



Georgia House of Representatives

SESSION REPORT

House Budget & Research Office
(404) 656-5050

Legislation Effective July 1, 2025

HB 15 Banking and finance; update terminology; provisions

By: *Rep. Bruce Williamson* *Through the Banks & Banking Committee*
(112th)

Final Bill Summary: HB 15 revises provisions related to Georgia banking law. The bill revises filing requirements by requiring counties of residence, rather than addresses, for incorporators, directors, and subscribers of financial institutions such as banks and credit unions. The bill modifies credit union subscriber requirements by setting out procedures related to the application for a certificate of incorporation with the department.

The credit union application review process will examine the public needs as well as the credit union having the adequate capital structure relative to the anticipated business of the credit union and the safety of prospective members. If the approval of a federal public body is also required with respect to a proposed credit union, the department may elect to not act on the application until federal approval is given. The bill defines disqualifying crimes for purposes of applications for licensure with the department, and allows the non-issuance or revocation of a license if the person has been convicted of a Georgia felony within the previous seven years or if that felony at any time was a disqualifying crime.

Provisions related to mortgage lending services and other mortgage lending practices, including definitions, are included in the bill. Mortgage brokers are required to submit an annual unaudited financial statement, but may also elect to submit an audited financial statement. Submitting an unaudited financial statement permits the department to require the submission of an audited financial statement if the department finds an audit to be necessary. Mortgage lenders and mortgage brokers must adhere to sufficient capital, net worth, and liquidity requirements based on the type of mortgage lender or servicer.

Provisions regarding criminal history checks are revised to permit commercial backgrounds in lieu of requiring Georgia Crime Information Center checks and fingerprints. The department is entitled to review the files of any applicant or merchant acquirer limited purpose bank to ensure checks have been conducted and all employees are qualified.

HB 36 Guardian and ward; revise list of providers who are authorized to participate in the processes for appointment of a guardian for an adult

By: *Rep. Rob Leverett (123rd)* *Through the Judiciary Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 36 revises Georgia guardianship law by adding physician assistants, nurses, and professional counselors to the types of approved professionals authorized to participate in appointments of guardians or conservators, as well as those who evaluate the state of a ward or proposed ward. An adult will not be presumed to be in need of a guardian solely because of a finding that the adult has a developmental disability. A proposed ward or proposed ward's legal counsel may challenge the sufficiency and weight of the results and conclusions of the evaluation. Additionally, definitions for "gross settlement" are provided with respect to applicable financial arrangements.

HB 37 Education; require local school systems to notify employees regarding social security withholdings and eligibility for certain benefits

By: *Rep. Rob Leverett (123rd)* *Through the Education Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 37 amends O.C.G.A. 20-2-55 to provide for payment of the costs of health insurance coverage for family members of local boards of education.

Section 2 amends O.C.G.A. 20-2-219.1, to require local school systems to notify new hires whether Social Security taxes are withheld from employee's paychecks beginning July 1, 2025. Every five years and upon separation of employment, the school system must remind employees whether Social Security taxes are withheld from the employee's pay during employment.

HB 53 Georgia veterans; allow certain persons to be buried in Georgia veterans cemeteries

By: *Rep. Josh Bonner (73rd) Through the Defense & Veterans Affairs Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 53 updates criteria for veterans to be eligible for burial in a Georgia veterans cemetery. Members will qualify in accordance with the federal 'Burial Equity for Guards and Reserves Act of 2021,' provided the member died after August 1, 1990 and completed a full term of service with an honorable discharge. Reserve and National Guard members who died during service as well as immediate family members are also eligible. The Department of Veterans Service may charge burial fees.

HB 78 Employees' Retirement System of Georgia; total percentage of funds invested in alternative investments; raise limit

By: *Rep. Lehman Franklin (160th) Through the Retirement Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 78 allows the Firefighters Pension Fund to invest up to 20 percent of assets in alternative investments. The bill allows the Employees' Retirement System (ERS) of Georgia to invest up to 10 percent of assets in alternative investments. The bill is certified by the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts as a non-fiscal retirement bill.

HB 81 Interstate Compact for School Psychologists; enter into

By: *Rep. Bethany Ballard (147th) Through the Education Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 81 creates the Interstate Compact for School Psychologists to establish a pathway for school psychologists to obtain equivalent licenses in member states to ensure that safe, effective school psychological services are available and delivered by appropriately qualified professionals in an educational setting.

HB 85 Superior Court Judicial Compensation Reform Act; enact

By: *Rep. Rob Leverett (123rd) Through the Judiciary Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 85 revises superior court judicial compensation to have the annual salary of each superior court judge set by the General Assembly, with that salary not to exceed 90 percent of the annual salary fixed for judges of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia. The new structure also caps the locality pay for each superior court judge at no more than 10 percent of the state annual salary. In the event the annual salary exceeds \$201,060, the maximum locality pay will be capped at 10 percent and further reduced by a fixed percentage if the annual salary exceeds that dollar amount. The bill does not alter retirement benefits that were previously in existence.

Superior court judges in office on July 1, 2025 will opt into this compensation structure by filing written notification with the Council of Superior Court Judges of Georgia and the governing authority of each county comprising the judge's judicial circuit. A superior court judge who does not exercise this option maintains the existing compensation structure for that judge.

All local laws, ordinances, and resolutions in effect that tie a state, county, or local salary to that of any superior court judge's salary will be suspended until July 1, 2026, with that state, county, or local salary remaining the same during that period of suspension. That salary will remain unchanged until the suspension is terminated, local legislation sets the compensation, or local ordinance becomes effective.

HB 86 Public officers and employees; calculating and setting the salaries of certain state officials; revise provisions

By: *Rep. Rob Leverett (123rd) Through the Judiciary Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 86 revises salaries for justices of the Supreme Court, judges of the Court of Appeals, the judge of the State-wide Business Court, and the judge of the Georgia State Tax Court. Fixed dollar amounts are repealed and replaced with a base salary equal to that of judges of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia, with each justice of the Supreme Court not receiving more than 100 percent of that base salary, each judge of the Court of Appeals not receiving more than 99 percent of that base salary, and the judge of the State-wide Business Court as well as the judge of the Tax Court not receiving more than 95 percent of that base salary.

HB 89 Public Health, Department of; require healthcare providers, facilities, and pharmacies to provide the Maternal Mortality Review Committee with psychiatric or other clinical records

By: *Rep. Sharon Cooper (45th) Through the Public and Community Health Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 89 authorizes the release of psychiatric records of a deceased person who is the subject of a maternal death review to the Maternal Mortality Review Committee.

The bill also creates the Regional Perinatal Center Advisory Committee that will advise on the adequacy of regional perinatal centers in the state. The adequacy assessment will consider various factors such as patient safety, interfacility coordination, evaluation of high-risk pregnancies and deliveries, and transportation adequacy.

The committee will be made up of 11 to 21 four-year term members appointed by the commissioner of the Department of Public Health. Any approved changes to the regional perinatal centers will require a budget request submission to the Office of Planning and Budget and the General Assembly.

Any facility seeking to become a regional perinatal center will need to share a readiness plan with the Department of Public Health. The department will submit a plan with funding considerations to the speaker of the House of Representatives, president of the Senate, and governor every four years beginning July 1, 2026.

HB 111 Income tax; reduce rate of tax

By: *Rep. Soo Hong (103rd) Through the Ways & Means Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 111 amends O.C.G.A. 48-7-20, relating to individual income tax rates, to lower the individual income tax rate effective on January 1, 2025 from 5.39 percent to 5.19 percent.

HB 113 State government; prohibit the state or its agencies from purchasing goods from certain foreign countries or related entities

By: *Rep. Lauren McDonald III (26th) Through the Governmental Affairs Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 113 requires the Georgia Technology Authority to maintain a list of concerned goods produced by a foreign company of concern or a foreign country of concern. State entities are prohibited from purchasing concerned goods from a foreign company of concern, a foreign country of concern, or a third-party vendor or reseller.

HB 114 Motor vehicles; federal regulations regarding safe operation of commercial motor vehicle and carriers; update reference date

By: *Rep. Lauren McDonald III (26th) Through the Motor Vehicles Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 114 addresses federal regulations for safe operations for drivers and vehicles transporting hazardous materials, changing the effective date from January 1, 2024 to January 1, 2025.

HB 116 Public Safety, Department of; Motor Carrier Compliance Division to Commercial Vehicle Enforcement; change name

By: *Rep. Lauren McDonald III Through the Motor Vehicles Committee (26th)*

Final Bill Summary: HB 116 renames the Motor Carrier Compliance Division within the Department of Public Safety to Commercial Vehicle Enforcement, and updates further language to reflect this change.

HB 131 Self-service storage facilities; revise advertisement requirements before an owner can enforce an owner's lien

By: *Rep. Matt Reeves (99th) Through the Judiciary Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 131 revises self-service storage facility advertising requirements so that storage facility owners attempting to enforce a lien are not required to advertise an auction once a week for two consecutive weeks, but are instead required to publish an auction advertisement once in the legal organ for the county or in any other commercially reasonable manner when the property being sold is anything other than a motor vehicle, motorcycle, trailer, watercraft, or recreational vehicle. The advertisement is deemed commercially reasonable if at least three independent bidders attend the auction.

