed from the registry solely on the basis that they completed all prison, parole, supervised release, and probation requirements, then they may do so if five years have elapsed since completing the requirements and if they are a Level I risk classification.

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

BILLS THAT CROSSED OVER, WAITING FOR SECOND CHAMBER PASSAGE

[HB 144](#)

(Lewis-Ward-115th) Updates the rights of a ward in a guardianship by clarifying that a ward can communicate freely and privately with people other than the guardian through visitation, telephone calls, email, or personal mail. If a guardian violates the right of the ward to communicate, visit, or interact with others, in O.C.G.A. 29-4-22(b), then a ward or interested party can petition the court with evidence alleging that the guardian violated that right. If the court finds the guardian violated the ward's right, then a court can impose a maximum fine of \$1,000 for each violation. After two violations have been reported and ruled on by a court, the court can impose temporary suspension of the guardianship and appoint another guardian until the violations are resolved.)

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

[HB 218](#)

(Hilton-48th) Defines "mentally incapacitated" as a mental impairment significantly affecting a person's ability to provide personal protection, necessities, carry out daily activities, or manage resources. It establishes that statements made by mentally incapacitated individuals aged 17 or older, describing nonconsensual sexual contact or physical abuse, are admissible as evidence if the person testifies at trial and the proponent provides pretrial notice to the adverse party. However, the adverse party can waive the testimony's use, and the individual who heard the statement can be cross-examined about it during trial.

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

[HB 298](#) (Daniel-117th) Mandates the State Board of Education, in consultation with the Department of Public Health, to establish a course in pregnancy, health, and human development for grades nine through 12 by July 1, 2025. The course will cover human biology related to pregnancy and various topics including gestational development stages, comorbid conditions in pregnant women, complications of delivery, and maternal mortality causes. This course will be incorporated into the health and physical education curriculum, distinct from sex education, and will not address sexual intercourse.

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

[HB 327](#) (Cameron-1st) Includes grandparent and grandchild of the whole blood or of the half blood or step-grandchild in the list of relatives who are able to be charged with incest.

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

[HB 893](#) (Dempsey-13th) Allows Georgia to enter into an interstate compact known as the "Social Work Licensure Compact" and authorizes the Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers, and Marriage and Family Therapists to administer the compact in this state.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

[HB 910](#) (Jasperse-11th) Delineates various terms and regulations regarding the dissemination and access of material deemed harmful to minors on public websites by commercial entities. It defines terms such as 'commercial entity,' 'digitized identification card,' 'distribute,' 'material harmful to minors,' 'minor,' 'news-gathering organization,' 'publish,' 'reasonable age verification,' and 'substantial portion.' Commercial entities are required to implement reasonable age verification methods before allowing access to websites containing a significant amount of harmful material for minors. Failure to do so can result in liability for damages, court costs, and fines of up to \$10,000 per violation. The section also specifies that no identifying information should be retained after age verification, with penalties for non-compliance. Exclusions are made for news-related content and cloud service providers. Additionally, internet service providers are not held accountable solely for providing access to harmful material if they are not responsible for its creation or dissemination.

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

[HB 959](#) (Corbett-174th) Establishes a Victims of Human Trafficking Fund Commission, administratively assigned to the Division of Family and Children Services. It creates a separate fund in the state treasury for disbursements, including for care, rehabilitative services, residential housing, health services, and social services for victims. The commission, comprised of appointed members, is

tasked with overseeing fund disbursements, maintaining records, and adhering to state standards. The commission is empowered to recommend changes in state programs and policies relating to the care of exploited victims, solicit federal funds and donations, and impose additional penalties for certain offenses, with funds directed to the Victims of Human Trafficking Fund. Additionally, it grants victims a cause of action against perpetrators and allows for the forfeiture of property used in the commission of related crimes, and provides for a required human trafficking training program for hotels.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by Senate Public Safety Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

[HB 993](#) (Powell-33rd) Creates a criminal penalty for those who groom a minor through a pattern of activity, and use electronic means to persuade, induce, entice, or coerce that minor to engage in a sexual offense, human trafficking, or any other offense within Chapter 6 of Title 16. A person who commits this crime will be subject to felony imprisonment of one to five years. This crime only applies to a person over the age of 18 and who is not within four years of age of the alleged victim. The bill also provides limitations of defense that a sexually exploitative visual medium is digitally altered for the offense of sexual exploitation of children.

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

[HB 1022](#) (Sainz-180th) "Colton-McNeill Act" - Increases penalties for committing the crime of cruelty to children against a disabled minor. The first degree of the crime now carries a penalty of between 15 and 30 years, while the second degree of the crime now carries a penalty of between 10 and 30 years.

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

[HB 1264](#) (Stephens-164th) Authorizes the Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers, and Marriage and Family Therapists and the Georgia Board of Nursing to establish a professional health program to provide for monitoring and rehabilitation of impaired healthcare professionals. The bill also adds provisions of SB 529, which provides a provisional license to people who are foreign trained. The provisional license requires they work at a place in an underserved area. Such license is good for two years, and can be extended for 2 years, and then the licensee must sit for the board.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

[HB 1361](#) (Thomas-21st) Outlines definitions and penalties regarding offenses related to trespassing and harassing wild animals. It defines "harassment" as any act that disregards the well-being of a wild animal or disrupts its normal behavior patterns. A "wild animal" encompasses any land or sea creature found in the wild, excluding domestic animals or livestock, even those housed in facilities for public visitation, conservation, or education. The code delineates degrees of criminal trespass involving wild animals, with first-degree offenses resulting in injury or death of the animal being a felony punishable by imprisonment for one to ten years, and second-degree offenses being misdemeanors punishable by up to 12 months' imprisonment. Offenders are liable for damages to property, including harm to the animal. The code specifies that certain defenses, like lack of sufficient guarding or provocation, are not valid excuses for trespassing or harassing wild animals. Additionally, it exempts individuals aiding others or animals in need from certain trespassing restrictions. Furthermore, the section introduces definitions pertinent to obscenity laws, such as "artificial intelligence system," "child," and "sexually explicit conduct," providing clarity for legal interpretation and enforcement. The bill also adds provisions of SB 182, relating to stalking, so as to provide for the offense of doxing.

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

[SB 36](#) (Robertson-29th) Makes the crimes of pimping and pandering penalized by a felony with one to 10 years of imprisonment. A person who commits a second or subsequent offense of pimping, or who commits a second or subsequent offense of pandering, will be penalized by a felony, with imprisonment of one to 10 years, and a mandatory minimum of one year. The court can depart from either crime's mandatory minimum if it deems in its discretion that the sentence is not in the interest of justice, although the court must state its findings on the record when doing so. Multiple Code sections are also revised to broaden the eligibility for vacating of sentences when a victim of human trafficking commits a crime while trafficked, but is not technically convicted since they were sentenced as a felony first offender. The bill adds a provision that makes a person guilty of a misdemeanor when they bring a weapon or long gun while on the property of the Georgia World Congress Center, or on the property of a locality during a private event involving a gated entry and ticketing, and on which alcohol is licensed to be sold. This is limited to three consecutive days, and only applies when the government and the private party have contractually agreed that the private entity will indemnify the government for acts occurring on the property during the events. This provision may not be implemented more than two times in a calendar year. The second part of the bill allows a federal law enforcement officer to detain an individual after a request by a state law enforcement officer with or without a warrant when the federal law enforcement officer is a full-time employee, in good standing, and authorized to arrest others and carry a firearm. The request by the state law enforcement officer may be retracted at any time after which a federal officer would no longer be able to detain an individual.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do pass by the House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

[SB 512](#) (Still-48th) Establishes a Victims of Human Trafficking Fund Commission, administratively assigned to the Division of Family and Children Services. It creates a separate fund in the state treasury for disbursements, including for care, rehabilitative services, residential housing, health services, and social services for victims. The commission, comprised of appointed members, is tasked with overseeing fund disbursements, maintaining records, and adhering to state standards. The commission is empowered to recommend changes in state programs and policies relating to the care of exploited victims, solicit federal funds and donations, and impose additional penalties for certain offenses, with funds directed to the Victims of Human Trafficking Fund. Additionally, it grants victims a cause of action against perpetrators and allows for the forfeiture of property used in the commission of related crimes, and provides for a required human trafficking training program for hotels.

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

[SR 616](#) (Still-48th) Amends the Constitution so as to provide that the General Assembly by general law may provide for the allocation of certain additional penalties and assessments to the Victims of Human Trafficking Fund for the purpose of providing care and rehabilitative and social services to individuals in this state who have been or may be sexually exploited.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

STUDY COMMITTEES DO NOT REQUIRE BOTH CHAMBERS' PASSAGE

[HR 1214](#) (Reese-140th) Creates the House Study Committee on the Affordability and Accessibility of Georgia's Legitimation Process.

STATUS: House Health Committee. Passage TBD. (As a House Study Committee, the bill does not need to cross for final passage)

[HR 1255](#) (Bell-75th) Creates the House Study Committee on Combating Human Trafficking in Major Transportation Areas.

STATUS: House Health Committee. Passage TBD. (As a House Study Committee, the bill does not need to cross for final passage)

[SR 806](#) (Harrell-40th) Creates the Senate Study Committee on the Impact of Social Media on Children and Platform Privacy Protection.

STATUS: Senate Rules Committee



Health & Behavioral Health

BILLS THAT HAVE PASSED BOTH CHAMBERS, AWAITING TRANSMISSION TO THE GOVERNOR

HB 441 (Dempsey-13th) Defines terms such as "authorizing dentist," "dental hygienist," and "teledentistry," providing clarity on their roles and responsibilities within the context of remote dental care. Provides that licensed dentists intending to practice teledentistry must adhere to stringent requirements including establishing formal referral relationships with in-state dentists and notifying the board of their intent to practice teledentistry. Dentists must also ensure informed consent from patients, emphasizing the limitations of remote care compared to traditional in-person examinations. The code also delineates the role of dental hygienists in teledentistry. Dental hygienists must be licensed and in good standing, meeting specific requirements to perform dental hygiene functions permitted under general supervision. The bill also mandates that health insurance plans cover teledentistry services as directed by Department of Insurance regulations. Insurers are prohibited from excluding such services or imposing additional costs based solely on their mode of delivery. Enforcement of these regulations falls under the jurisdiction of the Commissioner of Insurance, who is empowered to ensure compliance by health insurers with the provisions related to teledentistry coverage. Furthermore, the code empowers the Board to promulgate rules and regulations necessary for the effective implementation of teledentistry practices, providing guidance and standardization for practitioners statewide, including dental hygienists.

