

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

February 10, 2025

Valentine's day is imminent and while I am not hoping for any sort of proposal or shoebox full of "Be Mine's", I am expecting my annual Valentine's Day nightmare. I have it every February 13th and wake up freaked-out and worried about my ruined professional reputation. It goes like this: I am running up the stairs to the third floor of the [North Wing of the Capitol](#) with a backpack full of bills that I have to convince people to support. That is pretty normal, but then it gets weird: When I pull out a bill to show a lawmaker, it is covered in chocolate and gooey marshmallow with the pages all stuck together. I stupidly pull out my capitol water bottle to rinse it off in the hallway (never a good idea), but it turns out that it is full of champagne instead of water, so then the lawmaker thinks I drink on the job. As I try to explain, a naked baby flies out of the House Clerk's office and shoots an arrow at the lawmaker's assistant who then falls in love with the (appropriately pink) Oglethorpe statue. In the meantime, the governor walks by and says something like "Hi Polly. My, you are a total mess. Perhaps you'd better step into my office and get yourself together." I awkwardly thank him and then run in the door to his ceremonial office (where he swears people into their appointments and all that). As I step in and turnaround from closing the door, all the child serving agency heads, all my ex-boyfriends, and every driver I have ever honked at are there, staring at me with a mix of disgust and confusion, as is my high school calculus teacher who is especially less-than-impressed, as always. I then realize that I am wearing a 2-sizes-too-small peanut costume and carrying not a backpack but an enormous (like 3-foot long) Varsity chili cheese dog, with that flying baby trying to sprinkle onions on it. I scream and wake up just before my alarm goes off. Some Valentine's Day.

Anyway, as for more important stuff, please check out all the bills below (there are a lot of new ones!) and especially the action alerts and I'll see you all on the other side of that chili cheese disaster. And remember...

I heart you all.

--Polly

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Budget Information

Amended Fiscal Year 2025 – House Version

Key:

Yellow = House Changes to Governor's Version

Dept. of Administrative Services

- **\$23.5 Million Added** to Payments to Georgia Technology Authority for DCH Integrated Eligibility System (IES) modernization, the DHS \$TARS modernization project, the Board of Dentistry licensing software, and the State Board of Pharmacy licensing software. (Governor had asked for \$104 Million Added)
- **\$35 Million Added** for DCH Integrated Eligibility System (IES) in the amount of \$70,000,000 in state funds to match in the most efficient and effective CMS FMAP for an estimated total project cost of \$218,750,000, with \$35,000,000 in state funds appropriated in this appropriations cycle and an additional \$35,000,000 in state funds appropriated in the next appropriations cycle to match cash flows and actual costs of the project and the federal draw of matching funds.

Dept. of Agriculture

- **\$150 Million Added** and recognize \$100 Million in funds previously authorized through the Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission and provide \$150,000,000 in additional funds to provide disaster relief assistance to farmers and timber producers impacted by Hurricane Helene (Total funds: \$250 Million)

Dept. of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities

Adult Developmental Disability Services

- **\$1.6 Million Reduced** to reflect the delayed start date of the Macon Crisis Stabilization and Diagnostic Center for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Adult Forensic Services

- **\$436,920 Reduced** to reflect the delayed start date of a 30-bed jail-based competency restoration program pilot in Dodge County.

Adult Mental Health Services

- **\$500,000 Transferred** from the Georgia State Investment and Financing Commission to the DBHDD for the planning, design, and land acquisition of a new behavioral health crisis center in North Metropolitan Atlanta.

Dept. of Community Affairs

- **\$250.38 Million Added** for the Georgia Fund to support water and wastewater infrastructure development through low-interest loans to local communities. (Governor recommended \$250 Million Added)
- **\$500,000 Added** for the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District to complete the state's five-year water plan update. \$
- **\$501.7 Million Added** to support the development and construction of additional surface water resources for Georgia's coastal region to meet growth in demand.
- **\$28 Million Added** for grants and loans for rural workforce housing
- **\$20 Million Added** for grants for rural site development.

- \$10 Million Added in payments to the Georgia One Authority for Hurricane Helene relief efforts

Dept. of Community Health

Dept. Administration

- \$685,125 Added to develop a pilot program to deploy predictive modeling to detect potential fraud, waste, and abuse within the state's Medicaid program.

GA Board of Dentistry

- \$263,396 Added plus existing funds (\$83,100) for the implementation of new licensing software to enhance efficiency in licensure review. (Governor wanted to simply use existing funds (\$83,100))

GA State Board of Pharmacy

- \$237,167 Added plus existing funds (\$192,566) for the implementation of new licensing software to enhance efficiency in licensure review. (Governor wanted to use existing funds (\$192,566).)

Healthcare Access and Improvement

- \$35.64 Million Added in one-time grant funds for 45 public rural and critical access hospitals to assist in financial stabilization and recovery efforts from Hurricane Helene.

Medicaid - Aged Blind and Disabled

- \$38.64 Million Added for growth in Medicaid based on projected utilization. (Governor recommended \$46 Million Added)
- \$11.5 Million Added for new high-cost drugs.
- *Budget Direction:* Replace \$4,703,106 in state general funds with hospital provider fees.
- *Budget Direction:* Replace \$6,731,771 in state general funds with nursing home provider fees.

Medicaid - Low Income

- \$5.84 Million Added for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services requirement that the state provide 12 months of continuous eligibility for children under the age of 19 in Medicaid effective January 1, 2024.
- \$91.44 Million Reduced for Medicaid based on projected utilization. (Governor recommended \$85.33 Million Reduction)
- *Budget Direction:* Replace \$41,494,598 in state general funds with hospital provider fees.

PeachCare for Kids

- \$449,825 Added for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services requirement that the state provide 12 months of continuous eligibility for children under the age of 19 in the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) effective January 1, 2024.
- \$16.51 Million Reduced for Medicaid based on projected utilization. (Governor recommended \$16.15 Million Reduction)

GA Board of Healthcare Workforce

- \$120,000 Reduced to reflect savings in the implementation of a Behavioral Health Care Workforce Database.
- \$79,402 Added for two child and adolescent psychiatric fellowship positions.
- \$12.5 Million Added for start-up funds for graduate medical education.
- \$25 Million Added to replace and expand the existing Mercer School of Medicine building.
- \$25 Million Added for a new academic building for the Morehouse School of Medicine.

- **\$250,000 Transferred** nursing faculty loan repayment program from the Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce: Undergraduate Medical Education program to the Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce: Physicians for Rural Areas program to include all loan repayment funds under the same program.
- **\$3 Million Added** for one-time scholarship funding for Georgia medical students attending Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (PCOM) South Georgia.

Dept. of Corrections

Administration

- **\$5 Million Added** to develop a ten-year facility and population management plan, including target staffing ratios and classification review of offenders, to determine best future use of existing facilities and prioritize capital and security needs across the system.
- **\$1.01 Million Added** to develop and implement a statewide targeted marketing initiative to recruit and onboard new correctional officers. (Governor wanted \$2.8 Million Added)
- **\$900,000 Added** to develop and implement updated training curriculum for correctional officers.

Detention Centers

- **\$2.29 Million Added** to add correctional officer positions to improve staff to offender ratios and reflect increased retention.

Private Prisons

- **\$2.46 Million Added** to add 188 private prison beds at Coffee Correctional Institution and 258 private prison beds at Wheeler Correctional Institution. (Governor wanted \$2.95 Million Added)
- **\$2.67 Million Added** s to provide for a cost-of-living-adjustment for employees at Coffee (\$712,681), Wheeler (\$856,800), Jenkins (\$450,000), and Riverbend (\$646,696) Correctional Institutions consistent with the state employee cost-of-living-adjustment provided in Fiscal Year 2025.

State Prisons

- **\$13.55 Million Added** to add correctional officer positions to improve staff to offender ratios. (Governor wanted \$10.43 Million Added for 300 positions)
- **\$35.92 Million Added** for project backlog and major maintenance and renovation projects at facilities. (Governor wanted \$37 Million Added)
- **\$35 Million Added** to address critical capital maintenance and repairs.
- **\$9.28 Million Added** for additional facility maintenance personnel and regional support staff to address critical facility maintenance needs. (Governor wanted \$15.27 Million Added.)
- **\$46.6 Million Added** for sitework and construction of two 126-bed modular correctional units to facilitate offender population movement necessary for capital and security improvements. (Governor wanted \$93.2 Million Added for 4 units)
- **\$34.26 Million Added** for design and construction to replace locking control systems at various facilities.
- **\$5.96 Million Added** for project management resources to oversee capital projects.
- **\$248,062 Added** for a "tiger team" to support existing GDC locking team to address repairs needed on facility locks, locking controls, and security electronics.
- **\$636,469 Added** for skilled craftsman "tiger teams" focused on HVAC, plumbing, electrical, and fabrication needs in facilities. (Governor wanted \$1.19 Million Added.)
- **\$35.03 Million Added** to prevent contraband through the use of managed access and drone detection systems.
- **\$913,248 Added** to implement an off-site mail screening solution to inhibit contraband and ensure the safety of facility staff.

- **\$2.26 Million Added** to continue operating the digital forensics unit through a contract. (Governor wanted \$1.47 Million Added.)
- **\$10.49 Million Added** to purchase 2,200 body cameras and 1,800 tasers for increased facility security. (Governor wanted \$7.22 Million Added for 1,460 cameras and 1,300 tasers.)
- **\$2.51 Million Added** for hardware and software licenses for additional officer tablets to improve documentation and information sharing on offender management.
- **\$337,500 Added** to replace 750 Chromebooks for technical education programs.
- **\$662,700 Added** for Technical College System of Georgia vocational education contracts.
- **\$176,326 Added** for the Residential Substance Abuse Treatment program contract.
- **\$2.29 Million Transferred** from State Prisons program to Detention Centers (\$1,572,489) and Transition Centers (\$718,679) programs for ongoing capital maintenance and repairs.
- **\$7.16 Million Added** for renovation, equipment and technology for the creation of an Over Watch and Logistics unit to increase safety of correctional officers and inmates throughout state facilities.
- **\$6.23 Million Added** for data intelligence advanced integration development
- **\$489,666 Added** for retention of experienced correctional officers to address compression beginning April 1, 2025.