HB 136 Income tax; contributions to foster child support organizations; expand tax credit

By: *Rep. Mark Newton (127th) Through the Ways & Means Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 136 amends O.C.G.A. 48-7-29.24, relating to tax credits for contributions to foster child support organizations, to expand qualified expenditures for the credit to include wraparound services for aging foster children and justice involved youth who meet one of the following criteria: are enrolled in a public or private postsecondary education institution; enrolled in a program to obtain a high school diploma or equivalent; enrolled in a vocation school; or participating in a registered and compliant apprenticeship program. The bill adds to the definition of "aging foster children" former foster children between 16 and 25 years old who were in foster care for at least six months after the age of 14.

HB 136 adds to the definition of "justice involved youth" by including those between the ages of 16 and 25 who were in foster care for at least six months after reaching age 14.

The bill includes mentorship services provided to justice involved youth as a qualified expense, and limits the amount of contributions that can be used for expenses other than qualified expenses to no more than 20 percent. The annual compensation threshold to receive the credit is increased from \$500 to \$1,200 per year, and payments made to employees of a qualified mentorship organization that provide services other than mentorship are a qualified expense.

Corporations contributing under this program are limited to credits totaling no more than 30 percent of the entity's income tax liability. The bill further adds business enterprises, defined as an insurance company required to pay the tax provided for in O.C.G.A. 33-8-4, to be eligible for the credit for qualified expenditures related to wraparound services. The bill raises the aggregate cap for credits under this program from \$20 million to \$30 million, and eliminates the ability to carry forward any unused tax credit. No more than \$10 million in aggregate can be used by business enterprises.

The bill allows for the Division of Family and Children Services to decertify an organization that does not meet program requirements or has violated any other law. An organization seeking to be certified, but is not a licensed child-placing agency, must demonstrate it has operated an aging out program, and provided services to at least 50 aging foster children or justice involved youth over the course of at least two calendar years. After receiving certification, the organization must annually demonstrate that it is continually providing these services.

The bill adds that each qualified organization is required to post on its website a certification, signed by the organization's chief executive officer, that contains language provided for in the bill, to include a description of how qualified contributions were utilized.

HB 136 also creates a tax credit to be claimed by eligible employers that offer child care payments of at least \$1,000 per year directly to child care facilities for employees. An employer may earn \$500 per child per year that the payments are made, or \$1,000 per child for the first year an employer offers such incentive. The annual aggregate limit for the program is \$20 million and the credit may not be carried forward to any subsequent tax year. Additionally, a taxpayer with a qualifying child may claim a tax credit of \$250 per child under the age of 6, provided that the credit shall not exceed the taxpayer's income tax liability. Additionally, a taxpayer may claim a credit equal to 50% of a qualified child or dependent's care expenses, provided that the credit shall not exceed the taxpayer's income tax liability.

The bill is effective on July 1, 2025 and applicable to all taxable years beginning on January 1, 2026.

HB 137 Contracts; increase dollar value of certain public works contracts exempt from provisions relating to retention of contractual payments

By: *Rep. Victor Anderson (10th)* *Through the Governmental Affairs Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 137 increases the contract value amount from \$100,000 or less to \$250,000 or less for certain contracts that are exempt from specified contracting and bidding requirements.

HB 143 Water resources; water-measuring devices for farm use of surface and ground water; revise provisions

By: *Rep. Robert Dickey (134th)* *Through the Natural Resources & Environment Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 143 relates to water permits for agricultural use and removes language from Title 12 that requires permittees to have an acceptable type of water measuring device within one year of the updated effective date on a revised permit.

The bill removes other language that requires the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) of the Department of Natural Resources to document the withdrawal or lack of irrigation infrastructure at a given site, and further allows trained and certified EPD staff to install water measuring devices at no charge to the permittee. EPD is also allowed to undertake other repairs and replacements of these devices when necessary.

HB 144 Income tax; certain medical preceptor rotations; revise tax credit

By: *Rep. Mark Newton (127th)* *Through the Ways & Means Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 144 amends O.C.G.A. 48-7-29.22, relating to tax credits for medical preceptor rotations, to add licensed dentists to the eligible professions to receive a tax credit as a community-based faculty preceptor. The credit is changed to \$1,000 for each preceptorship rotation completed by a physician or licensed dentist in a calendar year, and \$750 for each preceptorship rotation completed in a calendar year by an advanced practice registered nurse. The credit will not exceed an aggregate cap of \$6 million per year, and the sunset date is changed from December 31, 2026 to December 31, 2030.

HB 150 Combating Threats from China Act of 2025 – Higher Education; enact

By: *Rep. Tim Fleming (114th)* *Through the Higher Education Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 150 creates the 'Combating Threats from Foreign Countries of Concern Act of 2025 – Higher Education.' The bill requires the university system to submit a semiannual report to the governor and the chairs of the House and Senate Higher Education Committees detailing the funding

received by the system from a foreign country of concern, a foreign entity of concern, or a foreign individual of concern.

HB 153 Sales and use tax; maintenance and replacement parts for certain machinery used to mix or transport concrete; extend exemption sunset date

By: *Rep. Beth Camp (135th) Through the Ways & Means Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 153 amends O.C.G.A. 48-8-3.2, relating to sales and use tax exemptions for certain manufacturing equipment, by extending the sunset date for an exemption on maintenance and replacement parts of machinery or equipment used with mixed concrete from June 30, 2026 to June 30, 2031.

HB 155 Local government; selection and objection to arbitrators; revise procedures

By: *Rep. Victor Anderson (10th) Through the Governmental Affairs Committee*

Final Bill Summary: House Bill 155 provides guidelines and requirements for objecting to a proposed annexation and the arbitration process that follows. The bill allows for the direct appeal of all final judgements or orders reviewing a zoning decision. The bill allows for the right to appeal to a local government board or authority for specified permit decisions. The bill adjusts certain provisions related to timing and notice requirements related to zoning decisions.

The bill restricts a county development authority from operating or undertaking any projects within certain municipalities if they adopt a resolution to limit such development and if the municipality is part of a massively municipalized county.

The bill requires a referendum vote of impacted county voters to approve specified types of annexations.

HB 156 Transportation, Department of; authority over vertiports; provide

By: *Rep. Todd Jones (25th) Through the Technology and Infrastructure Innovation Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 156 defines the term “vertiport” and includes vertiports in the definition of “landing field” which grants the Department of Transportation authority over vertiports. The bill also revises the term “tourism product development” to include air service product expansion at air carrier airports for taxation purposes.

HB 161 Georgia Bureau of Investigation; authority to issue subpoenas of electronic communication records for purposes of investigating certain cyber enabled threats to life and property; provide

By: *Rep. Clint Crowe (118th) Through the Judiciary Non-Civil Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 161 revises the statute that allows the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) to subpoena computers or electronic devices to include investigations of Title 16, Chapter 9, Article 8 (Identity Fraud) and O.C.G.A. 16-9-93 (Computer Crimes), 16-10-28 (Transmitting a False Public Alarm), 16-11-37 (Terroristic Threats and Acts), 16-11-39.1 (Harassing Communications), and 16-11-221 (Domestic Terrorism – Penalties).

The bill allows a court to find someone in contempt if they fail to obey these subpoenas, and restricts the subpoena from becoming public during the investigation or prosecution beyond the extent necessary for the issuance and compliance of the subpoena. This also removes the specific references to Code sections when the GBI can provide information in furtherance of a federal, local, or state criminal investigation so that it applies to all criminal investigations.

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

HB 164 Highways, bridges, and ferries; allowable variance for weight limitations upon a vehicle or load; repeal automatic repeal provisions

By: *Rep. Steven Meeks (178th) Through the Transportation Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 164 repeals the sunset on the allowable 10 percent variance on weight limitations upon a vehicle or load hauling certain commodities within certain areas of the state.

The legislation allows for enforcement of dimensions and weight of vehicles by local law enforcement officers trained to do so. The bill requires that any violation found during enforcement of weight and load provisions related to licensing or fuel tax registration and identification requirements be reported to the Georgia Department of Revenue by the officer or employee observing the violation.

HB 167 Game and fish; authorize fluorescent pink hunting outer garments

By: *Rep. Leesa Hagan (156th) Through the Game, Fish, & Parks Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 167 revises restrictions relating to hunting feral hogs, bears, and deer. The bill makes the color fluorescent pink an acceptable outer garment color that can be worn while hunting these animals under specific circumstances.

HB 172 Veterinary education; limits on student loan forgiveness program; provide

By: *Rep. David Huddleston (72nd) Through the Higher Education Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 172 clarifies eligibility for the Veterinary Education Loan Repayment Program to include former students and specifies that applicants must have practiced in the required specialty for 10 years or less. The maximum award amount for repayment is increased from \$80,000 to \$90,000, to be paid in increments of \$30,000 per 12 months of service.

HB 175 Education; employee comprehensive background checks for early care and education programs and Head Start programs; revise provisions

By: *Rep. Todd Jones (25th) Through the Education Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 175 amends O.C.G.A. 20-1A-2 to require comprehensive background checks for employees of early care and education programs, and Head Start programs. The bill provides for revocation and nonissue of licenses and commissions for early care and education programs for noncompliance.

HB 177 Domestic relations; protection for household pets in both family violence and dating violence protective orders; provide

By: *Rep. Sharon Cooper (45th) Through the Judiciary Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 177 permits a family violence or dating violence protective order or consent agreement to provide for the care, custody, and control of any animal kept as a household pet by either party or by a minor child living in that party's household. The order or agreement may also order the respondent to refrain from harassing, harming, taking, or concealing the household pet.