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

HB 557 (Stephens-164th) The bill authorizes advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants to prescribe hydrocodone, oxycodone, or their compounds in emergency situations, provided they maintain good standing with the relevant medical board and possess at least one year of post-licensure clinical experience. Patients receiving such prescriptions must be at least 18 years old, with the initial prescription limited to a five-day supply. Authorization for this practice must be incorporated into the provider's nurse protocol agreement or physician assistant's job description. Additionally, the bill permits licensed chiropractors, advanced practice registered nurses, and physician assistants to provide affidavits for individuals with disabilities to obtain temporary, permanent, or special permanent parking permits. It includes provisions safeguarding healthcare professionals seeking mental health or wellness services, ensuring their participation is not reported to licensing boards unless they are deemed unfit to practice or pose a danger. Evaluators of the program will enjoy immunity from civil liability under certain circumstances, and their findings will not be admissible in civil actions. Furthermore, the bill prohibits hospitals or hospital systems from imposing or enforcing restrictive covenants against staff in cases of permanent closure or acquisition resulting in reduced compensation.

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

[HB 874](#) (Hawkins-27th) Requires all public schools to always have a functional automated external defibrillator (AED) on site at all times during school hours and during any school-related function. Each school will ensure that the following requirements are met: designate an internal response team; ensure that all internal response team members and any other expected users receive training; ensure that emergency medical services are aware of the AED's location; ensure the AED is maintained/tested appropriately; ensure involvement of a licensed physician for training, notifications, and maintenance; establish a written emergency action plan; and conduct a minimum of two emergency action practice drills each school year.

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

[HB 991](#) (Blackmon-146th) Extends the sunset provision on the Hospital Medicaid Financing Program from 2025 to 2030.

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

[HB 1028](#) (LaHood-171st) Clarifies certain rules/regulations relating to the Department of Public Health including adding certain conditions to the definition of sexually transmitted diseases, adding opioid antagonists and post-exposure prophylaxis drugs to the commissioner's standing order, and removing certain outdated code sections.

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

[HB 1183](#) (Dempsey-13th) Requires local school systems to provide certain information to parents and guardians of students in grades six through 12 on Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes whenever other health information is provided.

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

[HB 1339](#) (Parrish-158th) Modifies and updates statutes relating to the state's certificate of need (CON) processes. The Department of Community Health (DCH) is required to review and update the state health plan every five years. The time period to submit a letter of intent is reduced from 30 to 25 days before application submission. The 120-day period for DCH to review the application begins upon receipt of the application and within 30 days of receipt, an applicant will be provided an opportunity to meet and review with DCH. Opposition is required to be submitted within 30 days of the receipt of the application. Additionally, expenditure thresholds for the construction, remodeling, and installation of capital projects are removed. HB 1339 expands several provisions relating to CON exemptions. The allowable period for a closed hospital to be repurposed without a CON is extended from 12 to 24 months. The expansion of hospital bed capacity is increased to 10 beds or 20 percent within a three-year period when the occupancy rate exceeds 60 percent for the previous 12 months is exempt. The maximum distance for certain healthcare facilities to relocate without a CON is extended from a three-mile radius to a five mile radius of the original location. Psychiatric or substance abuse inpatient programs or beds for Medicaid and uninsured patients are now exempt when an

agreement is reached with a nearby hospital. New or expanded rural hospital-based obstetric services are exempt. Acute care facilities in rural counties are exempt under certain circumstances. Transfers of existing beds and services are exempt when they occur within the same hospital system and are within a 10-mile radius of the original campus, provided the exemption has not been used in the prior 24 months. Noncompliance is addressed in Section 6 of HB 1339. Failure to meet one or more requirements for exemption will result in a monetary penalty. Repeated failure to pay fines or produce data leads to the revocation of exemption. Penalties associated with delayed or unsubmitted reports are increased from \$500 to \$2,000 per day up to 30 days and from \$1,000 to \$5,000 per day for every day after 30 days. DCH and the General Assembly's Office of Legislative Counsel will review and make recommendations to update and rewrite Title 31, Chapter 6 and other such provisions relating to CON in consultation with relevant stakeholders. Recommendations will be made to the General Assembly by December 1, 2024. The DCH commissioner will approve proportional donations to an individual rural hospital if the contribution exceeds the yearly maximum contribution amount. The maximum limit on the rural hospital tax credit is increased from \$75 million to \$100 million per taxable year and the sunset is extended from December 31, 2024 to December 31, 2029. HB 1339 creates the Comprehensive Health Coverage Commission, which will advise the General Assembly, governor, and DCH on matters related to the quality of and access to healthcare by low income and uninsured populations, including reimbursement, funding, quality improvement, and service delivery enhancement opportunities. The commission will consist of nine members including a chairperson appointed by the governor, four non-legislative members appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives, and four non-legislative members appointed by the president of the Senate. The commission's initial report will be submitted no later than December 1, 2024 and the commission will be abolished on December 31, 2026. The Senate has passed this bill with changes, including provisions which could allow Morehouse School of Medicine to open a hospital in central Atlanta that could provide services once offered by Atlanta Medical Center, and allow a hospital to open without a permit in any rural county where a prior hospital has been closed for over a year. The bill also includes a study committee to examine whether Georgia's state-federal Medicaid program should expand. It allows physicians from different specialties to share operating rooms (thus one building can be used for any procedure) and abolishes requirements for permits for outpatient birthing centers and imaging centers. New hospitals may be built in counties with less than 50,000 residents, as long as they agree to provide a certain amount of charity care, join the statewide trauma system and provide comprehensive behavioral health services. The bill is likely to go to conference committee for the chambers to work out their differences.

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

[SB 377](#)

(Tillery-19th) Defines and clarifies qualified residential treatment programs as a type of licensed child-caring institution.

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

[SB 480](#) (Hodges-3rd) Provides student loan repayment to mental health and substance use providers who provide services to underserved youth or who practice in an unserved geographic area. The total amount of repayment will be determined by the Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce and will be paid for a maximum of five years.

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

BILLS THAT HAVE PASSED BOTH CHAMBERS, BUT NEED AGREEMENT FROM THE FIRST CHAMBER DUE TO CHANGES

[HB 663](#) (Hatchett-155th) Outlines provisions regarding designated essential caregivers, visitors, and visitation policies in hospitals and long-term care facilities. A designated essential caregiver, appointed by a patient, guardian, or legal representative, is permitted to assist with personal needs and activities, with certain restrictions and adherence to facility policies. Hospitals and long-term care facilities are mandated to allow designated essential caregivers for minors and adults, subject to compliance with safety protocols and rules. However, access may be limited in certain areas or situations, and facilities reserve the right to suspend or terminate access based on various grounds, including noncompliance and safety risks. Additionally, facilities can establish visitation policies to manage visitor access, with considerations for medical necessity, patient care, and safety. The article emphasizes the rights of patients and residents, prohibiting the waiver or suspension of these rights, and mandates the posting of informational materials explaining these rights on facility websites. Furthermore, it prohibits state agencies from penalizing facilities for allowing visitor or caregiver access, except in cases of gross negligence or intentional harm, and exempts facilities from penalties for failure to comply with certain federal guidelines regarding visitation restrictions.

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

[HB 1046](#) (Clark-100th) Authorizes advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants to order home healthcare services and to be able to sign death certificates. The bill also revises provisions relating to the number of advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants that a physician can authorize and supervise at any one time.

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

[SB 293](#) (Watson-1st) Revises the selection and qualifications of district health directors. The commissioner of the Department of Public Health will appoint district health directors to serve as chief executive officers of each local health department in the respective district. The director must be licensed to practice medicine or have a master's degree in public health or a related field. If the director is not licensed to practice medicine, then a licensed physician must serve as the chief medical officer. If a position for district health director becomes vacant, the commissioner can appoint an interim without board approval until a permanent director is appointed and approved by the county boards of health.

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

[SB 373](#)

(Walker-20th) Amends the definition of "supervisor" related to professional counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists to remove the requirement that an applicant be a psychiatrist or a psychologist. It also removes the requirement that applicants to become a professional counselor have a doctoral degree in order to be licensed. Further, an associate professional counselor would be required to have 90 quarter hours in relevant education rather than 80 hours in order to be licensed. The Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers, and Marriage and Family Therapists is required to issue expedited licenses by endorsement within 30 days from the date of application for those individuals who have the same type of license in another state and meet other requirements, such as being in good standing. This will not apply to licenses for an associate marriage and family therapist.

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

[SB 455](#)

(Strickland-17th) Removes the requirement of the step therapy protocol for the treatment of serious mental illness. The bill requires acceptance of payment for health care items or services regardless of when authorization is obtained. The bill requires reimbursement to an independent pharmacy be no less than the average reimbursement for retail chain pharmacies.

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

BILLS THAT CROSSED OVER, WAITING FOR SECOND CHAMBER PASSAGE

[HB 82](#)

(Jackson-128th) Relating to tax credits for rural physicians, the bill subsequently creates a tax credit of up to \$5,000 for rural healthcare professionals, defined as physicians and dentists operating in a rural county. The tax credit may be claimed for up to five years for eligible professionals, provided that the healthcare professional continues operating in a rural county. The aggregate amount of the tax credit is limited to \$2 million per year.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by Substitute in the Senate Finance Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

[HB 101](#)

(Crowe-118th) Revises the Code relating to rural hospital tax credits by expanding the definition of a rural hospital and increasing the amount corporations can donate for tax credit purposes. It also creates a tax credit for mortgage loan originators and clarifies bill language on data centers that have applied for a certificate of exemption.