Transition Centers

- **\$489,666 Added** to add correctional officer positions to improve staff to offender ratios and reflect increased retention.

Dept. of Early Care and Learning

- **\$100,000 Added** for startup grants of up to \$10,000 per provider to establish additional Summer Food Service Program meal sites in areas with high rates of child food insecurity.

Pre-K Program

- **\$7.42 Million Added** to provide salary parity between Pre-K teachers with K12 teachers by moving to the State Board of Education salary schedule.
- *Budget Direction:* Utilize existing funds (\$3,549,690) for development costs of the new Pre-K Management System.

Dept. of Education

Central Office

- **\$150,000 Added** for an adaptive sports program.

Curriculum Development

- **\$2.49 Million added** for AP exams (\$2,244,870) and PSAT exams (\$249,424) due to increased utilization.

Quality Basic Education Program (QBE) Equalization Grant

- **\$24.34 Million Reduced** to reflect a data correction for Gainesville City and Hall County Tax Digests.

QBE Local Five Mill Share

- **\$214,870 Reduced** to adjust funds for the Local Five Mill Share for two new State Commission Charter Schools.

Quality Basic Education Program

- **\$203,344 Added** for the Completion Special Schools Supplement. (Governor recommended \$1.88 Million Reduction.)
- **\$114.28 Million Added** for a midterm adjustment based on enrollment growth. (Governor recommended \$114.94 Million Added.)
- **\$267,110 Added** for a midterm adjustment to the charter system grant.
- **\$93,202 Added** for a midterm adjustment to the local charter school grant. (Governor recommended \$150,725 Added.)
- **\$2.92 Million Added** for a midterm adjustment to the State Commission Charter School supplement for training and experience. (Governor recommended \$5.69 Million Added.)
- **\$12.9 Million Added** for the State Commission Charter School supplement for a total supplement of \$248,482,930.
- **\$0 Added** to reflect a data correction for two locally approved charter schools, Drew Charter School (\$137,098) and The Kindezi School (\$698,068), in the Atlanta Public Schools system. (Governor recommended \$835,166 Added.)
- **\$13.21 Million Added** to reflect growth in the Special Needs Scholarship. (Governor recommended \$12.44 Million Added.)

School Security Grants

- **\$50 Million Added** for security grants in the amount of \$21,635 per school allowing local school systems to enhance security system-wide.

State Charter School Commission Administration

- **\$0 Transferred** from the Charter Schools program (\$265,501) and provide additional funds (\$344,592) to implement the provisions of HB 318 (2024 Session). (Governor recommended \$610,093 Transferred.)

Technology/Career Education

- **\$95,859 Added** for two full-time and two part-time positions and operating costs to sustain Great Promise Partnership operations as a part of work-based learning programs for at-risk students at the Department of Education.

Employees' Retirement System of Georgia

- **\$500 Million Added** to strategically invest in increasing the funded ratio in order to improve long-term financial viability of the pension system and support state retirees.

Governor's Emergency Fund

- **\$145 Million Added** for Hurricane Helene emergency response expenses. (Governor recommended \$150 Million Added.)

Governor's Emergency management and Homeland Security Agency

- **\$5.75 Million Added** for Next Generation 911 and emergency services.
- **\$3 Million Added** for start-up funds for a school threat assessment tracking system.

Governor's Office of Student Achievement

- **\$160,000 Added** for startup funds to establish a regional crisis recovery network in partnership with the Southern Regional Education Board to support student mental health in response to significant public safety or natural disaster incidents impacting schools or school systems.

Dept. of Human Services***Child Support Services***

- \$5.77 Million in one-time funds added to maintain software applications on the Georgia Technology Authority mainframe.
- \$185,798n Added to support the attainment of child support for out of state non-custodial parents.

Child Welfare Services

- \$1.72 Million Added for Court Appointed Special Advocates to replace federal funds deemed ineligible by the Administration for Children and Families.
- \$1.7 Million Added s for the special victims unit to support the rescue of sexually exploited foster children.

Departmental Administration

- \$1.09 Million Eliminated for rent for a multi-service building in Coweta County.
- \$1.47 Million Added to integrate Pathways and Georgia Access into the Georgia Gateway integrated eligibility system.

Federal Eligibility Benefit Services

- *Budget Direction:* Utilize existing funds (\$133,763) to enhance Medicaid disability evaluation capacity.
- \$1.44 Million Added to provide a \$3,000 additional salary enhancement for eligibility caseworkers effective April 1, 2025.

Out-of-Home Care

- \$22.24 Million Added for utilization growth and increased costs of care.

Residential Child Care Licensing

- *Budget Direction:* Utilize existing funds (\$82,550) for one position and TRAILS electronic records management system enhancements to address new licensure and regulation responsibilities due to the creation of two new Child Caring Institution types in SB 377 (2024 Session) and HB 1201 (2024 Session).

Georgia Bureau of Investigation

- \$165,466 Added for the start-up cost for two crime scene technical leaders and three digital forensic investigators. (Governor recommended \$221,866 Added.)
- \$96,472 Added for the start-up cost to establish a Strategic Threat Assessment Group responsible for addressing threats to public officials, investigating homeland security matters, and partnering with critical infrastructure partners to provide support during major events occurring in the state. (Governor recommended \$120,472 Added.)
- \$490,700 Added to replace federal funds with state funds for three human trafficking positions.
- \$0 Added for continued operation of the End Human Trafficking Georgia 24/7 Hotline. (Governor recommended \$101,076 Added.)

Dept. of Juvenile Justice***Community Service***

- \$348,298 Added for youth competency beds to address bed utilization costs.

Secure Confinement (Residential Youth Detention Centers – RYDCs)

- **\$3 Million Transferred** from Community Service program to Secure Detention (RYDCs) program to align budget with expenditures.
- **\$681,688 Added** to reflect increased retention of juvenile correctional officers.

Dept. Of Law

- **\$93,518 Added** for three positions to expand the Human Trafficking Unit to the Augusta regions effective April 1, 2025. (Governor recommended \$187,036 Added for 6 positions in Macon and augusta.)

Public Defender Council

- **\$0 Added** for the Juvenile Conflict Defender Division manager position. (Governor Recommended \$226,517 Added.)

Dept. of Public Health

Adolescent and Adult Health Promotion

- **\$250,000 Added** for a campaign to educate Georgians on the signs and symptoms of colorectal cancer.
- **\$250,000 Added** for a campaign to educate Georgians on the adverse effects of vaping.

Epidemiology

- **\$270,000 Added** to study the impacts of social media on mental health for children in Georgia.

Infant and Child Essential Health Promotion

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

Public Health Formula Grants to Counties

- **\$500,000 Added** one-time funds for health department equipment.

Dept. of Public Safety

Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council

- **\$325,000 Added** to provide mandatory training for newly elected sheriffs. (Governor recommended \$246,000 Added.)

Georgia Public Safety Training Center

- **\$114,419 Added** for additional training for jailers in accordance with SB 37 (2024 Session). (Governor recommended \$168,853 Added.)
- **\$258,328 Added** for two training instructors and supplies for increased basic law enforcement training. (Governor recommended \$316,996 Added.)

Office of Highway Safety: Georgia Driver's Education Commission

- **\$522,437 Added** for driver's education and training in accordance with FY 2023 Joshua's Law Collections.

University System of Georgia Board of Regents

Public Service/Special Funding Initiatives

- **\$500,000 Removed** in unutilized one-time funds for rural community projects at the Center for Rural Prosperity and Innovation.
- **\$577,681 Added** for dental clinical training.

Teaching

- **\$17.75 Million Added** to reflect formula correction for FY 2025 cost-of-living adjustment in Teaching.

Dept. of Revenue

- *Budget Direction:* Utilize \$1,000,000,000 in prior year undesignated state funds surplus to provide a one-time additional refund for tax year 2024 of \$250.00 for single filers, \$375.00 for head of household filers, and \$500.00 for married filing jointly.

Georgia Student Finance Commission***Dual Enrollment***

- **\$21.29 Million Added** to meet projected enrollment.

HERO Scholarship

- **\$330,000 Replaced** funds and surplus funds used instead to meet the projected need.

HOPE Grant

- **\$2 Million Added** to meet projected enrollment.

HOPE Scholarships - Public Schools

- **\$6.1 Million Added** to meet projected enrollment.

Public Safety Memorial grants

- **\$540,000 Replaced** funds and surplus funds used instead to meet the projected need.

Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission – Capital Projects Fund

- **\$47.95 Million Added** for capital projects statewide. (Governor recommended \$70 Million Added)
- **\$500,000 Transferred** for planning, design, and land acquisition for a new behavioral health crisis center in North Metropolitan Atlanta to the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities.
- **\$30 Million Added** for GDC for design of new prison, statewide. (Governor recommended \$40 Million Added)
- **\$3 Million Added** for TCSG for One College and Career Academy.
- **\$6.57 Million Added** for GaDOE for Georgia School for the Deaf auditorium renovation and addition, Cave Spring, Floyd County.
- **\$0 Added** for debt defeasance to reflect the use of AFY 2024 and FY 2025 debt defeasance funds for Hurricane Helene relief. (Governor recommended \$100 Million Added)
- *Budget Direction:* Reflect the redirection of \$100,000,000 in funds appropriated for debt defeasance to be used to provide disaster relief financial support for farmers and debris cleanup for timber producers impacted by Hurricane Helene as approved by the Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission on November 1, 2024.



Justice, Public Safety, & School Discipline

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

STATUS: House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee

HB 138 (Neal-79th) Adds de-escalation techniques and training that include scenario-based training and methods to training for all POST certified peace officers.

STATUS: House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee

HB 179 (Smith-18th) Permits digital recording of certain trial proceedings for felony cases.