HB 180 Probate courts; modify certain requirements for probate judges

By: *Rep. Tyler Smith (18th) Through the Judiciary Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 180 requires candidates for the office of probate court judge in counties with a population of 90,000 or more to file a supplemental affidavit stating they satisfy the additional qualifications specific to counties of 90,000 or more (must be 30 years of age, a member of good standing of the State Bar of Georgia, and have practiced law for seven years) as currently set forth in O.C.G.A. 15-9-4.

HB 192 Top State for Talent Act; enact

By: *Rep. Matthew Gambill (15th) Through the Education Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 192 creates the 'Top State for Talent Act,' which references programs included in the High Demand Career List published by the State Workforce Development Board with respect to the State Board of Education's minimum course of study in career education for students in grades six through 12.

The bill aligns all workforce-related Code sections and incorporates all agencies that are performing workforce readiness. The High Demand Career List will be consulted when the Georgia Department of Education creates course work for career education. The bill also requires a report on articulation agreements to make sure students do not repeat courses for skills already mastered and completed.

HB 196 State employees' health insurance plan; drugs dispensed for self-administration; provisions

By: *Rep. Trey Kelley (16th) Through the Health Committee*

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

HB 199 Courts; protection of personally identifiable information of judges and their spouses; modify provisions

By: *Rep. Trey Kelley (16th) Through the Judiciary Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 199 revises provisions related to the protection of personally identifiable information of judges and judicial spouses. State and local government entities will remove or redact any personally identifiable information from publicly available content that specifically identifies a protected person as a judge, justice, or spouse.

Content held by a state or local government entity that includes personally identifiable information of a protected person, but does not specifically identify a person as a judge, justice, or spouse will be removed upon request by the protected person through submission of a request in writing. The removing or redacting of information will take place within 30 days of receiving a valid request.

HB 208 Special license plates; support state parks and historic sites; establish

By: *Rep. Lynn Smith (70th) Through the Motor Vehicles Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 208 revises the definition for "totally disabled veteran" and allows a totally disabled veteran to be issued a free license plate for up to two motorcycles or passenger cars after proper application is processed. Veterans who have been discharged from the military under conditions that are other than dishonorable, but who are not considered totally disabled are likewise able to be issued a special license plate for up to two motorcycles or passenger cars after proper application is processed.

The bill additionally creates seven specialty license plates. The first honors the Shepherd Center, with funds raised disbursed to Shepherd Center, Inc.; the second honors Georgia veterans and their families, with funds raised disbursed to the Georgia Veterans Service Foundation; the third honors Southern University Alumni, with funds raised disbursed to the Atlanta Metropolitan Chapter of Southern University Alumni Federation of Georgia, Inc.; the fourth honors Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., with funds raised disbursed to the Delta Life Development Center; the fifth honors Alabama State University alumni, with funds raised disbursed to the Alabama State University Metro Atlanta Alumni Chapter; the sixth supports the Department of Natural Resources State Parks and Historic Sites Division, with funds raised allocated to the same division; and the seventh promotes the conservation and enhancement of black bass populations, with funds raised allocated to the Georgia Natural Resources Foundation.

HB 217 Education; make Dual Achievement Program a permanent state-wide program

By: *Rep. Soo Hong (103rd)* *Through the Higher Education Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 217 updates provisions related to local school system enrollment counts as they relate to local board of education elections. The bill authorizes the Education Savings Authority to submit the income information of Promise Scholarship applicants to the Department of Revenue for verification.

The bill extends the Dual Achievement pilot program sunset date to July 1, 2031. It also provides for the distribution of QBE formula earnings from the State Board of Education to the TCSG board based on the number of eligible students participating in the program.

HB 222 Criminal procedure; inclusion of certain contact information on bonds and recognizances; require

By: *Rep. Shaw Blackmon (146th)* *Through the Judiciary Non-Civil Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 222 requires a bond to include the full name, email address, and phone number of the principal and each surety.

HB 224 Highways, bridges, and ferries; construction or maintenance of roads upon military bases or installations paid for by the United States Department of Defense or other entities; authorize

By: *Rep. Josh Bonner (73rd)* *Through the Transportation Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 224 authorizes the Georgia Department of Transportation to construct or maintain a private road on a military base or military installation when done through agreement with the U.S. Department of Defense and when paid for by the Department of Defense.

HB 233 State symbols; Brunswick stew as the official state stew; designate

By: *Rep. Rick Townsend (179th)* *Through the Special Rules Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 233 designates Brunswick stew as the official state stew, cornbread as the official bread, and the fourth Friday in November of each year as "National Sugarcane Syrup Day" in Georgia. It also prohibits companies of foreign countries from submitting contract proposals to a state agency.

HB 235 Georgia Supporting Living Donor Educators Act; enact

By: *Rep. Rick Townsend (179th)* *Through the Education Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 235 amends O.C.G.A. 20-1-12, known as the 'Georgia Supporting Living Donor Educators Act,' to require employers of school employees, teachers, and postsecondary employees to provide a leave of absence for the donation of bone marrow and organs.

HB 238 Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council; create and maintain an at-risk adult training course focusing on officer response to individuals with Alzheimer's disease or dementia

By: *Rep. Eddie Lumsden (12th)* *Through the Public Safety & Homeland Security Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 238 requires the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council to create and maintain an at-risk adult training course focusing on officer response to individuals with Alzheimer's disease or dementia.

HB 241 Contracts; convenience fees for payment by electronic means; revise provisions

By: *Rep. Trey Rhodes (124th)* *Through the Banks & Banking Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 241 revises law related to convenience fees by authorizing a lender or merchant to collect, in lieu of the actual cost, a fee which does not exceed the average of the actual cost incurred for a specific type of electronic payment, or a fee of up to five dollars, whichever is greater.

HB 266 Income tax; exempt income received as personal compensation for full-time duty in the active military service of the United States

By: *Rep. Steven Sainz (180th)* *Through the Ways & Means Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 266 amends O.C.G.A. 48-7-27, relating to the computation of taxable net income, to increase the exclusion for income related to military retirement benefits for retired military members under 65 to \$65,000.

The bill amends O.C.G.A. 48-7-29.25, relating to income tax credits for contributions to law enforcement foundations, by adding to the definition of "law enforcement foundation" a nonprofit corporation that maintains a formal relationship with one or more local enforcement units or provides support to law enforcement statewide. Qualified expenditures is expanded to include the purchase or lease of supplies and materials for technology updates, and the lease of facilities and purchase of goods for community engagement initiatives.

Any contribution amount that has been preapproved, but not contributed, may be applied for and disbursed by the Department of Revenue at 95 percent of the amount otherwise allowed by this Code section. Any contribution by certain corporate entities is limited to being utilized against 50 percent of that entity's tax liability. The bill eliminates the ability to carry forward any unused portions of the tax credit to be used against future tax years' liabilities.

HB 270 Eviction Service and Airplane Evictions Act; enact

By: *Rep. Matt Reeves (99th)* *Through the Judiciary Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 270 allows a judge or clerk in the relevant court to grant and issue a summons to a sheriff, lawful constable, or approved process server.

HB 287 Environmental Protection Division; Environmental Advisory Council; update reference date to standards, rules, and regulations

By: *Rep. Trey Rhodes (124th) Through the Game, Fish, & Parks Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 287 updates multiple sunset dates and authorizes the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to issue free courtesy hunting or fishing licenses to paralyzed or disabled individuals participating in approved organized events.

The bill also introduces a new fee structure for resident shellfish crew licenses. It creates two categories: one for up to 10 harvesters at an annual fee of \$200, and another for unlimited harvesters at an annual fee of \$400.

HB 296 Motor vehicles; presentation of a driver's license in a certain electronic format; provisions

By: *Rep. Houston Gaines (120th) Through the Motor Vehicles Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 296 clarifies language relating to poll workers in O.C.G.A. 21-2-417 to denote that a Georgia driver's license must be in physical format and issued by the Department of Driver Services.

The bill clarifies language relating to hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses in O.C.G.A. 27-2-2 and 27-2-3.1 to denote that a physical driver's license is required to identify an individual. The bill further allows licensees who are required to present their license to a law enforcement officer who possesses proper equipment to show them their electronic format-issued license. The bill notes that by July 1, 2027, all law enforcement officers will acquire equipment that can verify electronic licenses.

HB 296 creates definitions for "for-hire charter bus or motor coach" and "special modified rental vehicles" as it relates to ad valorem taxes to require individuals applying for a title for these two vehicles to pay 50 percent of title ad valorem tax fees at time of application and the remaining 50 percent within 12 months of filing the application.

HB 303 Original 33 Memorial Act; enact

By: *Rep. Carl Gilliard (162nd) Through the State Properties Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 303 creates the 'Original 33 Memorial Act,' which allows a monument honoring the Original 33, the Black legislators expelled from the General Assembly after the end of Reconstruction, to be placed on capitol grounds or in another prominent place. This is subject to the availability of private funds.

HB 322 Ga. Board of Dentistry; issuance of a dental or dental hygiene license for the sole purpose of teaching in an accredited dental, dental hygiene school, or academic medical center; revise provisions

By: *Rep. Lee Hawkins (27th) Through the Health Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 322 creates additional provisions for dental school teaching applicants to accomplish before submitting a teaching application to the Georgia Board of Dentistry.

HB 325 Domestic relations; Protective Order Registry; revise certain definitions

By: *Rep. Reynaldo Martinez (111th) Through the Judiciary Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 325 allows a member of the state organized militia who alleges stalking by another member of the organized militia to seek a protective order, with subject matter jurisdiction established by evidence that a nexus exists between the alleged conduct constituting stalking and the organized militia. The military judge may grant a protective order on a temporary or permanent basis or approve a consent agreement, and may punish a party's disobedience with contempt.