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

[HB 215](#) (Powell-33rd) Establishes the Georgia Community Health Worker Certification (CHWC) Committee, detailing its composition, responsibilities, and procedures. It defines key terms such as accreditation, certification, certification programs, certified community health worker, community health worker, and core competency. The CHWC Committee comprises eleven voting members appointed by the Commissioner, representing various professional backgrounds related to healthcare and public health policy, along with two agency representatives as nonvoting members. Members are subject to specific eligibility criteria and term limits, with provisions for reimbursement of expenses. The Committee is tasked with setting standards for accreditation and certification programs, assessing community health worker competency, facilitating reciprocity for certified workers from other jurisdictions, establishing disciplinary procedures, and ensuring compliance with public health standards. All certification programs must be accredited by the CHWC Committee, with the Department overseeing the process and providing necessary administrative support. Applicants seeking accreditation must fulfill specified requirements and pay a designated fee. Additionally, the Department is mandated to publish accreditation criteria and application procedures on its website to ensure transparency and accessibility.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

[HB 143](#) (Mathis-149th) Relating to the Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce, so as to provide for the establishment of the Georgia Health Care Professionals Data System; and for collaboration with state licensing boards.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

[HB 181](#) (Townsend-179th) Adds the compound 7-hydroxymitragynine to the definition of "kratom." The bill limits the methods that kratom can be ingested and requires that the sale of kratom be only behind the counter in stores. Anyone violating this section is guilty of a misdemeanor. The bill requires all kratom products to be derived from the natural kratom plant. A kratom processor cannot sell or distribute a kratom product that is adulterated or contains certain compounds or substances within it. An entity that manufactures, distributes, sells, or delivers kratom must maintain a registered agent in the state. A processor who knowingly or recklessly commits an act in violation will be guilty of a high and aggravated misdemeanor as a first offense and a felony on a second or subsequent offense, with a penalty of imprisonment between one to 15 years; a maximum fine of \$100,000; or both. A processor who negligently commits an act in violation of O.C.G.A. 16-13-122 will be guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to a maximum fine of \$1,000. A person who suffers injury or damages as a result of a violation of this Code section can also bring a civil action for actual damages, which are presumed to be at least \$250, together with court costs.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

[HB 308](#) (Newton-127th) Revises a tax credit for certain medical preceptor rotations; to add dentistry; to increase the value of the tax credit, and caps the aggregate amount at \$6 million per year.

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

[HB 362](#) (Mathiak-74th) Requires benefit providers to provide a written account of payments and reimbursements for services to treating providers upon 30 days of a request being made.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Insurance and Labor Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

[HB 546](#) (Jasperse-11th) Amends the definition of "pharmacy care" within the 'Georgia Pharmacy Practice Act' to allow for adaption of a prescription drug order. The bill allows a pharmacist to adapt a prescription drug order, under certain circumstances, by changing the quantity of medication prescribed, changing the dosage form of the prescription, and completing missing information on a prescription drug order. Adaptions must be documented and done with patient consent.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

[HB 576](#) (Gullett-19th) Prohibits an individual's vaccine status from being used to determine priority status on an organ transplant waiting list.

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

[HB 793](#) (Barton-5th) Allows an applicant for a license in social work who is enrolled in the last semester of their master's degree program for social work to sit for the master's social work licensing examination.

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

[HB 872](#) (Hawkins-27th) Allows for dental students to be eligible for the service cancelable loan program when they agree to practice in rural counties with a population of 50,000 or less.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. The bill is currently tabled in the Senate.

[HB 924](#) (Ballinger-23rd) Prohibits insurance companies from requiring the practice of "white bagging" by in-network providers for certain specialty medications. "White bagging" is the practice of requiring that these drugs be purchased through third-party pharmacies.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Industry and Labor Committee.

[HB 1035](#) (Cooper-45th) Allows for the sale and supply of opioid antagonists in vending machines. Additionally, persons and harm reduction organizations that dispense, supply, and administer opioid antagonists are immune from liability when acting in good faith.

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

[HB 1050](#) (Mathiak-74th) Modifies the licensing requirements for social workers and marriage and family therapists, as well as increases the required quarter hours for an approved supervised internship to 90 hours in order to be licensed as a professional counselor.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Regulated Industries Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

[HB 1077](#) (Cooper-45th) Creates a student loan repayment program for behavioral health providers. Eligible providers include but are not limited to licensed psychiatrists, addiction medicine specialists, psychologists, social workers, professional counselors, and marriage/family therapists. Repayment can be received for up to six years, and annual amounts range from \$10,000 to \$50,000 depending on the share of Medicaid patients seen. Total repayment may not exceed \$220,000. The Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce is also required to sponsor clinical behavioral health training programs at eligible institutions.

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

[HB 1104](#) (Crawford-84th) Requires athletic associations to post on their website guidelines and relevant materials informing and educating students, parents/guardians, school personnel, and coaches about screening for mental health risks and available resources. Coaches will annually view approved educational videos, if available, and review guidelines/materials related to mental health risks in student athletes. From SB 365: Provide for notification to parents and legal guardians of public school students of the right to receive email notification each time their child obtains school library materials. The bill also expands the definition of "public record" relating to inspection of students' records by parents. From SB 532: Prohibits sex education for public school students in this state before sixth grade; requires the State Board of Education to approve age- and grade-appropriate content standards for sex education curricula; and revises the "Parents Bill of Rights" to provide for parents to revocably opt-in to sex education for their children. From SB 240(?): addresses benefits to teachers in charter schools. From Sb 438: Defines "gender" as a person's biological sex determined by reproductive biology and genetics at birth, as stated on the official birth certificate. "Gender identity" is defined as a person's self-perceived or claimed gender. The legislation prohibits schools from allowing a person whose gender is male but identifies as female to participate in female-designated interscholastic athletics. It also restricts the use of multiple occupancy restrooms or changing areas designated for the opposite gender in the context of interscholastic athletics. Students or parents aggrieved by violations have the right to file grievances, appeal decisions to the local board of education, and seek private legal action for injunctive or declaratory relief. The provision explicitly notes that it does not override requirements or protections under the federal Americans with Disabilities Act. The bill also repeals a grant of discretionary authority to athletic association executive oversight committees by deleting "prohibit students whose gender is male from participating in athletic events that are designated for students whose gender is female, then the athletic association may adopt a policy to that effect; provided, however, that such policy shall be applied to all of the athletic association's participating public high schools;" from current law.

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

[HB 1170](#) (Hawkins-27th) Requires that government buildings, courthouses, and schools with automated external defibrillators provide opioid antagonists to assist in the event of an opioid overdose. The bill also bans providers from offering medicines that temporarily pause puberty to Georgians under the age of 18.

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

[HB 1260](#) (Gaines-120th) Requires the Dept. of Revenue to establish and maintain a directory of nicotine vapor products authorized for sale in this state; and prohibits the sale of any nicotine vapor product not listed in the directory. The bill also provides for compliance checks, civil penalties and enforcement and rules and regulations. The bill also requires the Commissioner to provide an annual report to the General Assembly.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

[HB 1314](#) (Romman-97th) Designates emergency medical services, including ambulance service, as an essential service.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

[HB 1322](#) (Cannon-172nd) Regulates consumable hemp products; and requires such products be packaged in certain containers. The bill also puts restrictions on advertisements of such products, on the location of retail establishments that sell such products.

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

[HB 1344](#) (Dempsey-13th) Revises provisions related to the Behavioral Health Coordinating Council. The commissioners of the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, Department of Early Care and Learning, Department of Community Health, Department of Public Health, Department of Human Services, Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Corrections, Department of Community Supervision, Department of Community Affairs, Technical College System of Georgia, Department of Labor, and the State School Superintendent will be authorized to attend or send a delegate to attend meetings. The Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers, and Marriage and Family Therapists can waive experience requirements for licensure applicants from other jurisdictions when their license is in good standing for at least two years. The bill also repeals the requirement for the Commissioner of DBHDD to submit an annual report to the Governor and various legislative bodies that includes a copy of the State Plan for the Coordinated System of Care and various information on severely and emotionally disturbed children and adolescents receiving services from DBHDD, DOE, or other state agencies.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

[HB 1409](#) (Leverett-123rd) Pertains to the legal liability of inpatient mental health providers in the delivery of care to individuals under the age of 21 and are in Department of Human Services (DHS) or determined by DHS to be in need of mental health care. Mental health care providers will not be held liable unless there is clear and convincing evidence of gross negligence. In such cases, the jury will be instructed to consider the patient's medical history, previous provider-patient relationships, and circumstances surrounding delivery of services. Included in the definition of mental healthcare providers are foster parents.

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

[HB 1490](#) (Newton-127th) Prohibits the enforcement of certain covenants and restrictions on physicians in employment or partnership contracts or agreements and delineates covenants not to compete which are valid and enforceable.

STATUS: House Judiciary Committee

[SB 32](#) (Anavitarte-31st) Requires local education agencies to implement a mobile panic alert system, known as 'Alyssa's Alert', capable of connecting disparate emergency services technologies. The system must be able to alert state and local law enforcement, and other first responders simultaneously. If a local education agency has already procured and implemented a mobile panic alert system with capabilities which meet the requirements of this Code section, the agency will not have to purchase a new system. No later than December 1, 2025, the Department of Administrative Services will identify whether an existing competitive source of supply is available for a system that meets the requirements of this Code section.

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

[SB 76](#) (Merritt-9th) Requires state health benefit plans to cover insulin medication at an amount not to exceed \$35.00 per 30 day supply or \$105.00 per 90 day supply.

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

[SB 307](#) (Kirkpatrick-32nd) Insurers employing prior authorization requirements must establish a program allowing for selective reduction in these requirements based on healthcare providers' performance and adherence to evidence-based medicine, aiming to enhance healthcare quality and affordability while reducing administrative burdens. The insurer has discretion in determining participation criteria for healthcare providers and services in the program but must submit a detailed filing to the department outlining the program's narrative, participation criteria, covered procedures, provider count, and other necessary information. By July 1, 2025, insurers must submit this filing annually in accordance with regulations set by the Commissioner.