STATUS: House Judiciary Committee

HB 194 (Byrd-20th) Revises standards of self-defense or self-defense of self or others to exclude the use or threat of force against a law enforcement officer in a public location.

STATUS: House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee

HB 214 (Bell-75th) Prohibits creative or artistic expression (i.e., the expression or application of creativity or imagination in the production or arrangement of forms, sounds, words, movements, or symbols, including music, dance, performance art, visual art, poetry, literature, film, and other such objects or media) as admissible evidence at trial.

STATUS: House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee

HB 237 (Carpenter-4th) Prohibits the use of a defendant's creative or artistic expression as evidence in a criminal trial unless the prosecution clearly proves its relevance through a strict legal process. Courts must first determine in a separate hearing that the defendant intended the work to be taken literally, that it has a strong factual link to the alleged crime, and that it is supported by additional admissible evidence. If admitted, courts must minimize prejudice through redactions, jury instructions, and the least biased presentation of the material.

STATUS: House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee

HB 301 (Gilliard-162nd) Time Served Act of 2025: Automatically restricts the criminal history of individuals convicted in a single incident who have completed their sentence and remained conviction-free for at least five years. This excludes serious violent felonies, sexual offenses, human trafficking, crimes against disabled or elderly individuals, sexual exploitation of minors, and offenses against law enforcement. The bill also requires the parole board to issue a certificate of employability if the parolee earns a high school equivalency diploma or higher, has no major disciplinary violations in the past year, and meets the board's job skills assessment criteria.

STATUS: House Judiciary Non-Civil

SB 25 (McLaurin-14th) Allows offenders who have either maxed out their performance incentive credits or are serving life sentences and up for parole consideration to request a video conference with the parole board at least 30 days before their tentative parole date. During this meeting, they can present information regarding their offense, rehabilitation efforts, community support, and the impact of their release. Additionally, offenders can request written findings explaining the board's decision, including input from the victim's side and prosecution. If three board members tentatively deny parole, the remaining two members have 14 days to review and discuss before the decision is finalized.

STATUS: Senate Public Safety Committee

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

STATUS: Senate Judiciary Committee

SB 32 (Williams-25th) Increases the sentence for any person who willingly resists, obstructs, or opposes any law enforcement officer by committing violence to such officer from 3-15 years to 10-20 years.

STATUS: Senate Judiciary Committee

SB 61 (Dolezal-27th) Revises and adds to the set of offenses for which youth ages 13 to 17 are tried and sentenced as adults. The bill would require that, in addition to the existing nine offenses, youth alleged to have committed any of the 23 following offenses would be treated the same as adult criminal defendants: aggravated assault with a firearm, terroristic threats or acts upon a school, attempt to commit or conspiracy to commit murder, attempt or conspiracy to commit rape, attempt or conspiracy to commit aggravated sodomy, attempt or conspiracy to commit aggravated child molestation, attempt or conspiracy to commit aggravated sexual battery, attempt or conspiracy to commit armed robbery with a firearm, attempt or conspiracy to commit aggravated assault with a firearm, attempt or conspiracy to commit aggravated battery upon a public safety officer, and attempt or conspiracy to commit a terroristic threat or act upon a school. Cases involving the added offenses may be transferred to the juvenile court by the superior court after indictment for further proceedings. The bill also amends O.C.G.A. 20-2-67 to require any student in grade 6 or higher to authorize the release of records pertaining to any class A or class B designated felony acts subject to a misdemeanor punishable by \$1,000 fine or 30 days imprisonment, community service, or a combination. Further, the bill amends O.C.G.A. 20-2-701 to require courts and state child-serving agencies to notify the local school system whenever a child is subject to electronic monitoring, an intensive supervision program, or home confinement program and authorizes the school to use the information for the purpose of school safety. A new Code Section 20-2-1181.1 is added to create the offenses of a terroristic threat of a school and a terroristic act upon a school and provide for punishment of

such offenses as a misdemeanor unless the threat suggested death of a person, which is a felony punishable by \$,1000 fine or imprisonment for 1-5 years, or both. If a person suffers a serious physical injury as a result of the threat, the felony punishment increases to a fine of \$250,000 and 5-40 years imprisonment, or both. Finally, O.C.G.A. 20-2-1185, relating to school safety plans and drills, is amended to require an annual site threat assessment of school buildings, facilities, and campuses by law enforcement, appropriate government agency, or certified individual or entity, to be included in the school safety plan submitted to the GaDOE. (A huge thank you to Barton Child Law and Policy Center for this excellent summary.)

STATUS: Senate Judiciary Committee

SB 116 (Bearden-30th) Requires DNA collection from individuals charged with a misdemeanor or felony who are subject to an immigration detainer notice and expands the definition of detention facilities to include jails and municipal detention facilities.

STATUS: Senate Hopper



Child Welfare & Protection

HB 57 (Cameron-1st) Expands the definition of incest to include step-grandparents and step-grandchildren.

STATUS: House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee

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

STATUS: House Ways and Means Committee

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

STATUS: House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee

HB 191 (Moore-91st) Permits the court to deliver a citation by certified mail, directly to the party's place of employment, known relative, or by any other reasonable means to either party if found to be avoiding delaying a hearing.

STATUS: House Judiciary Committee

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

STATUS: House Judiciary Juvenile Committee

HB 256 Adds fictive kin and relative caregivers to the Foster Parents Bill of Rights. The bill also allows the right to a fair, timely, and impartial investigation of licensing complaints, including due process and the option to have a certified volunteer advocate present, with all related communications kept confidential; a request for mediation or an administrative review of licensing decisions and must receive clear explanations of any corrective action plans citing specific licensing standards; a certified volunteer advocate present at all meetings with the department, protection from retaliation for filing complaints, and the ability to seek independent legal counsel regarding their status.

STATUS: House Judiciary Juvenile Committee

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

STATUS: House Hopper

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

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

SB 9 (Albers-56th) Prohibits distribution of computer-generated obscene material depicting a child and provides penalties and probation for such obscenities.

STATUS: Senate Judiciary Committee

SB 27 (Albers-56th) Establishes the offense of 'doxing' by criminalizing the malicious publication of private information online to intimidate, harass, or harm someone. Offenders face a misdemeanor for first-time offenses and a felony (1-10 years imprisonment) for serious harm, repeat offenses, or if an adult targets a minor. Victims can seek protective orders and sue for damages, including legal fees. Legal action can be filed where the communication originated, was received, or where the victim lives.

STATUS: Senate Judiciary Committee

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

STATUS: Senate Judiciary Committee

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

STATUS: Senate Higher Education Committee

SB 92 Georgia Red Flag Protective Order Act - Establishes a process for issuing temporary and long-term risk protection orders to restrict firearm possession by individuals deemed dangerous to themselves or others. A petitioner must provide the respondent's name and address and submit an affidavit under oath, detailing statements or actions that demonstrate a significant risk. A superior court hearing must be held within 14 days of issuing a temporary order. If the court finds clear and convincing evidence that the respondent poses a danger, it may issue a risk protection order for up to 12 months. The order must include the reason for issuance, start and end dates, any required mental health or chemical dependency evaluations, and instructions for surrendering all firearms and ammunition to law enforcement. It also prohibits the respondent from possessing, purchasing, or attempting to acquire firearms or ammunition while the order is in effect. The respondent has the right to request a hearing to challenge the order and may request another hearing after any extension. The Administrative Office of the

Courts will develop standardized petition forms, instructions, and training materials for court staff to ensure consistent implementation of the process.

STATUS: Senate Judiciary Committee

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

STATUS: Senate Children and Families Committee

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

STATUS: Senate Children and Families Committee

SB 110 (Anavitate-31st) Clarifies definitions related to child neglect and independent activities under Georgia's juvenile code. Defines blatant disregard as the conscious exposure of a child to an obvious and imminent risk of harm without precautionary measures. Specifies that neglect does not include allowing a child to engage in reasonable independent activities if the child is deemed mature enough to do so safely. The bill defines "independent activity" as the activity of a child who is not under the direct supervision of a legal custodian or person acting in loco parentis and shall include, but shall not be limited to, playing indoors or outdoors alone or with other children; walking to or from school; running errands; traveling to local commercial or recreational facilities; or remaining for no longer than 15 minutes in a vehicle, provided that the temperature inside the vehicle is not and will not become dangerously hot or cold." Additionally, it amends reckless conduct laws to ensure that allowing a child to engage in independent activities does not constitute a criminal offense unless it meets the legal definition of neglect.

STATUS: Senate Children and Families Committee



Health & Behavioral Health

HB 19 (Scott-76th) Requires DBHDD to create an electronic inpatient psychiatric bed registry to identify availability for psychiatric beds for inpatient facilities. Additional data sharing shall be reviewed and set by the department.

STATUS: House Public and Community Health Committee

HB 20 (Scott-76th) Requires the State Board of Education to adopt rules requiring all certificated public school personnel to receive annual training in depression and suicide awareness and prevention. The bill also establishes the Student Mental Health Screenings Grant Program, and requires GaDOE to develop a model policy for student depression and suicide awareness, plus help schools establish certain healthcare related partnerships to conduct mental health screenings.

STATUS: House Education Committee

HB 24 (Scott-76th) Establishes a school-linked behavioral health grant program under DBHDD to identify early interventions in K-12 schools for students that may have mental health or substance use disorders.

STATUS: House Education Committee

HB 26 (Scott-76th) Requires DBHDD to establish a school-linked behavioral health grant program to identify early interventions in K-12 schools for students that may have mental health or substance use disorders.

STATUS: House Public and Community Health Committee

HB 59 (Glaize-67th) Reduces the legal counselor ratio from 1 counselor to 450 students to 1 counselor to 250 students.

STATUS: House Education Committee

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

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill will be heard in committee this MONDAY.

HB 83 (Au-50th) Increases the taxes on packs of cigarettes from 37¢ to 57¢ per pack.

STATUS: House Ways & Means Committee

HB 84 (Au-50th) Increases the taxes on packs of vapor products from 7% of the wholesale price to 15%.