HB 327 Official Code of Georgia Annotated; amend various titles

By: *Rep. Rob Leverett (123rd) Through the Judiciary Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 327 makes comprehensive revisions to the law of wills, probate, administration of estates, guardianships, trusts, and powers of attorney as it pertains to fiduciary law.

The bill adds a duty by the executor of an estate to notify beneficiaries of an estate with a will that the will is being probated as well as the name and mailing address of the executor within six months after qualifying as the executor.

The bill revises statute related to trusts by allowing trusts to be in electronic form and signed by electronic signature, as well as changing the statute of limitations for breach of trust actions to two years from the date on which a document disclosing the existence of a claim is sent to a trust beneficiary.

The bill makes further revisions to trust law, including who can serve as a trust director, the governance of particular trusts, and the fiduciary duties of trustees. The bill revises provisions with respect to the determination of heirs, inheritance involving nonmarital children, and assisted reproduction.

HB 331 Animals; prohibit transfer of certain domestic animals at certain locations

By: *Rep. Beth Camp (135th) Through the Agriculture & Consumer Affairs Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 331 makes it unlawful for any individual to engage in the transfer of a dog, cat, or domestic rabbit in public spaces including roadsides; public right of ways; parkways; medians; public or commercial parking lots or sidewalks; parks; recreation areas; fairs; transient or seasonal flea markets; or other transient markets or outdoor locations.

This will not apply to people or entities that may be able to produce a valid animal shelter license, transfers at a residence or veterinary office, transfers as part of an event sanctioned by certain agricultural exhibitions, or prearranged transfers that take place at law enforcement facilities. Violators may be fined no more than \$100 for the first offense, \$250 for the second offense, and \$500 for third or subsequent offenses.

HB 339 Motor vehicles; exempt ride share drivers or ride share network services from definition of motor carrier

By: *Rep. Rob Leverett (123rd) Through the Judiciary Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 339 exempts ride share network services from liability for any injury to persons or damage to property committed by a ride share driver, provided that there has been no negligence or criminal misconduct by the ride share network service; the ride share network service is in compliance with the law regarding ride share drivers; and the ride share network service obtains a background check for each ride share driver at least once every two years.

HB 340 Distraction-Free Education Act; enact

By: *Rep. Scott Hilton (48th) Through the Education Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 340 amends O.C.G.A. 20-2-324.8, to enact the 'Distraction-Free Education Act.' The bill requires local school systems and public schools to enact policies and procedures for the use of personal electronic devices at school and school-sponsored events by students in kindergarten through eighth grade by July 1, 2026.

The bill provides for permissible student use of personal electronic devices, school electronic devices, and authorizes the Department of Education to provide guidance and technical assistance.

HB 352 Georgia Gestational Diabetes Management Act; enact

By: *Rep. Devan Seabaugh (34th) Through the Public and Community Health Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 352 is the 'Georgia Gestational Diabetes Management Act,' which includes patients with gestational diabetes on the list of those eligible for Medicaid covered continuous glucose monitors.

HB 358 Agriculture; prohibiting acquisition of possessory interest in certain land by certain foreign persons and entities; provide for a definition

By: *Rep. Vance Smith (138th) Through the Judiciary Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 358 defines "military installation" for purposes of prohibiting land possession by certain foreign persons or entities as a facility owned and operated by a branch of the U.S. Armed Forces that shelters military equipment and personnel, and facilitates training and operations for those branches.

HB 360 Revenue and taxation; rehabilitation of historic structures; revise tax credit

By: *Rep. Chuck Efstrotation (104th) Through the Ways & Means Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 360 amends O.C.G.A. 48-7-29.8, relating to tax credits for the rehabilitation of historic structures, to allow a taxpayer preapproved by the commissioner of the Department of Revenue to claim credits in tax year 2027 or 2028 for certified structures other than historic homes to receive the credit during tax year 2026 in amounts as follows: not to exceed 90% if the credit was preapproved for tax year 2027 or not to exceed 85% if the credit was preapproved for tax year 2028.

HB 371 Quality Basic Education Act; state's maximum authorization of capital outlay funding; provide for an increase

By: *Rep. John Corbett (174th) Through the Education Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 371 amends O.C.G.A. 20-2-260, relating to capital outlay funds generally under the 'Quality Basic Education Act.' The bill provides for an increase of the state's maximum authorization of capital outlay funding from \$300 million to \$375 million annually.

Section 2 amends O.C.G.A. 20-2-261, to require new construction for all elementary schools commencing on or after July 1, 2027, to include an inclusive playground design. The playground must address the physical, sensory, cognitive, social, emotional, imaginative, and communication needs of students. The playground should include a sensory-diverse environment that enables children of all abilities to develop physically, socially, and emotionally.

HB 392 Georgia Tax Court; certain events; revise dates

By: *Rep. Chuck Martin (49th) Through the Judiciary Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 392 revises dates related to the establishment of the Georgia Tax Court, with the initial chief judge serving an initial term beginning on April 1, 2026, and persons able to petition the court for relief beginning on and after July 1, 2026.

All contested cases pending before the Georgia Tax Tribunal as of June 30, 2026, will automatically transfer to the court as of July 1, 2026. Any petitioner with a case pending before the tribunal that does not wish for the case to be transferred to the court will make a written demand to the tribunal on or before December 31, 2025, with proceedings to conclude prior to June 30, 2026.

HB 398 Food, drugs, and cosmetics; authorize production and sale of cottage food items with certain exemptions, requirements, and disclosures

By: *Rep. Leesa Hagan (156th) Through the Agriculture & Consumer Affairs Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 398 creates a new article within Title 26 of the O.C.G.A. relating to cottage food items, operators, and production operations. A cottage food operator may only operate so long as they are in compliance with this article, and cottage food production operations may sell directly to consumers or to retail food establishments.

Violations of compliance within this article or any rule or regulation adopted pursuant to this article will incur a civil penalty of no more than \$75 per violation. The Department of Agriculture is authorized to inspect the area in a residence used by a cottage food operator in order to investigate a consumer complaint.

HB 399 Property; require certain residential landlords to have in-state staff to manage tenant communications

By: *Rep. Mary Margaret Oliver Through the Governmental Affairs Committee (84th)*

Final Bill Summary: HB 399 requires out-of-state landlords owning or operating rental properties in the state to employ a licensed broker, that may or may not reside in this state, and if the broker resides out-of-state, at least one person located within the state for purposes of managing and responding to communications from the landlord's tenants related to property issues.

HB 406 Judicial Retirement System; increase retirement age of superior court judges first taking office on or after July 1, 2026

By: *Rep. Rob Leverett (123rd) Through the Retirement Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 406 allows a member of the Judicial Retirement System (JRS) to retire at age 60, but the retirement allowance is reduced by any time served as a superior court judge. Once the member reaches 65, their retirement allowance is adjusted to reflect all their years of creditable service earned as a member of JRS. The bill is certified by the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts as a non-fiscal retirement bill.

HB 416 Local government; enterprise zones; revise class of retailer from which fees may be collected

By: *Rep. Chuck Efstration Through the Governmental Affairs Committee (104th)*

Final Bill Summary: HB 416 amends O.C.G.A. 36-88-6, relating to enterprise zone criteria, to restrict annual enterprise zone infrastructure fees assessed by local governing bodies to being assessed only on retailers that are qualifying businesses or service enterprises receiving a sales and use tax exemption for being located within a designated enterprise zone.

The bill amends O.C.G.A. 36-88-10, relating to time limitations for enterprise zones, to change the start of the 30-year duration of an enterprise zone authorized by O.C.G.A. 36-88-6 from beginning to the completion of the redevelopment project, and retiring of any revenue bonds related to the project to the first issuance of a bond with a principal amount of at least \$100,000.

HB 422 State employees' health insurance; include high deductible health plans

By: *Rep. Derrick McCollum Through the Insurance Committee (30th)*

Final Bill Summary: HB 422 requires the state employees' health insurance plan (SHBP) to include at least two high deductible health plans. The bill allows enrolled employees to make pretax contributions

to their health savings accounts. Government entities outside the scope of this bill are encouraged to offer similar pretax contribution options for their employees.

HB 423 Emergency telephone number 9-1-1 system; Next Generation 9-1-1 systems and services; provide

By: *Rep. Will Wade (9th)* *Through the Public Safety & Homeland Security Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 423 provides for Next Generation 9-1-1 systems and services, and requires all new 9-1-1 systems to conform to wireless enhanced 9-1-1 standards. The bill revises the duties and responsibilities of the Georgia Emergency Communications Authority, adds members to the board of directors, and revises the role of the executive director of the authority.

HB 426 Courts; nonpartisan election of magistrates; provide

By: *Rep. Kimberly New (40th)* *Through the Judiciary Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 426 provides for the nonpartisan election of probate and magistrate judges.

HB 428 Health; codify right to in vitro fertilization for individuals

By: *Rep. Lehman Franklin (160th)* *Through the Health Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 428 clarifies that an individual will not be prohibited or prevented from obtaining in vitro fertilization.

HB 454 Vince Dooley Battlefield Trust Fund Act; enact

By: *Rep. Houston Gaines (120th)* *Through the Game, Fish, & Parks Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 454 is known as 'The Vince Dooley Battlefield Trust Fund Act' and establishes a dedicated trust fund to support the preservation of historic battlefields in Georgia. Administered by the Department of Natural Resources, the fund will receive money from state appropriations, grants, and private donations to provide matching grants for purchasing or protecting battlefield lands. Organizations applying for grants must provide matching contributions, and meet specific criteria related to historical significance, proximity to other protected lands, and threats to preservation.