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

[SB 395](#) (Dixon-45th) Wesley's Law', allows for visitors and school employees to possess and administer an opioid antagonist if the person believes someone is suffering from a drug overdose on school property or at a school-sponsored activity. No cause of action can be brought whether a school personnel administers or chooses not to administer an opioid antagonist when this decision is brought in good faith.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Education Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

[HB 449](#) (Walker-20th) Requires the Department of Community Health, in collaboration with the Department of Veterans Service, to create a program in which military medical personnel can be certified as nurse aides, paramedics, cardiac technicians, emergency medical technicians, or licensed practical nurses without having to meet certain additional requirements. The term "military medical personnel" is added by the bill and relates to those who have relevant experience within the past 24 months prior to seeking certification or recertification as a medic, medical technician, or corpsman, within the U.S. Army, Air Force, Navy, or Coast Guard. The bill amends the definition of "advanced practice registered nurse" (APRN) to specify that APRNs engage in advanced nursing within one of the following roles: certified nurse midwife, certified nurse practitioner, certified nurse anesthetist, or a clinical nurse specialist. The bill revises the requirements for those applying to become an APRN, starting on September 1, 2025. The license must be renewed every two years, and it is a misdemeanor offense to practice as an APRN without a proper license. Further, the bill provides that any reference to a rural hospital organization within the chapter of the Code will include a hospital located in any county that satisfies the definition of rural hospital organization in O.C.G.A. 31-8-9.1.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. The bill has been postponed on the House Floor.

[SB 460](#) (Dixon-45th) Revises provisions relating to the number of advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants that a physician can authorize and supervise at any one time.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Regulated Industries Committee.

[SB 495](#) (Watson-1st) Stipulates that a registration card for low THC oil is valid for five years from the date of issuance so long as the individual continues to remain eligible for a card based on the continued diagnosis of the condition. The Department of Public Health will deliver the registration cards through certified mail or by electronic means, such as email.

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

STUDY COMMITTEES DO NOT REQUIRE BOTH CHAMBERS' PASSAGE

[HR 547](#) (Mathiak-74th) Creates the House Study Committee on Rural Medical Personnel Recruitment.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Special Rules Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee

[HR 1283](#) (Powell-33rd) Creates the House Study Committee on Safety and Consumer Protection of Nicotine Vapor Products.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Health Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

[HR 1360](#) (Dempsey-13th) Creates the House Study Committee on Alternatives to Opioids for Pain Management. This committee will be made up of 14 members, seven members of the House of Representatives, five non-legislative members, and two agency representatives. This committee will be abolished December 1, 2024.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Health Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

Maternal & Infant Care

BILLS THAT CROSSED OVER, WAITING FOR SECOND CHAMBER PASSAGE

[HB 1037](#) (Daniel-117th) Creates the Georgia Commission on Maternal and Infant Health to make policy recommendations regarding perinatal care programs and develop quality metrics. A report of findings and recommendations is due on July 1, 2026 and the commission will be repealed.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

BILLS THAT WERE INTRODUCED AFTER CROSSOVER DAY

[HB 1497](#) (Anulewicz-42nd) Provides that a human egg or human embryo is not considered an unborn child, a minor child, or a person for any purpose under law.

STATUS: House Public Health Committee

[HB 1499](#) (Cannon-58th) Provides for a grant program to prevent maternal mortality by managing risk factors, conditions, and circumstances and establishes the Maternal Mortality Prevention Grant Program to be administered by the Department of Public Health.

STATUS: House Public Health Committee

STUDY COMMITTEES DO NOT REQUIRE BOTH CHAMBERS' PASSAGE

[HR 1231](#) (Newton-127th) Creates the House Study Committee on Trauma, Maternal, Prenatal, and Pediatric Care Access and Funding.

STATUS: House Health Committee.



Early Childhood Education & Out-of-School Time

BILLS THAT CROSSED OVER, WAITING FOR SECOND CHAMBER PASSAGE

SB 360 (Hickman-4th) Provide that capital outlay funds may be used for educational facilities for voluntary pre-kindergarten programs provided by the school system; and that student projection counts may include pre-kindergarten.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Education Committee.

SB 386 (Dixon-45th) Provides for the regulation and taxation of sports betting in this state and increases funding to the state's Pre-K programs.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Higher Education Committee. The bill will be heard in committee TODAY (MONDAY).

STUDY COMMITTEES AND RESOLUTIONS THAT DO NOT REQUIRE BOTH CHAMBERS' PASSAGE

SR 471 (Albers-56th) Creates the Senate Study Committee on Access to Affordable Child Care (including for school-age children).

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. This is a Senate Study Committee and therefore does not need House approval.

SR 587 (Dixon-45th) Recognizes February 14, 2024, as Afterschool Day at the state capitol.

STATUS: SENATE ADOPTED.

SR 829 (Hickman-4th) Recognizes October 7-11, 2024, as Georgia Pre-K Week.

STATUS: Senate Adopted



K-12 Education

BILLS THAT HAVE PASSED BOTH CHAMBERS, AWAITING TRANSMISSION TO THE GOVERNOR

HB 995 (Bonner-73rd) Requires local school systems to provide an optional nationally recognized multiple-aptitude battery assessment to predict future academic and occupational success in the military to students in grades 11 and 12. This assessment will be provided to students during school hours at least once a school year.

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

SB 50 (Burns-23rd) Requires the State Board of Education to create content standards in lifeguard and aquatic safety beginning in the 2026-2027 school year. Local boards of education may

adopt curriculum and provide instruction in lifeguarding and aquatic safety. Curriculum should provide sufficient training to allow students to successfully complete certification as a lifeguard upon course completion.

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

[SB 233](#)

(Dolezal-27th) Creates the Georgia Education Savings Authority and the 'Georgia Promise Scholarship Act'; changes program weights in the Quality Basic Education formula; allows capital outlays funds to be used for pre-kindergarten programs; caps tuition fees for out of district student transfers; revises grants to low-performing schools; and amends the tax credit for qualified education donations. PART I Section 1-1 creates the Georgia Education Savings Authority to establish and administer student assistance programs. The powers, duties, functions, and organization of the authority are outlined in the newly created Title 20, Chapter 2B, Article 1. PART II Section 2-1 creates the 'Georgia Promise Scholarship Act', which would provide \$6,500 per student to families for qualified education-related expenses outside of the public school system. Qualified education expenses include: tuition at a participating school; tutoring; purchase of curriculum; professional services; transportation; fees for the management of account funds; other expenses authorized by the State Board of Education or the Georgia Education Savings Authority; or individual education expenses authorized by the parent review committee under Code Section 20-2B25. Funds will go into an account controlled by a parent to be used for qualified education expenses. In order to allow parents and taxpayers to measure the achievements of this program, students participating must take nationally norm-referenced tests that measure student academic progress in math and language arts or a state-wide assessment annually. The Education Savings Authority will report annually to the General Assembly on the number and demographics of participating students and schools; student performance on assessments; parental satisfaction; percent of funds utilized for each qualified education expenses; and the fiscal impact of the program on the state and school systems. PART III Section 3-1 revises the weights under the Quality Basic Education formula for instructional programs. Section 3-2 amends O.C.G.A. 20-2-260(5), relating to capital outlay funds, to include Georgia's prekindergarten programs provided and operated by the local school system to be included as an allowable use. School systems are currently unable to use capital outlay funds for this purpose. PART IV Section 4-1 amends O.C.G.A. 20-2-293 relating to a student attending a school in a system other than the system of the student's residence. Beginning July 1, 2026, if a student attends a school outside of the student's local school system, the new school system cannot charge more than the local share of funding for tuition to transfer students. PART V Section 5-1 amends the Georgia Foundation for Public Education to provide that schools in the lowest 25 percent of schools should be prioritized to receive funding to implement academic and organizational innovations to improve student achievement. Section 5-2 increases the maximum allowable income tax credit for individuals and businesses for qualified education donations for grants to public schools. The tax credit cap will increase from \$5 million in 2023 to \$15 million in 2024.

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

[SB 440](#) (Brass-28th) Revises O.C.G.A. 20-2-149.2, known as the Accelerated Career Diploma program, to simplify the dual enrollment program and allow for academic flexibility to better align with pathway programs. This diploma path is only available for an associate degree for applied science within the Technical College System of Georgia. The Dual Enrollment ACE (Accelerated Career Education) grant program creates a grant for students participating in the Accelerated Career Diploma program. These students will not be subject to the 30-hour dual enrollment cap and will allow dual enrollment funding to distinguish between academic and technical students. The sunset for this program is June 30, 2027.

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

[SB 464](#) (Dixon-45th) Revises the 'Georgia Early Literacy Act' to provide for the identification of up to five universal reading screeners by the Department of Education and Georgia Council on Literacy, one of which will be free to local school systems, for use by public schools and local school systems. Section 2 establishes the 'School Supplies for Educators Act' to provide financial/technical assistance to educators to purchase school supplies online subject to appropriations.

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

BILLS THAT HAVE PASSED BOTH CHAMBERS, BUT NEED AGREEMENT FROM THE FIRST CHAMBER DUE TO CHANGES

[HB 51](#) (Pirkle-169th) Authorizes local boards of education to use vehicles other than school buses for transport of students. It also allows for independent schools under GHSA to participate in athletics across state lines. (Thanks to GSBA for help with this summary)

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

[HB 318](#) (Hilton-48th) The legislative update encompasses several significant changes. Firstly, it involves the reestablishment of the Office of Charter School Compliance and the establishment of the Office of District Flexibility. These offices aim to streamline the administration and oversight of charter schools within the state's education system. Secondly, the bill mandates that administrative fees withheld by the state or local school systems for charter school administration must be exclusively utilized for that purpose. Up to three percent of charter school funding can be retained by local boards of education for administrative services, with any unused funds required to be remitted to the charter school annually. The Department of Education is also authorized to retain up to 3% for the administration of state-chartered special schools, with any remaining funds to be returned to the respective schools. Moreover, the legislation revises the eligibility criteria for project-specific capital outlay grants for low-wealth school systems, taking into account factors such as revenue rankings and the age of educational facilities. Additionally, it empowers the State Board of Education to establish rules and regulations to implement the provisions outlined in the bill. Lastly, the update includes changes to the definitions of energy cost savings measures

and contracts, reflecting adjustments in terminology and scope within the energy efficiency sector.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. House agreed to Senate changes so the bill awaits transmission to the Governor for his consideration.

[HB 1122](#) (Hilton-48th) Provides for funding requirements for superintendents and principals for local and state charter schools and allows part-time employees who work at least 20 hours per week to have their children attend the charter school. The bill also clarifies conflicts of interest around who can serve on state and charter boards. It was amended by the Senate committee to clarify that local charter schools, system charter schools, and college and career academies that are charter schools are defined in the bill as they already are in state law. The bill also added language from HB 1186 which requires the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) to work with GaDOE to establish a single numerical score on a scale of 0-100 for public schools and school systems that must be published on the GOSA website, GaDOE website, school system website, and the school website if one exists. The bill The bill was amended to clarify that GaDOE will show the single score in addition to the 4 categories of scoring. (Thanks to GSBA for help with the summary!)