STATUS: House Ways & Means Committee

HB 87 (Clark-100th) Requires health insurance benefits to cover medically necessary orthotic devices and prosthetic devices for affected persons during a three-year period. Additionally, healthcare insurance beneficiaries are to be provided with at least two distinct healthcare professionals under their coverage for each issuance and renewal of their coverage.

STATUS: House Health Committee

- [HB 96](#)** (Park-107th) Increases the taxes on packs of cigarettes from 37¢ to \$1.37 per pack.
- STATUS: House Ways and Means Committee
- [HB 97](#)** (Park-107th) Provides the expansion of Medicaid for low-income individuals making less than 138 percent of the (FPL).
- STATUS: House Public and Community Health Committee
- [HB 100](#)** (Douglas-78th) Requires that health insurers cost share the price of prescription drugs with enrollees, covering at least 80% of the rebates they receive or anticipate receiving for each drug.
- STATUS: House Insurance Committee
- [HB 101](#)** (Douglas-78th) Requires for the Board of Community Health to report annually the amount of prescription drug rebates and related concessions applied to the premium reductions for state health benefits plan participants.
- STATUS: House Insurance Committee
- [HB 102](#)** (Cooper-45th) Facilitates the establishment of the Georgia Quality Reporting Project, which would gauge the quality of treatment for opioid use disorder and healthcare overall, improve the quality of care, reduce the overall cost of medical treatment, and foster clinical research.
- STATUS: House Public and Community Health Committee
- [HB 109](#)** (Bonner-73rd) Provides for a five-year pilot program for the purpose of creating emergency psychiatric assessment, treatment, and healing units or EmPATH units in hospitals.
- STATUS: House Public and Community Health Committee
- [HB 124](#)** (Scoggins-14th) Requires the State Health Benefits Plan to cover healthcare services for pediatric autoimmune neuropsychiatric disorders associated with streptococcal infection (PANDAS) and pediatric acute onset neuropsychiatric syndrome (PANS) in accordance with nationally recognized clinical practice guidelines.
- STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by House Insurance Committee. The bill moves to House Rules Committee.
- [HB 139](#)** (Jones-25th) Prohibits drug manufacturers and wholesalers from withholding or limiting the supply of medications to pharmacies which participate in the federal 340B drug discount program.
- STATUS: House Health Committee

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

STATUS: House Ways and Means Committee

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

STATUS: House Health Committee

[HB 170](#) (Mathiak-82nd) Healthcare benefit providers must provide a written record of all payments and reimbursements made to an injured party within 30 days of receiving a written request from the treating healthcare provider.

STATUS: House Insurance Committee

[HB 196](#) (Kelley-16th) Insurers must reimburse pharmacies for drugs dispensed to state health plan beneficiaries at the national average drug acquisition cost or 4% of that cost, or \$50—whichever is less—or a professional dispensing fee. The cost share is based only on the dispensing fee.

STATUS: House Health Committee. The bill will be heard in committee this MONDAY.

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

STATUS: House Health Committee. The bill will be heard in committee this MONDAY.

[HB 209](#) (Romman-97th) Declares ambulance service, whether provided by a public, private nonprofit, or private for profit entity, as an essential service.

STATUS: House Health Committee

[HB 218](#) (Dempsey-13th) Lowers the age from 50 to 18 years old at which hospitals shall offer inpatient vaccinations for the influenza virus prior to discharge.

STATUS: House Health Committee. The bill will be heard in committee this MONDAY.

[HB 227](#) (Dickey-134) Revised Georgia's Medical Cannabis laws. Replaces language of "Low THC oil" to "medical cannabis" and keeps consistent criminal provisions to include "hemp" or "medical cannabis." The bill expands the duties of the Georgia Access to Medical Cannabis Commission to include public awareness efforts on the potential benefits of medical cannabis for eligible patients, and specifically directs that marketing does not "include any medical claim, unless such claim is supported by reliable scientific evidence; make any false or misleading claim; or

be attractive to children or otherwise directly or indirectly targeted to individuals under 21 years of age." It also removes or relaxes certain medical criteria for eligibility.

STATUS: House Health Committee. The bill will be heard in committee this MONDAY.

HB 231 (Neal-79th) Requires all health benefit policies to include coverage, either as part of the policy or through a required endorsement, for complementary and alternative therapies provided by a licensed physician, acupuncturist, chiropractor, or massage therapist. Additionally, policies must offer optional coverage, either in part or through an endorsement, for complementary and alternative therapies provided by a qualified herbalist, homeopath, or naturopath, provided the therapy is prescribed by a licensed physician. STATUS: House Insurance Committee

HB 251 (McDonald III-26th) Permits for a certified registered nurse anesthetist to order and administer anesthesia and an anesthesia plan in coordination with a licensed physician (as opposed to under direct supervision of a licensed physician).

STATUS: House Regulated Industries Committee

HB 258 (Buckner-137th) "PeachCare for Adults Act" - Expands healthcare coverage to adults aged 18 to 64 with incomes at or below 133% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) and not enrolled in Medicaid. Enrollees will not pay a monthly premium unless their income is at least 100% of the FPL. In that case, the premium will be the lower of either the cost of the second-lowest silver-level plan in the state's health insurance marketplace or 2% of the enrollee's gross income. The program does not impose work requirements, and all Medicaid providers will be automatically recognized as providers under this program.

STATUS: House Public and Community Health

HB 265 (Sainz-180th) Expands the provisions to include THC and other cannabinoids as listed hemp products that are not to be sold or distributed in this state if such product has a total concentration that exceeds 0.3% for dry products and 150 milligrams per serving in the form of gummy.

STATUS: House Agriculture & Consumer Affairs

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

STATUS: House Public and Community Health Committee

HB 298 (Kelley-16th) Requires hospitals to develop and implement a written nurse staffing plan to ensure adequate nurse staffing and skill levels for patient care. Each hospital must establish a

standing nursing staff committee, with the chief nursing officer as a voting member and at least 50% of the committee composed of registered nurses (RNs) who provide direct inpatient care for at least half of their work hours. If unsafe staffing conditions arise, DCH must refer the report to its Healthcare Facility Regulation Division for further investigation.

STATUS: House Health Committee

HB 314 (LaHood-175th) Requires athletic trainers who perform dry needling procedures to demonstrate proof of graduation from a program that included instruction of a minimum of 50 hours and competency assessment of achievement from an accredited education program governed by the Board of Certification for Athletic Trainer or its successor.

STATUS: House Hopper

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

STATUS: House Hopper

HB 326 (Au-50th) State Health Benefit Plan Non-Opioid Coverage Parity Act - Requires the State Health Benefit Plan to provide equal coverage for qualifying non-opioid pain management drugs. Prohibits the plan from offering greater coverage for opioid pain management drugs or imposing prior therapy or authorization requirements on non-opioid alternatives.

STATUS: House Hopper

HB 332 (Herring-145th) Creates an advisory workgroup to update, amend, or develop tools and protocols for screening children for trauma within the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) Program.

STATUS: House Hopper

HB 334 (Crawford-89th) Sickle Cell Disease Protection Act - Requires DCH to conduct an annual review of all medications, forms of treatment, and services that are eligible for coverage under the Medicaid program for those with a diagnosis of sickle cell disease.

STATUS: House Hopper

HB 335 (Crawford-89th) Requires athletic associations to collaborate with DBHDD to develop and share mental health education materials for student athletes, parents, school staff, and coaches.

Public and participating private schools (grades 6–12) must provide annual mental health resources to parents, and coaches must review training materials each year before coaching. The bill limits liability for schools and athletic associations regarding student mental health decisions and encourages youth athletic organizations to adopt similar policies.

STATUS: House Hopper

HB 336 (Crawford-89th) Requires local school systems that provide health information to parents and guardians, including immunizations, infectious diseases, and medications, to also include information on sickle cell disease for students in grades six through twelve. This information includes a description of the disease, risk factors, warning signs, recommended actions if symptoms appear, screening processes, and the importance of consulting a primary care provider to develop a treatment plan after a diagnosis.

STATUS: House Hopper

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

STATUS: House Public and Community Health Committee

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

STATUS: House Health Committee

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

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Insurance and Labor Committee

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

STATUS: Senate Health and Human Services Committee

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

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Insurance and Labor Committee. The bill moves on to Senate Rules Committee.

SB 50 (Lucas-26th) PeachCare Plus Act of 2025 - Expands Medicaid eligibility for individuals earning less than 138% of the federal poverty level. Mandates that by October 31, 2026, Georgia's Department of Community Health will submit a federal waiver request to enroll eligible individuals in state or federal marketplace healthcare plans, covering all associated premiums and costs. The program will remain in effect as long as federal funding covers at least 90% of expenses, with state savings directed to the Indigent Care Trust Fund. The bill also establishes an Advisory Commission on the PeachCare Plus Program, to assist in drafting, reviewing, and implementing the waiver request and provide ongoing recommendations for program success.

STATUS: Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee

SB 60 (Hufstetler-52nd) Increases regulation and duties of pharmacy benefits managers to include the duties to balance the interest of the care of the insured, health plans, and providers.

STATUS: Senate Insurance and Labor Committee

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

STATUS: Senate Health and Human Services Committee. The bill will be heard in committee this MONDAY.

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

STATUS: Senate Judiciary Committee

SB 80 (Summers-13th) Revises the definition of 'rural hospital organization' to include rural freestanding emergency departments.

STATUS: Senate Health and Human Services Committee

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

STATUS: Senate Insurance and Labor Committee

SB 113 (Dixon-45th) Establishes a professional health program to provide for monitoring and rehabilitation of impaired healthcare professionals.

STATUS: Senate Health and Human Services Committee



Maternal & Infant Care

HB 25 (Scott-76th) Allows GA DHS to apply for a waiver allowing SNAP and WIC beneficiaries to purchase diapers and menstrual hygiene products with the benefit once the US Department of Agriculture makes such an application available.

STATUS: House Public and Community Health Committee

HB 46 (Davis-87th) Ensures additional representation of healthcare and mental health experts, community members, and relevant nonprofits on the Maternal Mortality Review Committee. Also addresses Committee vacancies and establishes privacy protocols.