HB 484 General Assembly; digitization and electronic publication of Georgia Laws; provide

By: *Rep. Bill Yearta (152nd)* *Through the Code Revision Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 484 permits the publishing of the Georgia Laws to be electronic or in hardbound volumes. The Code Revision Commission is charged with providing assistance and oversight of the digitization and electronic publication of the Georgia Laws in a permanent digital repository.

HB 491 Game and fish; remove an exception for use of air guns to hunt wildlife

By: *Rep. Johnny Chastain (7th)* *Through the Game, Fish, & Parks Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 491 removes a sunset date related to hunting wildlife with an air gun. The bill also makes it unlawful to take any catfish species from state waters using a bow and arrow except under certain conditions.

HB 495 Education; Center for Rural Prosperity and Innovation; repeal

By: *Rep. Robert Dickey (134th)* *Through the Agriculture & Consumer Affairs Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 495 transfers authority of the Center for Rural Prosperity and Innovation from the University System of Georgia to the Georgia Department of Agriculture. The center's director will be

appointed by the Department of Agriculture commissioner. It will have a Georgia Rural Development Council composed of 12 members, six of which are appointed by the governor, three of which who live in different geographic areas of the state and are appointed by the speaker of the House, and three of which who live in different geographic areas of the state and are appointed by the president of the Senate.

The bill further outlines duties of the center, including producing an annual report, providing information and research, and conducting meetings at least once per quarter.

HB 511 Insurance; deductions from taxable income for contributions by taxpayers to catastrophe savings accounts and interest earned on such accounts; provide

By: *Rep. Eddie Lumsden (12th) Through the Ways & Means Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 511 creates O.C.G.A. 48-7-28.5 to allow for the creation of a catastrophe savings account to be used during qualifying catastrophic events. The account will be a savings or money market account, and can only be used for catastrophic weather events declared a disaster or emergency by the state's governor. A qualifying expense is either an insurance deductible or any expenses related to the qualifying damage to a taxpayer's primary residence that is not covered by insurance.

The contribution limits are set at no more than \$2,000 if a taxpayer's deductible is less than \$1,000; twice the taxpayer's deductible for deductibles over \$1,000, up to \$25,000; or up to \$250,000 if a taxpayer is self-insured. A taxpayer is granted a deduction on contributions to the account, interest income will be exempt from tax, and excluded from the taxpayer's income when making a qualifying distribution from the account.

HB 513 Local government; criteria for service delivery strategy; revise provisions

By: *Rep. John LaHood (175th) Through the Governmental Affairs Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 513 provides for the use of additional funding sources related to county services jointly funded by the county and one or more municipalities. The bill requires the county to provide an annual report of the funding of such jointly funded services.

The bill authorizes local government entities to continue existing local ordinances related to video surveillance at gas stations if such ordinances were adopted prior to May 6, 2024.

HB 516 State government; authorize county and regional library boards to conduct meetings via teleconference

By: *Rep. Kimberly New (40th) Through the State Planning & Community Affairs Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 516 allows county and regional library boards and community service boards to conduct meetings via teleconference. It also designates the attorney general as an applicable elected representative who can approve the issuance of certain private activity bonds to finance or refinance a state charter school.

HB 575 Transportation, Department of; authorize notice of certain public hearings by electronic publication

By: *Rep. Derrick McCollum (30th) Through the Transportation Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 575 allows the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) to use electronic publication for notifications of certain public hearings. The bill states that in any instance where federal or state law is unclear as to whether a public hearing is required, the GDOT is required to hold a hearing.

The bill authorizes the GDOT to negotiate acquisition of common property of a condominium association or property owners' association with the designated board for either such association. The bill also

authorizes establishment of a program by the department for the clearing of rights of way and the removal of wrecked or abandoned heavy duty vehicles from the rights of way of interstate highways and limited access highways.

The bill provides for payment of costs related to the removal or relocation of public utilities through agreement between the department and the utility provider.

HB 582 Georgia Survivor Justice Act; enact

By: *Rep. Stan Gunter (8th) Through the Judiciary Non-Civil Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 582 is the 'Georgia Survivor Justice Act.' When a defendant in a prosecution under Title 16, Chapter 5 (crimes against the person) raises a justification defense under O.C.G.A. 16-3-21, the defendant may offer relevant evidence that they had been subjected to acts of family violence, dating violence, or child abuse that was committed by the alleged victim to establish that the defendant was justified in using force or deadly force.

This evidence can include seeking law enforcement assistance, seeking services from a counselor or social worker, seeking medical attention, showing effects of battering and post-traumatic stress disorder, or relevant protective orders. Any evidence introduced is still subject to Evidentiary Rules 401, 402, and 403.

Section 3 limits the exception for murder to malice murder in which a person is immune from criminal liability due to coercion, and extends it to when there is imminent death of a third party.

Section 4 specifies that for O.C.G.A. 16-10-1 (violation of oath by public officer), which carries an existing penalty of imprisonment of one to five years, peace officers can only be subject to prosecution under the Code section for violations of their oath. No officer will be subject to prosecution for violation of their oath of office under the Code section unless the violation is predicated on the commission of a felony or a high and aggravated misdemeanor.

Section 5 allows a defendant previously sentenced to submit a petition to the court that requests they be sentenced under these new mechanisms, so long as the offense was committed prior to July 1, 2025, or the petition includes evidence that was not part of the record of the case at any sentencing hearing. The petition must be served upon the district attorney, and the state has 60 days to respond to the petition. There is a presumption that the hearing should be granted, although if a court denies the hearing, it must provide written findings for its reasoning. A hearing that is granted must be held within 90 days of the petition.

Section 6 allows a defendant to present evidence, at the time of sentencing, that they were subjected to acts of family violence, dating violence, or child abuse, and that those acts were a significant contributing factor to the offense that the defendant is being sentenced for. This section allows the following evidence to be introduced: hearsay; character evidence; evidence indicating they sought assistance from law enforcement, a counselor or social worker, or medical professionals; prior statements regarding these acts; evidence of the effects of battering and post-traumatic stress disorder; evidence pertaining to the alleged perpetrator's history of other types of these acts; expert testimony; or any other evidence that the court determines is credible and has sufficient probative value.

The judge may impose a different sentence if they believe that the defendant was subjected to these types of acts and that they were a significant contributing factor to the offense, or if the best interests of justice and welfare of society would be served. If the judge finds that one of those elements are met and the person was convicted of a crime punishable by death or life imprisonment, then they will be sentenced to imprisonment for between one and 30 years.

If that person was convicted of a felony other than one punishable by life or imprisonment or death, then they will be sentenced to imprisonment for between one and one-half the maximum period of time for which they could have been sentenced, by one-half the maximum fine to which they could have been subjected, or both.

Section 7 provides for the evidentiary privilege in court proceedings for communications made in the context of victim-centered practices or victim-offender dialogues, as provided in O.C.G.A. 24-5-511, which is created in Section 8.

Section 8 creates the evidentiary privilege for communications made at any time while preparing for participating in a victim-centered practice or victim-offender dialogue. This information is not subject to discovery in court proceedings or public inspection. Parties involved in these practices or dialogues can refuse to share their communications relating to this and prevent others in court from doing so. Facilitators of these programs are immune from civil damages for statements, actions, omissions, or decisions made in the course of these practices or dialogues unless it was grossly negligent and made with malice or made with willful disregard for the safety or property of any party to the practice or dialogue.

Section 9 amends O.C.G.A. 45-3-7 to create a specific oath that all officers must take after July 1, 2025. The oath will be before the chief executive officer of the agency or any authorized judicial official, and that oath will be filed in and entered into the records of that agency. Agencies can add additional language, although it must be aspirational only and of no legal effect in any criminal proceeding. This also makes any aspirational language that is added have no legal effect in any civil or criminal proceeding.

HB 586 Revenue and taxation; intangible recording tax; revise notes

By: *Rep. Bruce Williamson* *Through the Ways & Means Committee*
(112th)

Final Bill Summary: HB 586 amends O.C.G.A. 48-6-60, 48-6-66, and 48-6-68, relating to the application of the intangible recording tax, by changing the period length in the definitions of a long-term note secured by real estate, the placement of a lien upon real estate, and bonds for a title in the absence of a security deed from three years to 62 months.

HB 614 Local government; prohibit use or ignition of consumer fireworks in proximity to certain facilities housing equines; authorize

By: *Rep. Jan Jones (47th)* *Through the Agriculture & Consumer Affairs Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 614 allows a county governing authority or municipal corporation to adopt ordinances prohibiting firework usage within 200 yards of commercial facilities housing equines. Similarly, the county governing authority or municipal corporation may issue special event permits that allow the usage of fireworks within the 200 yard range.

HB 630 State Board of Registration; remove used car division and the used parts division; provisions

By: *Rep. Marcus Wiedower* *Through the Regulated Industries Committee*
(121st)

Final Bill Summary: HB 630 revises requirements for the State Board of Used Motor Vehicle Dealers and Used Motor Vehicle Parts Dealers to be composed of 10 members. The bill revises requirements for applicants and existing applicants. In addition, both divisions within the board are merged to provide for more flexibility.