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

BILLS THAT WERE INTRODUCED AFTER CROSSOVER DAY

[SB 284](#) (Estevez-6th) Add a program for students living in poverty to the table of quality basic education instructional programs with weights and student-teacher ratios.

STATUS: Senate Education and Youth Committee. The bill will be heard in committee TODAY (MONDAY).

[SB 582](#) (Harrell-40th) Requires the State Board of Education, in collaboration with the Department of Community Affairs and the Board of Community Affairs, to establish standards for building inspection and code enforcement. The State Board of Education is granted authority to adopt policies, rules, regulations, or guidelines to implement these standards. Local boards of education or other public school governing bodies are required to develop building inspection plans, coordinate joint inspections with relevant authorities, and report findings to the Department of Education using provided forms. They must also cooperate with state and local authorities involved in code enforcement activities following the established standards. The Department of Education is responsible for promulgating reporting forms, providing technical assistance for implementation, and ensuring compliance through corrective action if necessary.

STATUS: Senate Education and Youth Committee

BILLS THAT CROSSED OVER, WAITING FOR SECOND CHAMBER PASSAGE**HB 81**

(Corbett-174th) Revises the eligibility criteria are that a local school system must be currently, or in the most recent three years, ranked in the bottom 25 percent of school systems in sales revenue per full-time equivalent (FTE) student count and value of property per FTE student count. For local school systems in which the amount of special purpose local option sales tax revenues is ranked in the bottom 25 percent of eligible local school systems receiving such sales tax revenues, that system may submit a request to the Department of Education for consideration. The system must commit five years of such revenues to the project. Educational facilities must be more than 35 years old to be consolidated. Once a local school system has received a capital outlay grant and its need is met as determined by the department, it is not eligible to receive another grant for a period of 10 years.

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

HB 282

(Mainor-56th) States that local boards that use state funds to implement programs “shall give priority” to patriotic societies, including the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, to use school facilities, but local boards can deny them that right if they provide reasons for denial in writing. Also states that each local board of education may require students in grades 9-12 to complete and pass a course on the founding philosophy and principles of the United States of America that includes “an interactive taxpayer receipt web-based application and a budget simulator web-based application” along with the “the principles of economy in spending, constitutional limitations on government power to tax and spend, and prompt payment of public debt” (in current law). The web-based app for the taxpayer receipt and budget simulator will be provided free to local boards from GaDOE if the legislature appropriates funds. The bill provides schools a minimum course of study in career readiness education that includes instruction and training experiences focused on employability and career readiness skills; and it includes language from HB 127 that requires the State Board of Education to establish rules and regulations regarding interpreters for IEP meetings with students in the English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) program. The bill also permits local school boards to allow family members of school board members to receive health insurance coverage. (Thanks to GSBA for help with this summary!)

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

HB 338

(Erwin-32nd) Student Technology Protection Act' - amends the 'Quality Basic Education Act' by revising O.C.G.A 20-2-324 to provide that schools promote the safe and appropriate use of technology. By October 1, 2023, each local board of education and charter school governing body will adopt an acceptable use policy with the purpose of preventing and prohibiting any computer or network from accessing obscene materials. Each system will take necessary steps to implement and enforce the acceptable use policy to filter grade-appropriate content on school-owned devices. Language from SB 405 was added which lowers the age from 18 to 16 for State Completion Schools and has accountability in it to report graduation rates for cohorts.

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

[HB 579](#) (Barrett-24th) Relating to the 'Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Act' to allow students who previously qualified for the scholarship to remain eligible throughout the students' education. HB 579 requires the Department of Education to electronically deposit payments into the accounts of participating schools.

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

[HB 846](#) (Leverett-123rd) Requires public schools to notify public school employees about whether or not they receive Social Security benefits when they are hired, after five years, and upon exiting employment. Language from HB 1384 was added which increases personal leave for teachers from 3 to 5 days.

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

[HB 970](#) (Dickey-145th) The bill expands the eligibility criteria for the Realizing Educational Achievement Can Happen (REACH) scholarship program to include victims of human trafficking. Under HB 970, REACH participating school systems are empowered to designate REACH scholars annually, pending available appropriations. It mandates that participating school systems allocate \$1,000 and have the authority to provide an additional \$9,000 for each REACH scholar enrolled in their system.

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

[HB 987](#) (Cannon-172nd) The term "qualified local school system" is amended to reduce the minimum required millage rate or effective millage rate from 14 to 10 mills beginning July 1, 2024. School systems that receive equalization must meet these requirements or risk a 25 percent midterm adjustment of the initial equalization grant amount.

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

[HB 1452](#) (Gaines-120th) Establishes criteria for GaDOE in determining eligibility for state-funded special education programs, with a maximum age limit set to gradually increase from 22 years for the 2024-2025 school year to 30 years by the 2032-2033 school year and beyond. Individuals who meet these criteria will remain eligible for the remainder of the current school year, regardless of their date of birth. Additionally, individuals over the age of 23 seeking eligibility must have been enrolled and reported by a public school in Georgia during the two most recent full-time equivalent (FTE) program counts.

STATUS: House Education Committee, but since the bill was dropped after Crossover Day, it will not advance as its own bill.

[SB 105](#) (Walker-20th) Revises the minimum and maximum allowable benefit multiplier for current and future retiree retirement benefits payable upon normal, early, or delayed retirement in the Public School Employees Retirement System.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Retirement Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

[SB 147](#) (Still-48th) “Boundless Opportunities for Georgia Students Act” - Permits student transfers between local school systems without contracts between the local school system where the student resides and the local school system where the student seeks to enroll.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Education Committee.

[SB 202](#) (Rahman-5th) Provides for the GaDOE to establish and study a pilot program of outdoor learning spaces on elementary and secondary school property in order to determine whether and how to implement best practices and design standards for outdoor learning spaces.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Education Committee.

[SB 208](#) (Dolezal-27th) Allows each local board of education of a high growth school system to, by resolution, impose, levy, and collect educational development impact fees within any area of such school system with a total increase in student enrollment of 20% or more during the immediately preceding ten-year period.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. The bill has been postponed on the House floor.

[SB 405](#) (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.

[SR 189](#) (Dolezal-27th) Constitutional Amendment for enabling legislation (SB 208) that provides that the General Assembly may by general law authorize local boards of education to impose, levy, and collect development impact fees and use the proceeds to pay for a share of the cost of additional educational facilities.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. The bill has been postponed on the House Floor.

STUDY COMMITTEES DO NOT REQUIRE BOTH CHAMBERS' PASSAGE

[SR 251](#) (Davenport-44th) Creates the Senate Rosenwald Schools Study Committee.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Rules Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

[SR 692](#) (Williams-25th) Creates the Senate Transporting Students Safely Study Committee.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Education and Youth Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.



Higher Education

BILLS THAT HAVE PASSED BOTH CHAMBERS, AWAITING TRANSMISSION TO THE GOVERNOR

HB 982 (Gambill-15th) Authorizes the State Workforce Development Board to develop and approve a high-demand career list.

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

HB 985 (Martin-49th) Abolishes the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation and transfers any obligations, liabilities, or assets to the Georgia Student Finance Authority. The bill also eliminates provisions that caused suspension of various licensure due to being in default on loans for higher education. The bill also changes some provisions within the GA Student Finance Authority and regarding loans for higher education.

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

BILLS THAT HAVE PASSED BOTH CHAMBERS, BUT NEED AGREEMENT FROM THE FIRST CHAMBER DUE TO CHANGES

HB 130 (Gambill-15th) Establishes a student loan repayment program for eligible full-time peace officers. The total repayment amount must not exceed \$20,000 or the total student debt amount, whichever is less. Payments will be paid in annual installments for a period not exceeding five years. The Georgia Student Finance Authority is authorized to establish rules and regulations to implement the program, and the program is contingent upon appropriation of funds by the General Assembly.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. PASSED SENATE. House agreed to Senate changes so the bill awaits transmission to the Governor for his consideration.

[HB 185](#) (Gaines-120th) The bill originally provided for the establishment of Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IPSE) grants. As amended by the Senate, the bill establishes definitions and reporting obligations concerning funding received by the university system from foreign sources. It delineates terms such as "foreign adversary," encompassing specific countries like China, Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Russia, and the Maduro Regime, and defines "foreign entity of concern" and "foreign individual of concern" based on their affiliations with listed countries. The term "funding" is broadly defined to include various monetary exchanges. According to the Code, the university system is mandated to submit a detailed quarterly report to designated officials, disclosing any funding received from foreign adversaries, entities of concern, or individuals of concern. The report should specify the amount and type of funding, provide descriptions of the funding sources, including names and addresses, and include copies of associated contracts or agreements. Additionally, it must detail the purpose of the funding and indicate whether it was a one-time event or part of a series of funding events. However, the Code section does not require reporting of funding provided by individuals or families as tuition payments for students affiliated with or attending University System of Georgia programs, classes, or courses of study. Overall, the Code aims to enhance transparency regarding foreign funding within the university system, ensuring clear documentation and disclosure of such financial transactions.

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

[SB 112](#) (Anavitarte-31st) Creates the 'Workforce EXCEleration Act', which provides for a pilot program to establish a high school diploma program for adult learners. The program will be facilitated by the State Board of the Technical College System of Georgia. The pilot program must include at least two distinct programs and will be automatically repealed on June 30, 2029.

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

[SB 469](#) (Esteves-6th) Revises the maximum account balance allowed related to contributions to savings trust accounts for higher education expenses. The bill increases the income tax deduction cap related to higher education savings trust account contributions.

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

BILLS THAT WERE INTRODUCED AFTER CROSSOVER DAY

[HB 1509](#) (Sainz-180th) Provides for a residency requirement for eligible students in the Dual Enrollment program.

STATUS: House Hopper

[SB 581](#) (Harrell-40th) Provides for the election by a postsecondary education institution to allow concealed handguns upon campus and requires firearms safety training in order to carry handguns upon such campuses. The bill also requires storage for handguns at areas upon campus where carrying of a handgun is prohibited by law.