STATUS: House Public and Community Health Committee

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

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

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

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

HB 149 (Barnes-86th) Creates a three year pilot program to provide postpartum care program through mobile health clinics in counties that do not have a hospitals or birth centers offering obstetric care or fewer than 60 obstetric providers per 10,000 births.

STATUS: House Public and Community Health Committee

HB 263 (Bennett-94th) Creates a three-year pilot program to provide Medicaid coverage for doula care for pregnant Medicaid recipients. Reimbursements may include up to 5 doula visits for each Medicaid recipient.

STATUS: House Public and Community Health Committee

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

STATUS: House Hopper

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

STATUS: Senate Health and Human Services Committee



Early Childhood Education & Out-of-School Time

HB 118 (Townsend-179th) Requires childcare learning centers and family child care learning homes maintain at least one portable airway clearance device and each employee that cares or supervises children be trained in CPR.

STATUS: House Education Committee

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

STATUS: House Education Committee

HB 269 (Townsend-179th) Requires childcare learning centers to maintain a commercial general liability insurance policy or policies affording coverage for bodily injury and property in an amount not less than \$500,000 for a single occurrence and \$1 million in the aggregate.

STATUS: House Education Committee

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

STATUS: Senate Finance Committee. The bill will be heard in committee this MONDAY.

[SR 121](#) (Strickland-42nd) Recognizes After School Day at the Capitol on February 12th, 2025.

STATUS: Senate Read and Adopted

[SR 128](#) (Strickland-42nd) Recognizes Early Childhood Education Day at the Capitol on February 12th, 2025.

STATUS: Senate Read and Adopted



K-12 Education

[HB 12](#) (Cannon-172nd) Reduces the minimum required millage rate from 14 mills to 10 mills for a school system to qualify for equalization grants.

STATUS: House Education Committee

[HB 20](#) (Scott-76th) Requires schools to provide progress reports to parents or legal guardians of students in the early intervention program, and requires the GaDOE to collaborate with the Professional Standards Commission to improve and update professional development opportunities for teachers that specifically relate to supporting limited-English-proficient students.

STATUS: House Education Committee

[HB 23](#) (Scott-76th) Requires schools to provide progress reports to parents or legal guardians of students in the early intervention program, and requires the GaDOE to collaborate with the Professional Standards Commission to improve and update professional development opportunities for teachers that specifically relate to supporting limited-English-proficient students.

STATUS: House Education Committee

[HB 24](#) (Scott-76th) Establishes a school-linked behavioral health grant program under DBHDD to identify early interventions in K-12 schools for students that may have mental health or substance use disorders.

STATUS: House Education Committee

[HB 26](#) (Scott-76th) Requires DBHDD to establish a school-linked behavioral health grant program to identify early interventions in K-12 schools for students that may have mental health or substance use disorders.

STATUS: House Public and Community Health Committee

[HB 27](#) (Scott-76th) Provides for grants by the State Board of Education to local units of administration to support students living in poverty under QBE funding formula for schools.

STATUS: House Education Committee

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

STATUS: House Education Committee

[HB 42](#) (Davis-87th) Revises the calculation for student transportation programs and remove the requirement of regular transportation services to be funded prior to other transportation services. Requires the State Board of Education to collaborate to determine actualized costs for transportation programs.

STATUS: House Education Committee

[HB 47](#) (Davis-87th) Provides QBE funding to eligible public schools to enhance safety and infrastructure.

STATUS: House Education Committee

[HB 48](#) (Davis-87th) Establishes the Refugee and International Students Equalization (RISE) program to provide comprehensive wrap-around services for eligible K-12 students from other countries.

STATUS: House Education Committee

[HB 59](#) (Glaize-67th) Reduces the legal counselor ratio from 1 counselor to 450 students to 1 counselor to 250 students.

STATUS: House Education Committee

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

STATUS: House Education Committee

HB 104 (Cox-28th) Establishes regulations requiring that interscholastic sports competitions be categorized based on the student-athletes sex assigned at birth rather than gender. Sports are designated as male-men, or boys, and female-women, or girls, or coed.

STATUS: House Education Committee

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

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill will be heard in committee this MONDAY.

HB 106 (Barnes-86th) Authorizes local school boards and related bodies to offer driver education training courses as an elective to high school students.

STATUS: House Education Committee

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

STATUS: House Education Committee

HB 133 (Clark-100th) "Student Character Development Act" - Requires (by August 1, 2025) that all local education agencies adopt policies allowing students to be excused for at least one hour per week to attend religious moral instruction, known as a "released time course." Participation requires parental consent, and transportation must be arranged by parents or the sponsoring organization, which also assumes full responsibility for the student during the course. Public school funds cannot be used for these programs, except for minimal administrative costs, and courses cannot be held on school property unless under a neutral equal-access policy. Schools may grant academic credit for completed courses, evaluated using secular criteria such as instruction hours, syllabus content, assessment methods, and instructor qualifications. Students attending these courses will not be marked absent, and GaDOE will ensure schools maintain state and federal funding regardless of participation levels.

STATUS: House Education Committee

HB 173 (Taylor-173rd) Requires the DOE to provide all parents and guardians of students entering sixth grade with information on recommended adolescent vaccinations for meningococcal meningitis disease, HPV, and TDAP.

STATUS: House Education Committee

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

STATUS: House Education Committee. The bill will be heard in committee this MONDAY.

HB 198 (Chastain-7th) Encourages principals to use funding for access to patriotic societies like the Boy Scouts of America. Denials must be provided in writing to the requesting entity.

STATUS: House Education Committee

HB 200 (Bazemore-69th) Establishes a three year pilot immersive writing program for public school students for 2nd to 5th grade to improve literacy skills.

STATUS: House Education Committee

HB 202 (Hilton-48th) Establishes a program for the purposes of promoting and supporting the approval of new local charter school petitions by local boards of education and provides incentive grants to local boards of education that approve new local charter school petitions.

STATUS: House Education Committee

HB 217 (Hong-103rd) Changes the Dual Achievement Program from a pilot to a permanent statewide program. (FYI, the program awards a high school diploma to eligible students who complete the academic requirements for a technical college associate degree, diploma, or at least two certificate programs within a specific career pathway.)

STATUS: House Special Rules Committee

HB 221 (Cannon-58th) Requires public schools to provide equal accommodations for teams of both genders, including equivalent funding, facility access, and the like. The bill also requires the GaDOE to report annually on local school systems to include information regarding expenditures and participation rates for each gender. Additionally the bill allows for students to file a lawsuit should the provision of this bill be violated.

STATUS: House Education Committee

HB 229 (Neal-79th) Exempts materials used in the construction of capital outlay projects for educational purposes from local sale or use taxes approved and funded through a constitutionally authorized education special purpose local option sales tax (ESPLOST). Effective date is July 1st, 2025 to December 31st, 2033.

STATUS: House Ways & Means Committee

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

STATUS: House Education Committee

[HB 245](#) (Olaleye-59th) Revises QBE formula by adding a program for students in foster care, living in poverty or in unstable housing as defined by federal law (McKinney-Vento Act) to the table of quality basic education instructional programs with certain weights and student-teacher ratios.

STATUS: House Education Committee

[HB 267](#) (Bonner-73rd) "Riley Gaines Act" - Provides for separate restroom and changing areas for males and females in schools, for sleeping arrangements on school trips to be made according to sex; requires any collector of vital statistics throughout this state to identify each individual as either male or female, and replaces the term "gender" throughout the Code with "sex".

STATUS: House Education Committee

[HB 268](#) (Persinger-119th) Establishes grants for local school systems to hire qualified mental health coordinators, who will be responsible for identifying at-risk students and evaluating behavioral health programs. By July 1, 2025, the State Board of Education must define the duties and qualifications for these coordinators and create regulations for grant distribution. Additionally, the bill mandates youth violence and suicide awareness training for school personnel and introduces state-approved behavioral and emotional screening assessments, which must be recommended by the DBHDD by July 1, 2025, and designated by the State Board of Education by August 1, 2025. These assessments will be administered at no cost to students or their legal guardians, with public funds available for school reimbursement. The bill also requires the timely transfer of student records between schools, law enforcement, and other relevant agencies, while also defining critical student records, including academic history, discipline records, and criminal offenses. Schools must provide electronic copies of requested student education records within three business days, and by October 1, 2025, any existing MOUs regarding student records must be reviewed and updated. The bill also introduces a dispute resolution process, requiring regional education service agencies (RESAs) to mediate conflicts over student record disclosures. If a record cannot be legally released, the responsible agency must provide a written explanation and attempt to secure parental consent within five days. If disputes remain unresolved, they will be escalated to the Office of the Attorney General and GaDOE's chief privacy officer. The bill requires every local school system to establish a threat management team and mandates the creation of a statewide behavioral threat management system. By July 1, 2026, the Office of Safe Schools—which will be housed within the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency (GEMA)—must develop a statewide behavioral threat assessment operational process and a set of behavioral threat assessment indicators. By this same deadline, the state must also procure and implement the School and Student Safety Database (S3 Database) to track and assess student behaviors that may pose safety risks. Schools will be required to update their safety plans to include behavioral threat assessment management by July 1, 2025, and a statewide school safety compliance inspection report must be adopted and enforced by August 1, 2025. Additionally, each local board of education must develop a family reunification plan to facilitate the safe return of students and staff following an emergency. The bill also updates legal provisions regarding terroristic threats and school-related offenses allowing parents who intentionally encourage their child to make school threats to be held legally responsible, and stating that individuals accused of threatening

the death or injury of a group at a school will face mandatory suspension and counseling. The bill requires progressive discipline policies for educators who fail to comply with school safety requirements, and it strengthens information-sharing agreements between schools and law enforcement. By August 1, 2025, the GaDOE must publish model terms and conditions for the disclosure of student information, ensuring that school officials and law enforcement have clear guidelines for handling such data.