HB 635 State Licensing Board for Residential and Commercial General Contractors; revise provisions

By: *Rep. Marcus Wiedower (121st) Through the Regulated Industries Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 635 revises board requirements and licensing requirements related to the State Licensing Board for Residential and Commercial General Contractors. This removes the limitation on the amount of terms that board members can serve, and allows certain members of the board to have prior experience as a public building official rather than be currently in that position. A residential light commercial contractor or commercial general contractor must have at least four years of aggregate, academic credits from college-level courses in specific fields.

The board also has the ability to revoke licenses if a licensee knowingly enters into a contractual agreement to lawfully engage in or provide the use of their license to engage in contracting or perform the functions of a contractor.

HB 645 Health; COVID-19 testing of staff members in long term-care facilities; repeal certain provisions

By: *Rep. John LaHood (175th) Through the Human Relations & Aging Committee*

Final Bill Summary: HB 645 removes the COVID-19 testing requirement for new residents and staff in long-term care facilities. The bill also lowers the age at which a patient shall be offered a vaccination for the influenza virus at hospital discharge from 50 to 18 years old.

SB 1 'Fair and Safe Athletic Opportunities Act'; enact

By: *Sen. Greg Dolezal (27th) Through the Education Committee*

Final Bill Summary: SB 1 amends various titles in the Code, known as the 'Riley Gaines Act,' to provide for separate restrooms and changing areas for males and females during athletic events in schools and postsecondary institutions. Schools and postsecondary institutions must provide reasonable accommodations for individuals unwilling or unable to use a restroom or changing area designated for such an individual's sex. The bill provides for separation according to sex for sleeping arrangements on school trips.

All public schools, local school systems, and private schools participating in competitions or athletic events must designate each team, competition, or athletic event as for males, females, or coed.

The bill provides for legislative findings on the importance of certain distinctions between the sexes and student athletes deserve to have a competitively fair and safe opportunity to participate and succeed in sports. The term "gender" is replaced with "sex" throughout the Code.

SB 5 Private Review Agents; health insurers to implement and maintain a program that allows for the selective application of reductions in prior authorization requirements; provide

By: *Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick (32nd) Through the Insurance Committee*

Final Bill Summary: SB 5 requires health insurers to implement a program that reduces prior authorization requirements for providers based on quality metrics.

The bill also requires that all health benefit policies administered by the State Health Benefit Plan (SHBP) provide coverage for healthcare services related to Pediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorders Associated with Streptococcal Infections (PANDAS) and Pediatric Acute Onset Neuropsychiatric Syndrome (PANS).

Coverage must align with nationally recognized clinical practice guidelines and apply to diagnosis, treatment, management, and monitoring of these conditions. The bill prohibits special deductibles, coinsurance, or copayments beyond those generally applicable to other covered healthcare services.

SB 6 Controlled Substances; determine whether a controlled substance has been adulterated; authorize the use of testing equipment

By: *Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick* *Through the Health Committee*
 (32nd)

Final Bill Summary: SB 6 allows for drug analysis equipment to be used to determine whether a controlled substance or its packaging has been altered.

SB 20 Veterinarians; student loan repayment; who practice shelter medicine and in nonprofit pet sterilization clinics; provide; create the State Veterinary Education Board for Shelter Medicine and Pet Sterilization

By: *Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick* *Through the Higher Education Committee*
 (32nd)

Final Bill Summary: SB 20 expands eligibility for the Public Safety Memorial Grant to include spouses of law enforcement officers, firefighters, prison guards, emergency medical technicians, or highway response operators who have died or been permanently disabled in the line of duty. The bill increases the maximum award amount from \$2,000 per academic year to \$18,000 per academic year, and increases the lifetime award amount from \$8,000 to \$72,000.

The bill provides for the distribution of grants to the child or spouse of a public school teacher or public school employee who has been killed or permanently disabled by an act of violence in the line of duty. Eligible students attending an approved school will receive no more than \$18,000 per academic year, with a maximum total award amount of \$72,000.

The bill expands membership of the State Veterinary Education Board to include: an executive director of an animal shelter or a nonprofit pet sterilization clinic in this state and a veterinarian employed full time in the practice of shelter medicine or pet sterilization services in this state, both to be appointed by the governor.

The bill provides for a loan repayment program for veterinarians who have been practicing for less than 10 years and who practice shelter medicine or practice full time at a nonprofit pet sterilization clinic. The maximum award amount for repayment is \$75,000, to be paid in increments of \$25,000 per 12 months of service.

SB 40 Secondary Metals Recyclers; the definition of the term "used, detached catalytic converters" to said article; provide for applicability

By: *Sen. Bo Hatchett (50th)* *Through the Regulated Industries Committee*

Final Bill Summary: SB 40 prohibits a secondary metals recycler from paying more than \$100 in cash for any transaction to a seller. These recyclers are also prohibited from paying cash for used, detached catalytic converters or coils, used utility wire, used communications copper, copper wire, or a battery.

The bill revises certain requirements related to registered agents, and requires the locality to remit \$100 of each registration fee to the locality's general fund and \$100 to the Georgia Sheriff's Association. The bill also allows a municipal solid waste disposal facility operated by private enterprise to impose a surcharge of \$1 per ton of nonmetallic waste resulting from the shredding of vehicles or household appliances.

- SB 44 Equalization Grants, Annual Calculations, and Allocation; the definition of the term "qualified local school system" by reducing the minimum required millage rate; revise**
By: Sen. Sam Watson (11th) Through the Education Committee

Final Bill Summary: SB 44 amends O.C.G.A. 20-2-165, which revises the definition of the "qualified local school system" by reducing the minimum required or equivalent millage rate from 14 mills to 10 mills. This bill provides for a 25 percent reduction of equalization grant awards for local school systems whose millage rate or equivalent millage rate does not meet the minimum requirement.

A report created by the Department of Education will be sent to certain members of the General Assembly, the House Budget and Research Office, Senate Budget and Evaluation Office, and Office of Planning and Budget each year by September 1. The report will show systems that received an equalization grant the previous fiscal year, the total amount of equalization earned over the past 10 years, and list any systems with a millage rate less than 10 percent.

- SB 55 "Dignity and Pay Act"; enact**
By: Sen. Billy Hickman (4th) Through the Industry and Labor Committee

Final Bill Summary: SB 55 is the 'Dignity and Pay Act,' which removes the ability of the Georgia Department of Labor to offer exemptions to the minimum wage laws. Further, no employer is permitted to utilize a certificate issued by the U.S. Department of Labor that allows the company to pay individuals with disabilities below the minimum wage.

If a company currently utilizes a federal certificate, then that company must pay individuals with disabilities at least half of the minimum wage between July 1, 2026, and June 30, 2027. Starting on July 1, 2027, those employers will not be able to utilize those certificates to pay individuals with disabilities less than the minimum wage.

- SB 56 Georgia State Indemnification Fund; the Department of Administrative Services to purchase annuities for the payment of indemnification claims; authorize**
By: Sen. Jason Anavitate (31st) Through the Public Safety & Homeland Security Committee

Final Bill Summary: SB 56 authorizes the Department of Administrative Services to purchase annuities for the payment of indemnification claims. The bill allows for indemnification payments for claims relating to deaths of public safety officers related to COVID-19 when the death occurred on or before April 15, 2022. Applications for payment must be submitted no later than August 1, 2025.

- SB 58 "Georgia Transporting Life-Saving Organs and Personnel Act"; enact**
By: Sen. John Albers (56th) Through the Health Committee

Final Bill Summary: SB 58, known as the 'Georgia Transporting Life-Saving Organs and Personnel Act,' authorizes the emergency transportation of necessary personnel, organs, tissue, or medical supplies to a time-critical organ transplant procedure.

- SB 63 "Quality Basic Education Act"; local school systems offer certain exams to home study students; require**
By: Sen. Clint Dixon (45th) Through the Education Committee

Final Bill Summary: SB 63 amends O.C.G.A. 20-2-324.8, which requires that local school systems allow home school students to take the PSAT/NMSQT, SAT, PreACT, ACT, Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery, or Advanced Placement exams offered by the school system to resident students. The local school system may require home school students to pay for such an exam if the school is requiring all students to pay a fee to take the exam.

SB 72 "Hope for Georgia Patients Act"; enact**By: Sen. Matt Brass (6th) Through the Health Committee**

Final Bill Summary: SB 72 allows for a terminally ill patient's right to try investigational drugs, biological products, and devices to expand their access to individualized treatments.

SB 79 "Fentanyl Eradication and Removal Act"; enact**By: Sen. Russ Goodman (8th) Through the Judiciary Non-Civil Committee**

Final Bill Summary: SB 79 is the 'Fentanyl Eradication and Removal Act.'

The bill amends O.C.G.A. 16-13-31 regarding the manufacture, delivery, distribution, possession, or sale of noncontrolled substances to strike the references that cite to fentanyl in Schedule II and fentanyl analogue structural class. If a person sells, manufactures, delivers, brings into the state, or has possession of at least four grams of fentanyl, a fentanyl analog structural class, or any mixture containing these substances, then they are guilty of trafficking in fentanyl.

The penalty for at least four grams, but less than eight grams, is a mandatory minimum of eight years and a fine of \$75,000. The penalty for at least eight grams, but less than 14 grams, is a mandatory minimum of 15 years and a fine of \$150,000. The penalty for at least 14 grams, but less than 28 grams, is a mandatory minimum of 25 years and a fine of \$250,000. The penalty for 28 grams or more is a mandatory minimum of 35 years and a fine of \$750,000.