STATUS: Senate Judiciary Committee

BILLS THAT CROSSED OVER, WAITING FOR SECOND CHAMBER PASSAGE

[HB 56](#) (Petrea-166th) Expands eligibility for the Public Safety Memorial Grant to include spouses of law enforcement officers, firefighters, or prison guards who have died in the line of duty.

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

[HB 1124](#) (Martin-49th) Extends the sunset provision of the Needs-based scholarship from 2025 to 2027 and changes the eligibility requirements from 80% to 70% of the credit requirements toward the credential of his or her program of study, if such program is a four-year program; or 45% of the credit requirements toward the credential of his or her program of study, if such program is a two-year program.

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

[HB 1231](#) (Holcomb-81st) Allows students who are concurrently seeking a baccalaureate degree and a first professional degree, and students who meet achievement standards and commence a graduate program at an eligible institution within 18 months of earning a baccalaureate degree, to use the full number of hours of HOPE scholarship eligibility. The bill also states that a former foster youth who has not previously received a HOPE scholarship or previously met the eligibility requirements for a HOPE scholarship shall be deemed eligible for a HOPE scholarship for up to 30 semester hours or 45 quarter hours, provided that such former foster youth is eligible and maintains satisfactory academic progress in accordance with the standards and practices used for federal Title IV programs by the institution at which the student is enrolled.

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

[SB 137](#) (Burns-23rd) Establishes two categories of approved schools for Tuition Equalization Grant (TEG) eligibility: approved nonproprietary schools and approved proprietary schools. The bill requires an award amount not to exceed 150 percent of the regular TEG award for eligible students enrolled in a program of study directly related to a job or career field identified by the State Workforce Development Board.

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

[SB 385](#) (Williams-25th) Allows Georgia Military College to offer specified bachelor's degree programs only to students enrolled in the Georgia Military Global Online Leadership College (GOLC). The bill requires Georgia Military College to submit an annual report on the success or failure of all offered bachelor's degree programs.

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

[SB 399](#) (Echols-49th) Requires the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) commissioner to collaborate with the University System of Georgia (USG) chancellor to provide a report on specified information related to courses, transfers, degree completion, and the High-Demand Career List to the governor, lieutenant governor, speaker of the House of Representatives, and certain legislative committee chairs. The bill provides expectations to the Board of Regents, units of USG, and local boards of education to enter into and amend agreements with TCSG related to transferability of credits.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. The bill has been postponed on the House Floor.

[SB 497](#) (Hickman-4th) Redesignates the High-demand Career Initiatives Program as the High Demand Apprenticeship Program. The bill lowers the maximum contract completion award amount from \$10,000 per apprentice to \$5,000 per apprentice and increases the number of allowable apprentices from five per year to 10 per year. The bill establishes the Public Service Apprenticeship Program through the Office of Workforce Development in order to promote the creation and expansion of registered apprenticeship programs throughout the state.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. The bill has been postponed on the House Floor.

STUDY COMMITTEES DO NOT REQUIRE BOTH CHAMBERS' PASSAGE

[HR 1384](#) (Blackmon-146th) Creates the House Study Committee on Assessing the Semester and Quarter Systems at USG and TCSG Institutions.

STATUS: House Higher Education Committee

[SR 770](#) (Harrell-40th) Creates the Senate Higher Education in Prison Study Committee.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Higher Education Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

[SR 787](#) (Dixon-45th) Creates the Senate University Admissions Study Committee.

STATUS: Senate Rules Committee



Environmental Safety

BILLS THAT HAVE PASSED BOTH CHAMBERS, BUT NEED AGREEMENT FROM THE FIRST CHAMBER DUE TO CHANGES

[SB 340](#) (Kirkpatrick-32nd) Amends O.C.G.A. 48-8-3.3, related to the Georgia Agricultural Tax Exemption, to extend the sales and use exemption to diesel exhaust fluid used for agricultural purposes.

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

BILLS THAT CROSSED OVER, WAITING FOR SECOND CHAMBER PASSAGE

[HB 348](#) (Collins-71st) Requires warning signs for traffic safety enforcement devices and school zone speed limit reduction to display flashing yellow lights while the speed reduction is in effect. The speed limit may be enforced 30 minutes prior to and 30 minutes after the school starts; 30 minutes prior to and 30 minutes after the school dismisses unless the school campus is bisected by a highway; and when the driver is 10 miles per hour over the speed limit. When a citation is issued, the driver will receive an assigned hearing date that must be within 60 days of issuance of the citation. If a penalty is unpaid 30 days after a final notice has been mailed, the vehicle's registration cannot be renewed until the penalty and late fees have been collected. The bill requires an assigned hearing date to be issued with a citation for improperly overtaking a school bus. Registration of the vehicle cannot be renewed until the penalty and late fees are collected. Most provisions of the old HB 301 were included in this bill as well. These increase penalties for overtaking a school bus.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Public Safety Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

[HB 409](#) Addresses the behavior of passing school buses. Encourages school districts from having stops on roads 40 mph and over, second offense sends contact info to the insurer, and increases the fine from \$250 to \$1,000.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by Senate Education and Youth Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

[HB 971](#) (Newton-127th) Allows a taxpayer to claim a tax credit of up to \$300 for eligible expenses related to firearm safe handling instructional courses and firearm secure storage devices. The tax credit will have an annual aggregate cap of \$3 million, and an individual taxpayer may only receive credits totaling \$300 in their lifetime from this program. Any unused tax credit cannot be carried forward.

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

SB 406

(Dixon-45th) Requires the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency to establish a grant program for school mapping data to be included in the building mapping information system managed by the agency when funding is available. "School mapping data" means building information, floor plans, and emergency response plans of a public or private school system or an independent private school.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

SB 97

(Anavitarte-31st) Creates the offense of operation of a motor vehicle with a fraudulent license plate. A person commits this offense when they, willfully and with an intent to obscure or misrepresent the identity of a vehicle or its owner, operate a vehicle while: concealing any portion of the license plate; displaying a license plate issued to a different motor vehicle; displaying a revalidation decal other than the one issued to the motor vehicle; or displaying a license plate not issued by the Department of Revenue which has the appearance of one validly issued by the department. SB 97 requires warning signs for traffic safety enforcement devices and school zone speed limit reduction to display flashing yellow lights while the speed reduction is in effect. The speed limit may be enforced one hour prior to and one hour after the school day starts; one hour prior to and two hours after the school dismisses unless the school campus is bisected by a highway; and when the driver is 10 miles per hour over the speed limit. The legislation restricts fines and civil penalties received from use of automated devices to 30 percent of the law enforcement agency's budget in order to keep the permit for operating the device.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. The bill has been postponed on the House Floor.

SB 351

(Anavitarte-31st) Creates the 'Protecting Georgia's Children on Social Media Act of 2024' in Part I Section 1-1. Part II Section 2-1 adds to the character education program relating to bullying a new requirement to teach "responsible digital citizenship and the safe and appropriate use of technology, the internet, and social media" beginning in the 2025-2026 school year. Section 2-2 requires the Department of Education to develop model programs regarding online safety for grades six through 12, and post on its website recommended curricula and instructional materials. The model programs should be re-evaluated periodically to reflect changes in internet and social media use. Section 2-3 requires local governing bodies to adopt a social media policy by April 1, 2026. The Department of Education will assist in the creation of social media policies, and have the authority to withhold state funding if a local governing body fails to comply with this Code section or fails to enforce its social media policy. Section 2-4 requires the Department of Education to include cyberbullying in its model policy regarding bullying. The department will post on its website resources for local in-person providers throughout the state available to families for students who have been found to be perpetrating bullying and those who have been targets of bullying. PART III Section 3-1 requires providers of social media platforms to make commercially reasonable efforts to verify the age of account holders. Any person under the age of 16 will be treated as a minor by social media platforms, and the platform must obtain the express consent of such minor's parent or guardian for use of the platform. The attorney general has the exclusive authority to enforce Chapter 6 of Title 39. Section 3-2 requires a commercial entity to use a reasonable age verification method before allowing access to a public website that contains a substantial portion of material that is harmful to minors. It holds that commercial entity liable for damages and a fine of up to \$10,000 per violation if it fails to perform reasonable age verification, namely that the individual is at least 18 years of age, of the individual attempting to access the material. When performing a reasonable age verification, the commercial entity will not retain any identifying information after access to the material has been granted.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. The bill has been postponed on the House Floor.

SB 402

(Ginn-47th) Removes the ability of a law enforcement agency's governing body from charging additional fines, fees, penalties, or charges along with the civil monetary penalty if a vehicle is found to be in violation by a recorded image. Agents, law enforcement agencies, or governing bodies found in violation of the provisions within this article will be fined \$1,000 by the commissioner of the Department of Public Safety.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. The bill has been postponed on the House Floor.

STUDY COMMITTEES DO NOT REQUIRE BOTH CHAMBERS' PASSAGE

SR 203

(Jones-10th) Creates the Senate Safe Firearm Storage Study Committee.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Rules Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.



Shelter & Nutrition

BILLS THAT PASSED BOTH CHAMBERS, BUT REQUIRE AGREEMENT FROM THE FIRST CHAMBER DUE TO CHANGES

HB 404 (Carpenter-4th) Requires that rental properties are fit for human habitation. The bill includes cooling as a utility that cannot be shut off prior to an eviction action. Landlords are prohibited from requiring a security deposit that exceeds two months' rent. A tenant, when they fail to pay charges owed to landlord, is afforded a three-business day written notice period prior to an eviction proceeding being filed. The eviction notice will be posted conspicuously on the property door in a sealed envelope and delivered via any methods agreed to in the rental agreement.

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

HB 1203 (Kelley-16th) Entitles a landlord to use an off-duty sheriff, sheriff's deputy, marshal, or Peace Officer Standards & Training Council (POST) certified officer with jurisdiction to execute a writ of possession at the landlord's sole cost and expense when an on-duty official is unable to execute the writ within 14 days of the landlord's application or request for execution. The landlord will have access to a list of authorized off-duty personnel, and provide written notice to the sheriff, constable, or marshal of the time of execution of the writ at last five calendar days in advance of the execution.