STATUS: House Education Committee

HB 293 (Miller-62nd) Repeals the Code Section 20-2-11 relating to the participation or advocating of divisive concepts, which repeals a provision which prohibits basing certification and classification of certain professional personnel upon completion of training programs which advocate for certain concepts.

STATUS: House Education Committee

HB 294 (Miller – 62nd) Requires the State Board of Education to review and update necessary policies, guidelines, and processes for awarding units of high school credit to students based on a demonstration of subject area competency for the 2025-2026 school year. The State school superintendent shall not authorize any denial, delay, or otherwise interfere with the approval of any performance-based assessment identified and approved by the state board.

STATUS: House Education Committee

HB 307 (Ballard-147th) The Georgia Early Literacy and Dyslexia Act now explicitly includes dyslexia as a learning disability. It redefines high-quality instructional materials, limiting those that use the three-cueing system. The state will review and update timelines every three years for universal reading screeners, which will be limited to five approved screeners capable of identifying students significantly at risk of not meeting grade-level reading proficiency. Schools must report annually on the total number and percentage of K-3 students identified with dyslexia characteristics. Each school must certify in writing that the handbook has been distributed to all administrators, teachers, and personnel. If a student is at risk and does not improve despite evidence-based interventions, additional data will be examined to assess dyslexia.

STATUS: House Hopper

HB 310 (Olaleye-59th) Provides grants of up to \$7,500 to eligible student teachers to support teacher recruitment, distributed in installments during their student teaching. The State Board of Education administers the program.

STATUS: House Hopper

HB 313 (Dunahoo-31st) Requires all public and elementary and secondary schools to display the Ten Commandments at the main entrance of the main building, the main entrance of the school

library, media center and the main entrance of the cafeteria by July 1, 2025. Schools cannot use public funds to purchase such, but are required to accept donated copies.

STATUS: House Hopper

[HB 328](#) (Carpenter-4th) Increases the annual aggregate limit for tax credits available for certain student scholarships from \$120 million to \$200 million per year.

STATUS: House Hopper

[HB 333](#) (Herring-145th) Requires that the state minimum salary schedule for professionals in elementary and secondary education be updated each year based on annual inflation or deflation for the immediately preceding calendar year.

STATUS: House Hopper

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

STATUS: House Hopper

[HR 174](#) (Dubnik-29th) Constitutional Amendment which provides appointment of the state school superintendent by the State Board of Education and for the election of members of the State Board of Education for two-year terms by the members of the House of Representatives and Senate whose respective districts are embraced or partly embraced by each congressional district of this state. (Enabling legislation has yet to appear in the hopper.)

STATUS: House Education Committee

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

STATUS: PASSED SENATE. The bill awaits committee assignment in the House.

[SB 4](#) (Dolezal-27th) Provides for public complaints against school board members and makes changes to required and prohibited topics for school board member training.

STATUS: Senate Education and Youth Committee

SB 17 (Anavitarte-31st) Ricky and Alyssa's Law - Requires local school systems to implement a mobile panic alert system capable of connecting directly to emergency services and first responders. The bill also authorizes the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency to adopt rules and regulations for the requirements for school mapping data.

STATUS: Senate Education and Youth Committee

SB 22 (Tillery-19th) Requires the DOE to publish federal guidance documents within 15 calendar days.

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

SB 38 (Dolezal-27th) Imposes educational development impact fees on high-growth school systems experiencing a 20% or greater student enrollment increase over a 10-year period. The affiliated Constitutional Amendment is SR 52.

STATUS: Senate Economic Development and Tourism Committee

SB 41 (Jackson-41st) Requires public schools to provide equal accommodations for teams of both genders, including equivalent funding, facility access, and the like.

STATUS: Senate Education and Youth Committee

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

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

SB 54 (Jones-10th) Requires the State Board of Education to establish a statewide emergency alert system by 2026 for schools to notify law enforcement and first responders of threats. By 2027, a secure threat database will track verified school safety threats, with students only added after investigation and social worker evaluation. Schools must provide mental health support for affected students, and the Board may consult state security agencies to implement these measures.

STATUS: Senate Education and Youth Committee

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

STATUS: Senate Education and Youth Committee

SB 65 (Mallow-2nd) Mandates that all children prior to their fifth birthday be enrolled and attend a full day kindergarten program for one school year prior to enrolling in the first grade which shall be provided for all public schools of the state.

STATUS: Senate Education and Youth Committee

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

STATUS: Senate Education and Youth Committee

SB 93 (Kemp-38th) Prohibit the three-cuing system from inclusion in high-quality instructional materials or structured literacy.

STATUS: Senate Education and Youth Committee

SB 115 (Parkes-7th) Revises the sales tax exemption dates for clothing and school related supplies from July 30, 2016 through July 31st, 2016 to August 7th through August 13 of each year.

STATUS: Senate Finance Committee

SB 120 (Harbin-16th) Prohibits public schools, local education agencies, and public postsecondary institutions from promoting, supporting, or maintaining any programs or activities that advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion. Any postsecondary institution that violates this shall be subject to the withholding of state funding or state administered federal funding which includes scholarships, loans, and grants.

STATUS: Senate Hopper

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

STATUS: Senate Hopper

SB 124 (Still-48th) Mandates that the School Superintendent and the Department of Education take all necessary steps to implement federal agency guidance. Additionally, students with a parent on

active military duty in the state qualify for a Promise Scholarship until they return to public school, graduate, turn 20, or, for special education students, turn 21.

STATUS: Senate Hopper

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

STATUS: Senate Hopper

SR 52 (Dolezal-27th) Constitutional Amendment-Imposes educational development impact fees on high-growth school systems experiencing a 20% or greater student enrollment increase over a 10-year period. The enabling legislation is SB 38.

STATUS: Senate Economic Development and Tourism Committee



Higher Education

HB 7 (Kendrick-95th) Provides for a \$4,000/year tax credit (3 year maximum) for workforce-ready graduates employed in high-tech full-time jobs in rural counties for at least 40 weeks during a 12-month period.

STATUS: House Ways and Means Committee

HB 18 (Sainz-180th) States that eligible Dual Enrollment high school students must currently be and remain legal residents of Georgia while in the program.

STATUS: House Higher Education Committee

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

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Higher Education Committee.

HB 56 (Petrea-166th) Expands tuition grants to include spouses of law enforcement officers, firefighters, and prison guards who were killed or permanently disabled in the line of duty.

STATUS: House Higher Education Committee

HB 130 (Jasperse-11th) "Pay As You Earn Education Program (PAYE)" - Establishes a student loan program under the Georgia Student Finance Authority. Georgia residents attending eligible institutions can receive loans, contributing \$1,000 annually while repaying 3% of their income for 15 years post-graduation or opting for a 10-year fixed repayment with interest. Schools must enroll at least 1% of their freshman class, and participating private institutions receive a \$1,000 tax credit per student. Eligibility excludes non-citizens, defaulters, certain felons, and incarcerated individuals.

STATUS: House Higher Education Committee

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

STATUS: House Higher Education Committee

HB 203 (Griffin-149th) Requires the Board of Regents to include graduates from historically black college or university (HBCU) that is a unit of the University System of Georgia.

STATUS: House Higher Education Committee

HB 206 (Bell-75th) Removes provisions making students ineligible for HOPE scholarships or grants based solely based on a conviction for an offense involving marijuana or a controlled substance.

STATUS: House Higher Education Committee

HB 284 (Schofield-63rd) Authorizes baby bond saving programs in which public funds can designated for qualified expenses such as paying for higher education, purchasing a home, investments, and other permitted purposes for the beneficiary coming of age. The affiliated Constitutional Amendment is HR 99.

STATUS: House Appropriations Committee

HB 286 (Neal-79th) Creates a subfund to provide startup capital to certain small businesses that are majority owned by students or graduates of a small business program of study of TCSG.

STATUS: House Higher Education Committee

HR 99 (Schofield-63rd) Constitutional Amendment authorizing baby bond saving programs in which public funds can designated for qualified expenses such as paying for higher education, purchasing a home, investments, and other permitted purposes for the beneficiary coming of age. (Enabling legislation has yet to appear in the hopper.)

STATUS: House Appropriations Committee



Environmental Safety

HB 1 (Au-50th) Establishes the offense of making a firearm accessible to a child (except where possession of a firearm by a child is lawful) by charging a person with criminal negligence when a child gains access to a readily dischargeable firearm, and such person failed to secure the firearm or left the firearm in a place to which the person knew or should have known the child could gain access. The bill also provides for an affirmative defense to prosecution in certain circumstances. The bill also requires gun dealers to post a sign saying, "IT IS UNLAWFUL TO STORE, TRANSPORT, OR ABANDON AN UNSECURED FIREARM IN A PLACE WHERE CHILDREN CAN OBTAIN ACCESS TO THE FIREARM."

STATUS: House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee

HB 2 (Au-50th) Provide a tax credit for firearm safe storage devices of up to \$300. This tax credit must be pre-approved and can only be applied once in a taxpayer's lifetime.

STATUS: House Ways and Means Committee

HB 3 (Au-50th) Prohibits the transfer of firearms except when facilitated by a dealer and requires a universal background check for the transfer of firearms. Exceptions are made in certain circumstances.

STATUS: House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee

HB 4 (Au-50th) Requires a three-day waiting period for the purchase or transfer of certain firearms.

STATUS: House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee

HB 9 (Schofield-63rd) "Safer States Act" - Repeal and reduces the manufacturing and selling of chemical flame retardants or chemicals in such things as bedding, carpeting and certain children's products.

STATUS: House Natural Resources and Environment Committee

HB 63 (Oliver-84th) Provides that any owner who fails to secure a loaded or unloaded firearm with knowledge that either a minor or any other person can possess such firearm will be guilty of a misdemeanor of when the firearm is obtained by a minor and exhibited in a public place or while making a threat of violence or by any individual, regardless of age, and used during the commission of a crime or during an act which results in the injury or death.