The bill also revises the penalties that can be imposed once the individual meets the requirements for a judge, and the judge agrees to depart from the mandatory minimums. New sentencing ranges are also added to the Code.

Further, the bill responds to a court case and ensures that mandatory minimums cannot be suspended, stayed, probated, deferred, or otherwise withheld by the court.

SB 81 Motor Vehicle Franchise Practices; protection of consumer data in motor vehicle sales; provide**By: Sen. Matt Brass (6th) Through the Regulated Industries Committee**

Final Bill Summary: SB 81 extends requirements regarding consumer data in motor vehicles to affiliates of a franchisor, manufacturer, or distributor. The bill also makes it a crime for a third party to access, share, sell, copy, or use certain protected dealer data from a motor vehicle. In addition, it prohibits a third party from including any limitation on a dealer's ability to protect, store, copy, share, or use any protected dealer data or to permit access to protected dealer data without prior, express, and written consent by the dealer. Vendors of dealer data systems are required to adopt a standardized integration framework for "over-the-air" systems, and additional protections are provided for dealers with regard to accessing data from manufacturers, franchisors, distributors, or their affiliates.

Every franchisor, manufacturer, or distributor must provide compensation to dealers for any assistance provided to a buyer or lessee whose vehicle required a change, repair, or update by remote means. The bill also defines "new motor vehicle dealer" to include when a dealership offers motor vehicles for sale at the location, and requires those locations to provide maintenance to customers.

SB 88 Douglas Judicial Circuit; a fourth judge of the superior courts; provide**By: Sen. Tim Bearden (30th) Through the Judiciary Committee**

Final Bill Summary: SB 88 increases the number of superior court judges in the Douglas Judicial Circuit from three to four. The fourth judge will be appointed for a term beginning January 1, 2026, continuing through December 31, 2028. The successor will be elected at the nonpartisan judicial election in 2028.

SB 93 "Georgia Early Literacy Act"; the three-cuing system from inclusion in high-quality instructional materials or structured literacy; prohibit**By: Sen. RaShaun Kemp (38th) Through the Education Committee**

Final Bill Summary: SB 93 amends O.C.G.A. 20-2-153.1 to provide for the Professional Standards Commission to adopt rules to require that the content standards align with the science of reading for core curricula for state-approved educator preparation programs.

SB 96 Official Code of Georgia Annotated; provisions creating certain boards, panels, authorities, centers, commissions, committees, councils, task forces, and other such bodies; update and modernize**By: Sen. Drew Echols (49th) Through the Code Revision Committee**

Final Bill Summary: SB 96 makes modifications with respect to particular boards, advisory councils, commissions, and other similar bodies. Certain bodies are abolished, with liabilities and obligations of those bodies assumed by the state. The composition, appointment procedures, member terms, and requirements of particular bodies are revised.

SB 98 Guardian and Ward; county conservators; provide**By: Sen. Bill Cowsert (46th) Through the Judiciary, Juvenile Committee**

Final Bill Summary: SB 98 changes various references in the Juvenile Code to reflect "county conservators" rather than "county guardians," and adds references to "county conservators" to various other sections of the Code. After July 1, 2025, in matters related to a conservatorship when an individual designated as a county guardian is serving as a county conservator, the designation of that individual will be county conservator.

SB 99 Crimes and Offenses; definition of law enforcement officer; provide**By: Sen. Randy Robertson (29th) Through the Public Safety & Homeland Security Committee**

Final Bill Summary: SB 99 establishes the definition of "law enforcement officer" to include a peace officer; any state or federal law enforcement personnel who render assistance to a law enforcement agency of the state or any political subdivision therein; an appointed chief of police or department head of a law enforcement unit while pursuing required training; a federal law enforcement officer employed by the U.S. government as a full-time law enforcement officer; and an individual certified in another state hired in Georgia while pursuing training required by the 'Peace Officer Standards and Training Act.'

SB 100 "Andee's Law"; enact**By: Sen. Randy Robertson (29th) Through the Judiciary Committee**

Final Bill Summary: SB 100 allows an adult who had been adopted to request and receive a copy of their original Georgia birth certificate following payment of a fee. The copy will indicate it is not a certified copy. A parent, sibling, or descendant of a deceased person may receive a copy of the decedent's birth certificate under the same procedure.

SB 110 Definitions Relative to the Juvenile Code; definition of neglect and to provide for new definitions

By: *Sen. Jason Anavitarte (31st) Through the Judiciary, Juvenile Committee*

Final Bill Summary: SB 110 defines the term "blatant disregard" within the Juvenile Code as a real, significant, and imminent risk of harm that is so obvious to a legal custodian that a reasonable person would not expose a child to that imminent risk of harm without exercising certain precautionary measures. It also defines the term "independent activity" to be one that is not under the direct supervision of a legal custodian or parent and includes playing outdoors, walking to school, running errands, and traveling to local commercial or recreational facilities.

The bill modifies the definition of "neglect" to be when someone fails to provide necessary parental care, rather than proper parental care. It also narrows the requirements of when a parent must provide certain supervision necessary for the health and safety of a child to require the parent to avoid creating a real, significant, and imminent risk of harm to the child as a result of blatant disregard for the parent's responsibilities. This further narrows what constitutes abandonment of a child under the definition of "neglect" to exclude when a parent or guardian permits a child to engage in independent activities that reasonably avoid substantial risk of harm.

The bill also modifies O.C.G.A. 16-5-60 to amend the crime of when a person causes bodily harm to or endangers the bodily safety of another through conscious disregard of another's safety to explicitly not include when a parent or legal custodian permits a child to engage in one or more independent activities unless doing so constitutes neglect.

SB 119 Manufactured or Mobile Homes; limited exceptions to circumstances under which a manufactured home shall become real property; provide

By: *Sen. Russ Goodman (8th) Through the Banks & Banking Committee*

Final Bill Summary: SB 119 revises provisions regarding when manufactured homes become real property, specifically through a certificate of permanent location. When a certificate of permanent location is filed, the commissioner will notify the holders of all listed security interests that a certificate has been filed and the certificate of title has been surrendered.

The filing of a certificate of permanent location and the surrender of a certificate of title will not impair the rights and remedies of a prior interest holder until the interest has been satisfied. Additionally, the filing of a certificate of permanent location and the surrender of a certificate of title will not impose additional licensing or conduct requirements on the lien or security interest holder.

SB 123 Compulsory Attendance; provisions of the state's compulsory school attendance laws; update and revise

By: *Sen. John Kennedy (18th) Through the Education Committee*

Final Bill Summary: SB 123 amends O.C.G.A. 20-4-141, 20-2-690, and 20-2-690.1. The bill updates and revises provisions of the state's compulsory school attendance laws. The bill provides that no student will be expelled by a public school due solely to absenteeism.

Beginning in 2026, and every other year after, the Department of Education will submit a county-by-county report of compliance by local school systems with provisions related to the student attendance and school climate committee to the chairs of the House Education Committee and the Senate Education and Youth Committee.

If a school system has a chronic absenteeism rate of 10 percent or higher, the system must create an attendance review team. If one or more schools has a school chronic absenteeism rate of 15 percent or higher, the system will establish an attendance review team for each such school.

SB 125 Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors; decouple the sequential order of experience and examination requirements

By: *Sen. Larry Walker III* *Through the Regulated Industries Committee*
(20th)

Final Bill Summary: Section 1-1 of Part I and all of Part III of SB 125 are a modernization update to the licensing Code for electrical contractors, plumbers, conditioned air contractors, low voltage contractors, and utility contractors.

These parts make numerous changes, including: 1) revising requirements for State Construction Industry Licensing Board members; 2) revising what plumber classifications can install, maintain, alter, or repair medical gas piping systems; 3) exempting any licensed conditioned air contractor who also is a registered professional engineer from certain continuing education requirements; 4) removing the cap on continuing education that both the Division of Electrical Contractors and the Division of Master Plumbers and Journeyman Plumbers can require; 5) requiring each division to make all reasonable efforts to provide continuing education online or through home study courses; 6) clarifying that any licensed master plumber, or company that holds a valid utility contractor license, can construct, alter, or repair any plumbing system that extends from the property line up to five feet of any building; and 7) allowing for applicable licensee's partners, officers, and employees to continue operating for 60 days after the death of a licensee, in addition to allowing the applicable division to provide one additional 60-day grace period.

These parts also revise dates and timelines, add references to internet advertising, and revise fine amounts.

Section 1-2 removes a requirement for licensure as a professional engineer that requires a person to subsequently pass an exam after obtaining required educational experience.

Part II requires the Office of the Secretary of State to institute a unified system for tracking continuing education credits completed by licensees of the various boards under the secretary of state's purview. Beginning on January 1, 2026, a professional licensing board will not renew a license until the applicant has complied with all applicable continuing education requirements.

SB 130 Health; medical education funding and the service cancelable loan program; expand

By: *Sen. Mike Hodges (3rd)* *Through the Health Committee*

Final Bill Summary: SB 130 expands the ability for a resident or fellow to be taught in a teaching hospital or a medical facility that meets the stated criteria. This bill also allows a resident or fellow to apply for the service cancelable loan program through the Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce.