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

HB 1410 (Efstration-104th) Updates provisions of the State Housing Trust Fund. Defines a "homeless person" in detail, including those living in public places not meant for long-term accommodation, residing in temporary shelters, or facing imminent housing loss due to eviction, lack of resources, or other circumstances; "qualified sponsor", and "stable housing accountability program". These programs, certified by the commission, are designed to provide homeless individuals with voluntary, immediate, and stable housing, while also outlining specific conditions for residency, ongoing assistance for securing permanent housing, and adherence to accountability measures such as sobriety, job training, and participation in counseling. The application process for these programs involves assessing various factors, including the projected number of homeless persons to be assisted, the sponsor's ability to leverage resources, the geographic distribution of existing programs, and the quality of assistance offered to residents. The bill underscores the importance of allocating funds exclusively for stable housing accountability programs and mandates a performance audit conducted by the state auditor. This audit aims to evaluate spending on homeless programs, scrutinize contract awards, assess program metrics, and ensure accountability and effectiveness in addressing homelessness. The audit findings are to be reported to key state officials by a specified deadline, facilitating transparency and accountability in homeless program expenditure and management.

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

BILLS THAT WERE INTRODUCED AFTER CROSSOVER DAY

[HR 1564](#) (Bennett-94th) Creates the House Summit on Hunger and Food Insecurity.

STATUS: House Agriculture and Consumer Affairs Committee. The bill will be heard in committee TODAY (MONDAY).

[SB 577](#) (Jackson-41st) Provides for landlords to remove personal property following execution of writs of possession within seven days of such execution; to authorize the marshal to remove such property after 14 days; to authorize the marshal to appoint ex-officio assistants to the marshal; to provide for the collection of costs associated with such removal.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Immediately transmitted to the House for its consideration.

BILLS THAT CROSSED OVER, WAITING FOR SECOND CHAMBER PASSAGE

[HB 1017](#) (Seabaugh-34th) The bill creates the offense of unlawful squatting when he or she enters upon the land or premises of another and resides on such land or premises for any period of time knowingly acting without the knowledge or consent of the owner, rightful occupant, or an authorized representative of the owner. For purposes of this Code section, the term 'resides' means to inhabit or live on or within any land or premises.

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

[HB 1034](#) (Franklin-160th) Designates the fourth Friday in November of each year as "National Sugarcane Syrup Day", because, frankly, why not? The bill also seeks to place upon the grounds of the state capitol building and upon the 44 grounds outside the state archives building a marker which commemorates the patriots of 45 the Revolutionary War.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Economic Development and Tourism Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

[HB 1048](#) (Carpenter-4th) Designates cornbread as the official state bread...AND establishes the 'Georgia Statewide Music Office Act.'

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Economic Development and Tourism Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

[HB 1073](#) (Washburn-144th) Repeals hearing and notice provisions relating to zoning decisions for halfway houses, drug rehabilitation centers, or drug dependency treatment centers.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate State and Local Governmental Operations Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

[HB 1182](#) (Crowe-118th) Changes Georgia's Housing Tax Credit (HTC) program to lessen the percentage of the housing tax credit.

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

STUDY COMMITTEES DO NOT REQUIRE BOTH CHAMBERS' PASSAGE

[HR 1418](#) (Olaley-59th) Creates the House Study Committee on the Use of Local Fees to Support Affordable Housing.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Governmental Affairs Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

[HR 1433](#) (Bell-75th) Creates the House Study Committee on the Eradication of Homelessness.

STATUS: House Governmental Affairs Committee

[SR 709](#) (James-35th) Creates the Senate Rental Housing Affordability Study Committee.

STATUS: Senate Urban Affairs Committee



Miscellaneous

LEGISLATION SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR

[HB 30](#) (Carson-46th) Provides a definition of antisemitism for purposes of state government, using the advisory definition of antisemitism adopted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) on May 26, 2016. IHRA defines antisemitism as a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews, and includes rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions, and religious facilities. An agency that enforces any criminal or noncriminal law or regulation that prohibits discrimination will consider the definition of antisemitism during that enforcement. Nothing in the bill will be construed to infringe upon First Amendment rights or an individual's right to engage in legally protected conduct or activity pertaining to U.S. foreign policy or international affairs.

STATUS: SIGNED INTO LAW 1/31/24

BILLS THAT PASSED BOTH CHAMBERS, AWAITING TRANSMISSION TO THE GOVERNOR

[HB 880](#) (Ballard-147th) Brings Georgia into compliance with the federal 'Servicemembers Civil Relief Act' and allows the spouse of a servicemember to practice his or her occupation without a license so long as that spouse: 1) holds a current license to practice the occupation in another state; 2) is in good standing in the other state; 3) has filed an application for an expedited license by endorsement along with the military orders of the servicemember, which can both be filed prior to moving to Georgia; 4) is hired by an in-state employer that may lawfully hire the spouse to engage in the occupation; and 5) has his or her information verified by the in-state employer. If a spouse is not issued a license by endorsement within 30 days of filing the application, then he or she can continue to work for the in-state employer without being licensed. If the spouse is denied an expedited license by endorsement, then that spouse will no longer qualify to engage in the practice of the occupation. A professional licensing board is permitted to investigate any persons exempted under this bill and to revoke that person's exemption if the spouse violated any of the recognized standards of the occupation or knowingly made any misleading or deceptive representations in his or her application.

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

BILLS THAT PASSED BOTH CHAMBERS, BUT REQUIRE AGREEMENT FROM THE FIRST CHAMBER DUE TO CHANGES

[HB 301](#) (Ridley-22nd) The bill was originally about the amount of civil monetary penalty for violations of improperly passing a school bus and speeding in a school zone when captured by cameras, but was fully replaced with policy regarding penalties for local government entities that implement immigration sanctuary policies, and also a provision that deals with abandonment of a public road.

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

[HB 1010](#) (Jones-47th) Increases the number of hours of annual paid parental leave for state employees from 120 to 240 hours. Paid parental leave can be used for the birth of a child or the foster and adoption placement of a child. The bill also requires the employing entity to provide notice of the benefits provided under this Code section to each eligible employee upon hiring and annually thereafter.

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

[HB 1026](#) (Hagan-156th) Designates the Southeast Georgia Soap Box Derby as the official soap box derby of the State of Georgia. The bill also includes language from HB1440 that provides for grant and loan programs to incentivize and attract semiconductor companies to locate/relocate in Georgia.

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

[SB 433](#)

(Cowsert-46th) Donor Intent Protection Act' - Requires a charitable organization or trust that accepts a contribution pursuant to an endowment agreement to not violate the terms of any donor-imposed restriction. If a donor-imposed restriction is violated, the donor, the donor's lineal descendants, or the donor's legal representative may bring a civil action within four years after discovering a breach of the endowment agreement. If a court finds a violation, the court is authorized to order a remedy consistent with the charitable purposes expressed in the endowment agreement. The court, however, will not be authorized to order the return of the contribution.

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

[HB 237](#)

(Hagan-156th) The original language which designated the Southeast Georgia Soap Box Derby as the official soap box derby of the State of Georgia was completely removed from the bill and the bill was amended to include the sports betting Georgia Lottery Bill (which failed in the Senate earlier this session).

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

[HB 375](#)

(Leverett-123rd) Relating to petition for appointment of a guardian, adds certain behavioral health providers (i.e., physician assistants, nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists in psychiatric/mental health, marriage and family therapists or professional counselors) to the list of those who can sign an affidavit, and lays out such providers' roles in the context of guardianship/conservator situations. The bill also addresses provider compensation for certain services as pertains to these situations.

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

[HB 1021](#)

(Daniel-117th) Increases the amount of the dependent exemption from \$3,000 per dependent to \$4,000 per dependent.

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

[HB 1096](#)

(Washburn-144th) Allows the Office of the Secretary of State to institute a unified system for tracking the continuing education credits completed by licensees of the various boards under the secretary of state's purview. Beginning on January 1, 2025, a professional licensing board shall not renew a license until the applicant has complied with all applicable continuing education requirements.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

[HB 1127](#) (Pirkle-169th) Adds definitions in the 'Georgia Hemp Farming Act' for "consumable hemp product", "contaminants", and "full panel certificate of analysis". The bill outlaws the sale of consumable hemp products unless a processor or manufacturer has contracted a full panel certificate of analysis within the past 12 months. Random inspections of consumable hemp products may be conducted by the Department of Agriculture to ensure compliance with this Code section. HB 1127 outlaws the ability to sell hemp products directly, or indirectly through another person, to any individual under the age of 21. Proper identification must be presented to confirm that a purchaser is of required age.

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

[HB 1165](#) (Mainor-56th) Replaces the chairperson of the Governor's Office of Children and Families with the commissioner of the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities on the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council.

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

[HB 1190](#) (Collins-71st) Authorizes the division director within the office of the Secretary of State to issue licenses in instances when the requirements for licensure have been met and the professional licensing board fails to act within 60 days of the date of the receipt of an application and the information and documents required to be submitted with such application verifying that all requirements for the issuance of such license have been met.

STATUS: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

[SB 64](#) (Robertson-64th) 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. Recommended Do Pass by the House Judiciary Committee. The bill was recommitted to committee and therefore did NOT PASS.