STATUS: House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee

HB 64 (Oliver-84th) Requires assault weapon owners to maintain liability insurance in an amount not less than \$1 million for unintentional death, injury, or disability to a human being and for damage to property per incident arising out of the ownership, maintenance, operation, or use of an assault weapon. Failure to provide proof of minimum liability insurance will result in a misdemeanor. Exceptions or affirmative defenses may apply.

STATUS: House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee

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

STATUS: House Ways & Means Committee. The bill will be heard in subcommittee this MONDAY.

HB 80 (Westbrook-163rd) Permits law enforcement agencies the option to destroy or sell certain firearms if left unclaimed.

STATUS: House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee

HB 207 (Crawford-89th) Requires handguns and long guns in motor vehicles to be stored in a locked compartment.

STATUS: House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee

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

STATUS: House Motor Vehicles Committee

HR 9 (Moore-91st) Constitutional Amendment creating the "Safe Water and Toxic Enforcement Fund." The enabling legislation is HB 193.

STATUS: House Natural Resources & Environment Committee

SB 19 (Lucas-26th) Requires a ten-day waiting period for the purchase or transfer of certain firearms.

STATUS: Senate Judiciary Committee

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

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

SB 49 (Parent-44th) Establishes the offense of making firearms accessible to a child by failure to secure the firearm or leaving the firearm in a place where a child can knowingly gain access; a person commits the offense of making a firearm accessible to a child if such child gains access to a readily dischargeable firearm, and the person with criminal negligence Requires firearm dealers to display a conspicuous notice that reads: IT IS UNLAWFUL TO STORE, TRANSPORT, OR ABANDON AN UNSECURED FIREARM IN A PLACE WHERE CHILDREN ARE LIKELY TO BE AND CAN OBTAIN ACCESS TO THE FIREARM

STATUS: Senate Judiciary Committee

SB 53 (Jones-10th) Requires the GA Department of Public Safety, in coordination with GaDOE, to develop a program to educate the public on safe storage of firearms, contingent upon funding.

STATUS: Senate Public Safety Committee

SB 66 (Parent-44th) Prohibits persons convicted of misdemeanor crimes of family violence or persons subject to family violence protective orders from receiving, possessing, or transporting a firearm.

STATUS: Senate Judiciary Committee

SB 75 (Burns-23rd) Provides for standards for signs warning of a reduced speed limit in a school zone and signs warning of the use of automated traffic enforcement safety devices. The bill also authorizes district attorneys, solicitors-general, and prosecuting attorneys to enforce civil monetary penalties relative to the enforcement of laws regarding speeding in a school zone using recorded images.

STATUS: Senate Public Safety Committee



Shelter & Nutrition

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

STATUS: House Special Rules Committee

HB 21 (Scott-76th) "Healthy Food Access Tax Credit Act" - creates a tax credit of 15% of incurred expenses for the development or improvement of a property that sells healthy foods in a less developed area.

STATUS: House Ways and Means Committee

HB 60 (Barnes-86th) Ensures that all public school students have access to high-quality and high-nutrition free breakfast and lunch.

STATUS: House Education Committee

HB 65 (Moore-91st) Designates collard greens are designated as the official Georgia state greens, and 'potlikka' as the official Georgia state dipping sauce of the official Georgia state bread. (See HB 14).

STATUS: House Special Rules Committee

HB 183 (Seabaugh-34th) Provides guidance on the termination and removal of unauthorized guests by an innkeeper, allowing them to request removal by a peace officer five days after giving notice of payment to the guest.

STATUS: House Judiciary Committee

HB 188 (Lim-98th) Permits an adult resident, or the parent/guardian of a minor resident, who has obtained a civil or criminal court order, to submit a written request to terminate their rental agreement

STATUS: House Judiciary Committee

HB 193 (Moore-91st) "Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 2025" prohibits businesses from knowingly discharging, releasing, or exposing individuals to chemicals known to cause cancer or reproductive toxicity without providing a reasonable warning. It also requires the Governor to compile and maintain a list of chemicals linked to these health risks. The associated Constitutional Amendment is HR 9.

STATUS: House Judiciary Committee

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

STATUS: House Special Rules Committee

HB 299 (Taylor-92nd) Repeals Code section 44-7-19 which prohibits local governments from regulating the amount of rent to be charged for privately owned, single-family or multiple-unit residential rental property.

STATUS: House Governmental Affairs Committee

HB 302 (Gilliard-162nd) "Leave No Georgia Child Hungry Act" - Requires the State Board of Education to annually determine and allocate state funds to provide free, quality, and healthy meals to students enrolled in after-school and summer school programs in public schools. These state funds will supplement any available federal funds to ensure meal availability. It also mandates the State Board of Education to establish minimum nutritional requirements for these meal programs, ensuring they meet or exceed federal guidelines. Additionally, local school systems must submit compliance plans and will receive assistance in securing start-up grants for implementing the meal programs. Local school systems are encouraged to establish these free meal programs, and those that do will be reimbursed by the state according to policies set by the State Board of Education.

STATUS: House Education Committee

HB 305 (Olaleye-59th) Protect the Dream Act - Prohibits investment firms with assets under management below \$6.25 million or ownership of at least 25 single-family homes in a single county from acquiring additional single-family homes in Georgia.

STATUS: House Governmental Affairs Committee

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

STATUS: House Hopper

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

STATUS: House Hopper



Miscellaneous

HB 34 (Washburn-144th) The Secretary of State shall create a professional licensing board tracking solution that will track the compliance of all licenses and continuing education requirements for license renewal beginning on January 1st, 2026.

STATUS: House Regulated Industries Committee. The bill will be heard in committee this MONDAY.

HB 98 (Hugley-141st) Provides for a state income tax credit equal to 10% of the federal child tax credit.

STATUS: House Ways and Means Committee

HB 99 (Hugley-141st) Increases state income tax credit from 30% to 100% based on the federal child/dependent care tax credit. The bill also states that if the total amount of the tax credit exceeds the taxpayer's income tax liability for a taxable year, the excess funds shall be refunded to the taxpayer.

STATUS: House Ways and Means Committee

HB 107 (Ballard-147th) Permits the use and creation of digital verifiable professional licenses for spouses of servicemembers.

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by the House Defense & Veterans Affairs Committee. The bill moves on to Rules Committee.

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

STATUS: House Ways and Means Committee. The bill will be heard in subcommittee this MONDAY.

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

STATUS: House Ways and Means Committee. The bill will be heard in subcommittee this MONDAY.

[HB 122](#) (Byrd-20th) Recognizes that life is protected and valued at the time of moment of conception and is afforded all the rights and privileges of the U.S Constitution.

STATUS: House Public and Community Health Committee

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

STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by House Technology and Infrastructure Innovation Committee. Moves on to House Rules Committee.

[HB 161](#) (Crowe-118th) Permits Georgia Bureau of Investigation to issue electronic subpoenas for cyber enabled threats with the exception of disclosing ongoing investigations. Revises the definition of domestic terrorism and establishes new penalties including life imprisonment or death for cases of fatalities.

STATUS: House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee

[HB 166](#) (Franklin-160th) Recognizes the fourth Friday in November as "National Sugarcane Syrup Day" in Georgia.

STATUS: House Special Rules Committee

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

STATUS: House Judiciary Committee

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

STATUS: House Judiciary Committee

- [HB 259](#) (Sharper-177th) Recognizes the second Monday in August of each year as "Local Elected Officials Day in Georgia."
STATUS: House Special Rules Committee
- [HB 303](#) (Gilliard-162nd) Original 33 Memorial Act - This bill honors the Original 33, the Black legislators expelled from the General Assembly following the end of Reconstruction with a monument on the state capitol grounds.
STATUS: House State Properties Committee
- [HB 316](#) (Park-107th) Provides a state income tax credit equal to 20% of federal earned income tax.
STATUS: House Hopper
- [HB 319](#) (Clark-100th) Provides that any state or local official or employee who violates state law related to deterring the concealing, harboring, or shielding of an illegal alien will be guilty of a criminal offense and may be subject to removal and replacement from their position by the Governor and prosecuted by the Attorney General.
STATUS: House Hopper
- [HR 120](#) (Holly-116th) Constitutional Amendment extending the regular legislative sessions from a maximum of 40 legislative days to 90 legislative days. (Enabling legislation has yet to appear in the hopper.)
STATUS: House Special Rules Committee
- [SB 21](#) (Tillery-19th) Waives sovereign and governmental immunities for local governments and their officials and employees for a violation of the prohibition on immigration sanctuary policies; and requires sheriffs, jailers, and deputies to honor immigration detainer requests issued by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
STATUS: Recommended Do Pass by Senate Public Safety Committee. The bill moves on to Senate Rules Committee.
- [SB 36](#) (Setzler-37th) Georgia Religious Freedom Restoration Act-Mandates that the government cannot substantially restrict a person's religious practice unless it can prove the restriction serves a compelling governmental interest and is implemented in the least restrictive way possible. These protections apply specifically to Georgia's state and local governments. Individuals who believe their religious rights have been violated can file a legal claim or defense and seek relief, including attorney's fees. However, the bill clarifies that it does not alter the Establishment Clause, meaning it does not require government funding or benefits for religious activities.
STATUS: Senate Judiciary Committee

[SB 37](#) (Albers-56th) Creates the Georgia Board for Artificial Intelligence and requires that all governmental entities develop and maintain artificial intelligence system usage plans which are published on their website.

STATUS: Senate Economic Development and Tourism Committee

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

STATUS: Senate Government Oversight Committee

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

STATUS: Senate Insurance and Labor Committee

[SB 57](#) (Tillery-19th) Prohibits financial institutions and utility providers from denying services based on a person's social credit score or constitutional rights, such as free speech, religious beliefs, firearm ownership, or refusal to adopt certain policies on environmental, diversity, or healthcare issues. The law applies to large financial institutions (assets over \$1 billion) and utility providers offering electricity, water, gas, or broadband services. Violations are classified as unfair business practices, allowing affected individuals to sue for damages up to \$150,000, injunctive relief, and legal fees.

STATUS: Senate Judiciary Committee

[SB 67](#) (Parent-44th) Establishes a state tax credit equal to 20% of the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) for eligible taxpayers. If the credit exceeds the taxpayer's state income tax liability, the excess amount will be refunded.