SB 132 Insanity and Mental Incapacity; hearing before a court orders an evaluation of the mental competency of an accused person to stand trial; require

By: *Sen. Brian Strickland* *Through the Judiciary Non-Civil Committee*
(42nd)

Final Bill Summary: SB 132 provides that individuals whom are charged with a non-violent misdemeanor must receive a competency evaluation within 45 days, while those charged with anything other than a non-violent misdemeanor still must receive a competency evaluation within 90 days. Offenses of driving under the influence and domestic violence charges are not included within the 45-day timeline. This also provides that judges must provide a hearing before ordering the mental competency evaluation if the request comes from the defense. Upon holding that hearing, if the judge orders an evaluation, he or she must explain why they have a bona fide doubt in an order about the accused's competency. If a defendant makes a special plea claiming incompetency, then the court must hold a bench trial unless either side

requests a jury trial. If charged with a non-violent offense, the court may allow outpatient evaluation instead of jail-based evaluation.

SB 141 Revenue and Taxation; the appeal and protest period from 30 days to 45 days for tax assessments; extend

By: *Sen. Bo Hatchett (50th) Through the Ways & Means Committee*

Final Bill Summary: SB 141 extends the appeal or protest date for tax assessments, the denial claim for certain refunds, proposed assessment or license fees imposed by the Department of Revenue, erroneous payment of intangible taxes, and petition to provide information related to allocations and apportionments for their business activity, from 30 days to 45 days.

Additionally, the commissioner of the Department of Revenue is able to reinstate a canceled license within 45 days, rather than 30 days. The bill also extends the due date of any licenses or taxes, excluding ad valorem or income tax, from 30 days to 45 days after notice.

The bill further amends both O.C.G.A. 48-5-7.2 and 48-5-7.3, relating to preferential assessment for rehabilitated historic property and landmark historic property, to allow for a classification and assessment approved by a county to continue for up to an additional 12 years for income-producing property.

SB 144 Fertilizers or Pesticides; a manufacturer cannot be held liable for failing to warn consumers of health risks above those required by the United States Environmental Protection Agency; clarify

By: *Sen. Sam Watson (11th) Through the Agriculture & Consumer Affairs Committee*

Final Bill Summary: SB 144 allows pesticides registered with the Department of Agriculture commissioner that display a label approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or is consistent with the 'Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act' human health risk assessment to be considered a sufficient warning of health risk.

Provisions regarding this new subsection are not applicable when the EPA has discovered that a manufacturer has knowingly withheld, misrepresented, concealed, or destroyed certain health risks in order to obtain EPA approval.

SB 147 Correctional Institutions of State and Counties; consent for the release of certain criminal history, vocational, and educational information for inmates upon release; provide

By: *Sen. Michael Rhett (33rd) Through the Public Safety & Homeland Security Committee*

Final Bill Summary: SB 147 allows state correctional institutions to provide for the release of certain criminal history, vocational, and educational information for inmates upon release. The bill provides for the issuance of an identification card, and a program and treatment completion certificate.

SB 149 Tuition Equalization Grants at Private Colleges and Universities; definition of approved school; revise

By: *Sen. Billy Hickman (4th) Through the Higher Education Committee*

Final Bill Summary: SB 149 revises the institution eligibility for tuition equalization grants to require classification as a Level VI institution by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

SB 153 Official Code of Georgia Annotated; revise, modernize, correct errors or omissions in, and reenact the statutory portion of said Code

By: *Sen. Bo Hatchett (50th) Through the Code Revision Committee*

Final Bill Summary: SB 153 is the annual Code revision bill to revise, modernize, and correct errors or omissions to the Official Code of Georgia Annotated. The bill reflects the work of the Code Revision Commission to repeal portions of the Code that are obsolete, declared unconstitutional, or preempted or superseded by subsequent laws. Lastly, the bill provides for other matters relating to revision, reenactment, and publication of the Code.

SB 193 State Board of the Technical College System of Georgia; establish the adult workforce high school diploma program; authorize

By: *Sen. Matt Brass (6th) Through the Higher Education Committee*

Final Bill Summary: SB 193 authorizes the Technical College System of Georgia to establish the adult workforce high school diploma program, which has a sunset date of July 1, 2031.

SB 201 Consumer Transactions; increased consumer protection for homeowners entering into contracts with contractors following natural disasters; provide

By: *Sen. Larry Walker III (20th) Through the Agriculture & Consumer Affairs Committee*

Final Bill Summary: SB 201 protects homeowners entering into contracts with contractors in the wake of a natural disaster. Contractors entering into a contract with a homeowner within one year of a natural disaster are required to accept contract cancellation if all or part of the homeowner's insurance claim is not covering their loss. Contractors are also required to notify homeowners of their right to cancel.

SB 213 "Fair Business Practices Act of 1975," commercial cheating services that target students and examinees seeking a professional license as an unlawful, unfair, and deceptive trade practice; ban

By: *Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick (32nd) Through the Regulated Industries Committee*

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

SB 241 Funeral Directors; organic human reduction as a means of disposing of deceased human bodies; provide

By: *Sen. Rick Williams (25th) Through the Regulated Industries Committee*

Final Bill Summary: SB 241 provides for regulations related to organic human reduction, as a form of disposing of bodies upon death. Organic human reduction facilities are required to obtain a license from the State Board of Funeral Service. These facilities must meet certain requirements including: having a room with a minimum space for 30 people where funeral services are conducted, having and maintaining at least one hearse and church truck, and not being located within 1,000 feet from a residential subdivision.

SB 245 Grandparents; include within the category of persons who may seek to revoke or amend an existing grandparent visitation order

By: *Sen. Mike Hodges (3rd) Through the Judiciary Committee*

Final Bill Summary: SB 245 permits grandparents who have been granted visitation rights to their grandchild following the death, incapacitation, or incarceration of the parent of the child to petition the court for revocation or amendment of the visitation rights, as long as the petition has not been filed more than once during any two-year period.

SB 252 Real and Personal Property; conveyance of municipal property interests to independent school systems; provide

By: *Sen. Sonya Halpern (39th) Through the Intragovernmental Coordination Committee*

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

SB 256 Electric Membership Corporation; disclose certain acquisitions and other information to its members within a certain time frame; require

By: *Sen. Bill Cowsert (46th) Through the Energy, Utilities & Telecommunications Committee*

Final Bill Summary: SB 256 requires any electric membership cooperation (EMC) that exceeds 15 percent of the net utility plant invested in an EMC gas affiliate to disclose the yearly cost of the gas sold to its members.

SB 276 Recovery of Medical Assistance from Third Party; certain provisions to comply with federal law; revise

By: *Sen. Drew Echols (49th) Through the Insurance Committee*

Final Bill Summary: SB 276 introduces new obligations for third-party health insurance payers, regarding medical assistance claims. The bill prohibits third-party payers from withholding payment for healthcare services that have already been rendered, preventing them from denying payment solely due to a lack of prior authorization. The bill also requires insurers to respond to inquiries from the state regarding the status of claims within 60 days.

SB 298 Judgements and Rulings; certain appellate procedures regarding the denial of sovereign and any other immunity available to the state; provide

By: *Sen. Randy Robertson (29th) Through the Judiciary Committee*

Final Bill Summary: SB 298 permits the right of one direct appeal from all judgments, orders, or rulings related to the granting or denial of immunity to one or more parties based upon sovereign, municipal, official, qualified, or any other immunity. All judgments, orders, or rulings related to one or more parties' legislative privilege or legislative immunity will have the right of direct of appeal to be exercised within 30 days of any judgment, order, or ruling.

SB 351 "Protecting Georgia's Children on Social Media Act of 2024"; enact (Passed 2024 Session – Effective July 1, 2025)

By: *Sen. Jason Anavitarte (31st) Through the Education Committee*

Final Bill Summary: SB 351 creates the 'Protecting Georgia's Children on Social Media Act of 2024' in Section 1-1.

Section 2-1 adds to the character education program relating to bullying a new requirement to teach "responsible digital citizenship and the safe and appropriate use of technology, the internet, and social media" beginning in the 2025-2026 school year.

Section 2-2 requires the Department of Education to develop model programs regarding online safety for grades six through 12, and post on its website recommended curricula and instructional materials. The model programs should be re-evaluated periodically to reflect changes in internet and social media use.

Section 2-3 revises O.C.G.A. 20-2-234 relating to internet safety and requires local governing bodies to adopt an acceptable-use policy for internet use by October 1, 2025. Schools should implement technology protection measures to block access to prohibited materials. The department will provide guidance and assistance to local schools and school systems to comply with these requirements. The State Board of Education will have the authority to withhold state funding if a local governing body fails to comply with this Code section.

Section 2-4 requires local governing bodies to adopt a social media policy by April 1, 2026. The department will assist in the creation of social media policies, and have the authority to withhold a portion of state funding if a local governing body fails to comply with this Code section or fails to enforce its social media policy.

Section 2-5 requires the department to include cyberbullying in its model policy regarding bullying by July 1, 2026. The department will post on its website resources for online and local in-person providers throughout the state available to families for students who have been found to be perpetrating bullying and those who have been targets of bullying.

Section 3-1 requires providers of social media platforms to make commercially reasonable efforts to verify the age of account holders. Any person under the age of 16 will be treated as a minor by social media platforms, and the platform must obtain the express consent of such minor's parent or guardian for use of the platform. The attorney general has the exclusive authority to enforce Chapter 6 of Title 39.

Section 3-2 requires a commercial entity to use a reasonable age verification method before allowing access to a public website that contains a substantial portion of material that is harmful to minors. It holds that a commercial entity liable for damages and a fine of up to \$10,000 per violation if it fails to perform reasonable age verification, namely that the individual is at least 18 years of age, of the individual attempting to access the material.

When performing a reasonable age verification, the commercial entity will not retain any identifying information after access to the material has been granted.