SB 157

(Strickland-17th) Provides for changes to existing licensing requirements for applicants to specified licensing boards, specifically pertaining to use of criminal history records, and also with records restrictions and petitions for the sealing of records. Section 1-1 of SB 157 adds a definition of "covered misdemeanor" as a misdemeanor conviction in the last five years prior to the application and an offense listed in O.C.G.A. 35-3-37(j)(4)(B), which provides for family violence offenses, offenses against children, sexual offenses, and serious traffic offenses. The section also defines "conviction" and "felony". Section 1-2 replaces the "crime of moral turpitude" standard and requires the professional licensing board to bear the burden of denying an applicant for a license due to their criminal record by the standard of "substantially more likely than not". An applicant is also entitled to a hearing before the professional licensing board per the 'Georgia Administrative Procedure Act'. Section 1-3 makes a denial of a request for reinstatement of a revoked license and the refusal to issue a previously denied license a contested case under the 'Georgia Administrative Procedure Act'. Section 1-4 permits license denial only if a direct relationship is found between a criminal record and the licensed occupation, and the applicant's licensure would pose a direct and substantial risk to public safety because they have not been rehabilitated to safely perform the licensed duties and responsibilities. This section clarifies what rehabilitation evidence will be considered and the disclosure of criminal records to those that are serious, recent, and relevant convictions that have not been expunged or pardoned. A list of specific crimes must always be disclosed, while others must be excluded. Requirements related to character standards are modified to require individualized consideration of applicants, and boards are required to provide a procedure, including written findings that it uses to justify a license denial due to a criminal record. Further, the section requires boards to allow an applicant to apply for a predetermination procedure to determine whether their criminal history record will lead to a denial in the future. Boards are also required to post public information on their websites and application about the criminal record consideration, including the legal standard, disclosure rules, predetermination process, and appeal. By March 31st of each year, the occupational licensing board will be required to file with the Office of the Secretary of State an annual report containing required information on licensing and criminal records, including the racial and ethnic distribution of applicants who were denied. Section 1-5 changes a referenced definition for the term "felony". Section 1-6 and 1-7 change references to be consistent with the new definitions, and they restrict records when there has been a conviction that has been restricted, sealed, annulled, dismissed, vacated, or pardoned. A plea in which someone is still fulfilling requirements as a first offender will still be visible to the Georgia Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors Board when making determinations. These sections add requirements for when the board can consider convictions in its determination, and provides for a predetermination procedure to determine whether a petitioner's conviction would disqualify them from obtaining a relevant license prior to applying for the license. Parts II, III, IV, and VI replace the "crime of moral turpitude" standard, require the review of an applicant's criminal history to be directly related to the profession, require a denial on criminal history records grounds to be due to a substantial risk to public safety standards, and regulate disclosure of criminal records to serious, recent, and relevant convictions, for the following boards: Georgia State Board of Accountancy, Georgia Board of Dentistry, Georgia Composite Medical Board, Georgia Real Estate Commission and Appraisers Board, Structural Pest Control Commission, Professional Standards Commission, and Georgia Board of Pharmacy. Only some of the provisions are applied to requirements of the insurance commissioner due to conflicts with federal law. Part V applies to long-term care facilities and modifies the definition of "criminal record" to exclude certain parties who received a general

pardon from the State Board of Pardons and Paroles for their convictions, starting from the date of their conviction or adjudication rather than the completion of their sentence. Part VII 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. Parts VIII and IX revise O.C.G.A. 35-3-37 to make those who commit the crime of theft eligible for a record restriction. The bill removes the limitation that only two misdemeanor convictions, or a series of misdemeanors arising from one incident, could be requested to be restricted through a petition. It increases eligibility for who can petition the court to seal records to those who have had records restricted pursuant to O.C.G.A. 17-10-21 (vacating of sentence for trafficking victim defendants), and an individual cited for a criminal offense that later had the charge dismissed, nolle prossed, or reduced to a violation of a local ordinance. The court is required to order all records held by the clerk to be restricted and unavailable to the public if the record has been restricted through a pardon by the Board of Pardons and Paroles. The bill allows restricted information to always be available to criminal justice agencies for law enforcement or criminal investigative purposes. It removes the requirement that the prosecutor must agree with a petition to the court for a retroactive grant of first offender status. The bill does not allow a court to provide retroactive first offender status for a conviction that was used as the underlying conviction pursuant to 16-11-131 (possession of firearms by convicted felons and first offender probationers) or if the conviction was used to enhance a sentence pursuant to 17-10-7 (punishment of repeat offenders). Part X makes the bill effective on January 1, 2025, and applies to all applications for licensure submitted on or after that date.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do pass by the House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

[SB 180](#) (Setzler-37th) Provides for the preservation of religious freedom relating to state government.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Judiciary Committee.

[SB 198](#) (Harrell-40th) Requires pharmacy benefits managers in contract with the state health benefit plan to reimburse independent pharmacies at a minimum of the average reimbursement for retail chain pharmacies for the same drug on the same day. Pharmacy benefit managers are also required to provide annual compliance certification to the Department of Community Health and make records available to the department upon written demand.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Public Health Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

[SB 235](#) (Halpern-39th) Creates the HBCU Innovation and Economic Prosperity Planning Districts Commission.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Higher Education Committee. The bill will be heard in committee TODAY (MONDAY).

[SB 390](#) (Walker-20th) Prohibits the Board of Regents from using any public funds on any materials, services, or operations offered by the American Library Association or any of its affiliates. The bill also prohibits the Department of Administrative Services from accepting any bid or proposal made by the American Library Association or any of its affiliates for a state contract.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Higher Education Committee. The bill will be heard in committee TODAY (MONDAY).

[SB 414](#) (Kennedy-18th) Creates the 'Personal Privacy Protection Act'. The bill prohibits public agencies from collecting, publicizing, disclosing, or requesting specified personal information related to nonprofit organizations, with exceptions. The bill creates the misdemeanor crime of improper collection or disclosure of personal information.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Recommended Do Pass by the House Judiciary Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

[SB 437](#) (Robertson-29th) Authorize the Department of Agriculture to enforce certain criminal laws in OCGA Title 16 over which the agency would have jurisdiction. The bill also regulates consumable hemp products and prohibits the sale of consumable hemp products to individuals under the age of 21 years. It requires the posting of certain signs concerning the legal age to purchase consumable hemp products.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Agriculture and Consumer Affairs Committee.

[SR 579](#) (Cowsert-46th) Constitutional amendment authorizing the Georgia General Assembly to provide by general law for sports betting in this state; and for the regulation and allocation of revenues of such activities.

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. Assigned to House Higher Education Committee. The bill will be heard in committee TODAY (MONDAY).

STUDY COMMITTEES DO NOT REQUIRE BOTH CHAMBERS' PASSAGE

[HR 1083](#) (Gambill-15th) Creates the House Study Committee on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Workforce for Georgia's Growing Economy.

STATUS: House Health Committee. (As a House Study Committee, the bill does not need to cross for final passage)

[HR 1169](#) (Hutchinson-106th) Creates the House Study Committee on the Economic Advantages of Marijuana Legalization.

STATUS: House Health Committee. Passage TBD. (As a House Study Committee, the bill does not need to cross for final passage)

[HR 1256](#) (Schofield-63rd) Creates the House Study Committee on the Establishment of a Baby Bonds Program.

STATUS: House Health Committee. Passage TBD. (As a House Study Committee, the bill does not need to cross for final passage)

[SR 476](#) (Albers-56th) Creates the Senate Study Committee on Artificial Intelligence.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Science and Technology Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

[SR 757](#) (Anderson-43rd) Creates the Senate Study Committee on the Establishment of a Baby Bonds Program.

STATUS: Senate Children and Families Committee

Advocacy Asks

We are down to the wire and need some streamlined advocacy to move some dollars and bills. That said, please pick one or two of the following that suits you and make a call to key House and Senate Appropriations members and ask them to ensure that the following dollars are secured in the FY2025 budget. (There are too many emails for folks at this point in the session, so calling is best!)

In the Dept. of Human Services: Please restore \$2.66 Million to the Georgia DHS Out-of-School Care Services Program (line 2371). These funds help provide afterschool and summer enrichment programming for children in and at risk of engaging with Georgia's foster care system. What's more, they draw down federal funds for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) to serve low-to-moderate income communities & children in the foster care system.

In the Dept. of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities: Please increase or at least retain \$2 Million to expand the Georgia Apex Program (line 805), which provides school-based mental health in more than 730+ public schools across the state. These funds will allow DBHDD to better meet demand by using tele Behavioral health in places that lack providers and to support certain Community Service Board as they transition to CCBHCs (Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics).

In the Dept. of Public Health: Please maintain funding to support and provide continuity for Georgia's families with infants via the Home Visiting program at \$1.75 Million (line 3148). Home Visiting programs have an amazing track record when it comes to reducing abuse and neglect, improving infant and maternal health (and reducing mortality), and helping families navigate various systems to obtain the best developmental outcomes for their children. These dollars will allow DPH to expand services to 13 additional counties (Coweta, Heard, Meriweather, Spalding, Troup, Upson, Baker, Colquitt, Dougherty, Grady, Mitchell, Thomas, Worth, Crisp, Dooley, Muscogee, Sumter, Talbot, Taylor, and Webster), which have a high incidence of preterm births and low birth weights.

GaDOE: Please appropriate funds (suggested \$20 million) for the afterschool/summer enrichment program, BOOST 2.0 grant program (BOOST = Building Opportunities in Out-of-School Time) in the GaDOE. Last year, BOOST grantees operated 1000+ sites in 112 Georgia counties. 97 grantees served nearly 80,000 kids in afterschool and 87,000 kids in summer programs. The original program, BOOST, was funded by COVID recovery dollars at \$27M/year for the last three years and now those funds are expiring. We have clear evidence that the program was hugely successful in supporting our children, achieving: Improved school outcomes, enhanced well-being and connectedness, increased life and teamwork skills, and increased access to expanded supports and services.

Dept. of Juvenile Justice & Dept. of Human Services: Please maintain salary increases and enhancements for employees in all sectors, but especially in DJJ and child welfare sectors (lines 2717, 2739, 2760, 2778, 2317) where high turnover endangers not only the children who come in contact with those agencies, but in many ways, the dedicated and mission-driven state employees who serve them.

In the Dept. of Community Health and the Dept. of Public Health: Please maintain increased reimbursement rates for speech-language pathology, audiology, physical therapy, and occupational therapy providers (lines 1109, 1135, 3150). Delivering appropriate compensation for such child-serving providers will help ensure that each child who needs services will get them and thus, vastly improve their ability to achieve their full potential.

Who to Contact:

In the Senate:
Sen. Blake Tillery
Appropriations Chairman
404-656-5038

Sen. Ben Watson
Appropriations Health and
Human Development
Subcommittee Chairman
404-656-7880

Sen. John Kennedy
President Pro Tempore
404-656-6578

Sen. Jason Anavitarte
Majority Leader
404-656-0085

Sen. Gloria Butler
Minority Leader
404-656-0075

In the House:
Rep. Matt Hatchett
Appropriations Chairman
404-463-2247

Rep. Katie Dempsey
Appropriations Human
Resources Subcommittee
Chairwoman
404-463-2248

Rep. Darlene Taylor
Appropriations Health
Subcommittee
Chairwoman 404-463-
2248

Rep. Jon Burns
Speaker of the House
404-656-5020

Rep. Jan Jones
Speaker Pro Tempore
404-656-5072

Rep. Chuck Efrstration
Majority Leader
404-656-5052

Rep. James Beverly
Minority Leader
404-656-5058