STATUS: Senate Finance Committee

[SB 68](#) (Kennedy-18th) Introduces significant changes to civil practice, tort law, contracts, and motor vehicle regulation. Limits owner liability for injuries that occur on their property, prevents plaintiffs' lawyers from suggesting a monetary value to compensate for pain and suffering, and enables trials to be split into multiple stages so that juries can determine liability and damages separately. This is part of the Administration's tort reform effort.

STATUS: Senate Judiciary Committee

[SB 69](#) (Kennedy-18th) This is part of the Administration's tort reform effort: Requires any third-party entities to be registered with the Department of Banking and Finance and limiting their ability to

exert influence over the plaintiffs' legal decisions, such as when and how plaintiffs settle a case, and prevents foreign governments from becoming litigation financiers.

STATUS: Senate Judiciary Committee

[SB 71](#) (Beach-21st) Provides that any compensation a student-athlete receives for the athlete's name, image, or likeness at a postsecondary education institution is not exempt from state or federal income taxes.

STATUS: Senate Finance Committee

[SB 74](#) (Burns-23rd) Expands the offense of knowingly distributing harmful materials to minors to include librarians in school and public libraries. Violators are guilty of a high and aggravated misdemeanor.

STATUS: Senate Education and Youth Committee

[SB 97](#) (Setzler-37th) Provides that it is illegal to intentionally and secretly place or direct someone else to place an electronic monitoring device to track a person's physical location without their consent. Exceptions apply when the vehicle or aircraft owner, lessor, lessee, or lienholder consents, when U.S. military personnel act within their official duties, when a parent or legal guardian tracks a child under 21 or an incapacitated individual, when mobile service providers track users for service purposes, or when manufacturers install tracking devices in vehicles or aircraft. Additionally, any other similar acts that invade privacy** are also prohibited. This law does not apply to automated license plate recognition systems.

STATUS: Senate Judiciary Committee

[SR 131](#) (Summers-13th) A Constitutional Amendment to authorize the operation and regulation of sports betting and casino gambling activities in this state. All authorized casino gambling activities shall take place at a casino facility. The proceeds of the sports betting and casino gambling activities at a rate of 20% of gross income will be paid into a special trust fund to be created by the General Assembly. (Enabling legislation has yet to appear in the hopper.)

STATUS: Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee



Advocacy Ask

[Ask #1: School Social Workers](#)

[Ask #2: Out-of-School Time Funds and Liaison](#)

[Ask #1: School Social Workers](#)

The Ask:

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

What Do School Social Workers Do?:

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

The Why:

- Georgia averages one SSW per 1,911 students!
- While Georgia has approximately 14,300 licensed social workers across various fields, a shortage exists in K-12 settings because many school districts are unable to meet the recommended social worker-to-student ratio of 1 for every 250 students. This limits the ability of social workers to provide individualized attention and comprehensive services and leaves students without sufficient access to mental health and social support.

The Message:

Dear Representative _____,

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

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

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

Call members of the House Appropriations Education Subcommittee:

Rep. Matt Dubnik, Chair	404-463-2246	matt.dubnik@house.ga.gov
Rep. Will Wade, Vice Chair	404-651-7737	will.wade@house.ga.gov
Rep. Kimberly Alexander	404-656-7859	kimberly.alexander@house.ga.gov
Rep. Robert Dickey	404-656-5099	robert.dickey@house.ga.gov
Rep. Chris Erwin	404-656-7850	chris.erwin@house.ga.gov
Rep. Leesa Hagan	404-656-0177	leesa.hagan@house.ga.gov
Rep. Edna Jackson	404-656-0265	edna.jackson@house.ga.gov
Rep. Jan Jones	404-656-5072	jan.jones@house.ga.gov
Rep. Todd Jones	404-656-9210	todd.jones@house.ga.gov

Ask #2: Out-of-School Time Funds and Liaison

The Ask:

Ask members of the House Appropriations - Education Subcommittee to:

1. Fund afterschool and summer learning programs by funding the Georgia Dept. of Education's BOOST 2.0 grants in the FY26 budget at \$20 million.
2. Create an Out-of-School Time liaison position to coordinate afterschool and summer learning policy across the state agencies that handle such programs: GaDOE, Dept. of Human Services, Dept. of Early Care and Learning.

What is BOOST?

For the last three years, GaDOE, in partnership with GSAN, used a total of \$85 Million in COVID relief funding to create the Building Opportunities in Out-of-School Time (BOOST) grant program, which has funded evidence-based afterschool and summer learning programs. The federal funds for the program have expired, but the BOOST outcomes for kids have been amazing! (SEE THIS MEMO!) SW pls add that new memo Uzma did on the 3 year results *Therefore, in order to keep the progress for kids going*, Georgia needs to target dollars into more grants, which we are calling "BOOST 2.0".

The Why:

The BOOST 2.0 Grant Program, (housed at the Georgia Department of Education) will build off the existing infrastructure and partnerships of BOOST. This will:

- Create a statewide framework that expands access to and assures quality of afterschool and summer learning opportunities.
- Prioritize funding support to OST programs that serve vulnerable youth, such as those who are economically disadvantaged, have a disability, and English language learners.
- Use existing state infrastructure to provide training and technical assistance to OST providers fiscal administration, quality measurement, program effectiveness, and provider leadership.
- Leverage program evaluation and evidence collection strategies embedded within the BOOST grant to determine how to best serve current and prospective afterschool and summer learning providers in the future.

An Interagency Liaison can coordinate afterschool and summer programming between the Georgia DECAL, DHS/DFCS, and GaDOE. If such a liaison is placed in Georgia Department of Education (Office of Whole Child Supports), efficiencies and communications can be maximized in:

- Alignment and coordination of OST services provided to youth and families;
- Development of reliable protocols for interagency communication regarding implementation of similar youth enrichment programs;
- Streamlining of grant application and administration to help both large and small organizations; and
- Streamlining of training, technical assistance, and professional learning provided to organizations funded and/or licensed by the agencies.

For more on OST Funding and Programs in GA, [check out this Brief](#) from the Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network!

The Message:

Dear Representative _____,

Please include funding in the FY26 budget to continue the BOOST (Building Opportunities in Out-of-School Time) grants, which have been critical to student success and are no longer supported by federal COVID relief dollars. These funds have supported afterschool and summer learning in 115 of Georgia's 159 counties and served about 80,000 kids K-12 year round. Additionally, please fund an interagency liaison to coordinate afterschool and summer programs across GaDOE, DHS, and DECAL. BOOST supports working parents while enhancing student literacy, mental health, and career-ready skills.

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

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

Call members of the House Appropriations Education Subcommittee:

Rep. Matt Dubnik, Chair	404-463-2246	matt.dubnik@house.ga.gov
Rep. Will Wade, Vice Chair	404-651-7737	will.wade@house.ga.gov
Rep. Kimberly Alexander	404-656-7859	kimberly.alexander@house.ga.gov
Rep. Robert Dickey	404-656-5099	robert.dickey@house.ga.gov
Rep. Chris Erwin	404-656-7850	chris.erwin@house.ga.gov
Rep. Leesa Hagan	404-656-0177	leesa.hagan@house.ga.gov
Rep. Edna Jackson	404-656-0265	edna.jackson@house.ga.gov
Rep. Jan Jones	404-656-5072	jan.jones@house.ga.gov
Rep. Todd Jones	404-656-9210	todd.jones@house.ga.gov



Resources You May Find Helpful

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



Upcoming Events

February 2025

Tuesday, February 11

- Justice Reform Partnership: Talk Justice Tuesday – Caught In-Between Youth and Criminalization of Immigration
 - Time: 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM (Virtual)
 - RSVP: [Talk Justice Tuesday](#)

Wednesday, February 12

- Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network: Afterschool Day at the Capitol 2025
 - Time: 8:00 AM – 11:00 AM
 - More Info: [Afterschool Day at the Capitol 2025](#)
- Georgia Child Care Association: GCCA Day at the Capitol
 - Time: 8:00 AM – 11:00 AM
 - Location: 206 Washington Street, Atlanta, GA 30334
 - Register: [Event Registration](#)

Tuesday, February 18th

- PAGE: PAGE Day at the Capitol
 - Time: 8:00AM-2:00PM
 - Location: Sloppy Floyd Building - West Tower, 162 Jesse Hill Jr Dr SE, Atlanta, GA 30303
 - Register Here: [PAGE Events & Merchandise – Event Registration](#)

Thursday, February 20th

- Georgia Association of Educator: GAE Day at the Capitol
 - Time: 9:00 AM- 3:00 PM
 - More Info: [Events | Georgia Association of Educators](#)
- Legislative Reception for Children: Voices for GA Children
 - Time: 5:00PM-8:00PM
 - Location: City Hall
 - *More Information to Come*

Tuesday, February 25

- Justice Reform Partnership: Justice Day 2025
 - Time: 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM
 - Location: 201 Washington Street SW, Atlanta, GA 30303
 - Register: [Justice Day](#)

Tuesday, February 26

- Georgia ACT 2025 Housing Day at the Capitol
 - Time: 7:00AM - 3:00PM
 - Location: Central Presbyterian Church, 201 Washington St SW, Atlanta, GA 30303
 - Register here: [Georgia ACT 2025 Housing Day at the Capitol](#)

March 2025

First Week of March

- Pre-K Week Launch: Voices for GA Children
- *More Information to Come*

Thursday, March 6th Crossover Day

Sunday, March 9th

- Atlanta Community Food Bank: Hunger Walk Run
 - Time: 12:00PM- 4:00PM
 - RSVP: [Hunger Walk Run 2025 General - Atlanta Community Food Bank](#)

Tuesday, March 11

- Justice Reform Project: Talk Justice Tuesday – Post Cross Over Review
 - Time: 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM (Virtual)
 - RSVP: [Talk Justice Tuesday](#)

April 2025

Friday, April 4th Sine Die (Last Day of Legislative Session)

Tuesday, April 8

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