

We also passed the following House bills, resolutions and Senate bill during the sixth week of session:

- [House Bill 53](#), which would remove the State Board of Registration for Foresters from within the Secretary of State and would establish the board as a separate entity administratively attached to the State Forestry Commission, beginning on January 1, 2025. Individuals nominated to the board by the governor and confirmed by the Senate. The board may issue cease and desist orders, as well as impose a fine of no more than \$500 for violations. The bill would set the registration fee for a license at \$200 and would allow for the amount to be adjusted according to the Consumer Price Index;
- [House Bill 300](#), which would require solar power facility agreements to provide procedures for the decommissioning of a solar power facility;
- [House Bill 409](#), which would authorize specified local authorities that operate public water or sewer systems to dispose of or grant easements in specified instances;
- [House Bill 461](#), which would update current law relating to the imposition of regulatory fees by local governments to require the proceeds of regulatory fees collected by a local government to be used for the related regulatory activity and not the general operations of the local government. HB 461 would eliminate the ability for a local government to impose a fee for construction projects classified as renovation based on the cost of the project and instead would require the use of square feet for the calculation of a fee for an "extensive renovation project," which is defined as a project valued at \$75,000 or more to renovate an existing structure;
- [House Bill 516](#), which would increase the minimum amount for a public road construction or maintenance contract that prohibits negotiation to \$500,000. The bill would allow for exemption of the requirement to accept written public comment for 30 days in the event that the public has been afforded the opportunity for comment during the environmental phase of a public-private partnership. If the public is afforded the opportunity for comment during the environmental phase of a public-private partnership, the requirement that the department hold a public hearing would also be waived. HB 516 would provide an exception to final approval of projects by the board when it has previously approved the proposal based on a determination that the proposal provided the apparent best value to the state. HB 516 would also amend current law governing the length of modular unit transporters to allow for an increased length from 80 feet to 84 feet when a permit is purchased;

- [House Bill 546](#), which would amend the definition of "pharmacy care" within the Georgia Pharmacy Practice Act to allow for changes to a prescription drug order. The bill would allow a pharmacist to adapt a prescription drug order, under certain circumstances, by changing the quantity of medication prescribed, changing the dosage form of the prescription and completing missing information on a prescription drug order. Adaptions would be required to be documented and done with patient consent;
- [House Bill 576](#), which would prohibit an individual's vaccine status from being used to determine priority status on an organ transplant waiting list;
- [House Bill 809](#), which would allow occupational therapists to perform dry needling;
- [House Bill 814](#), which would amend current law relating to computation of taxable net income to exclude any grants for investments in broadband infrastructure received as part of 47 U.S.C. 1702, the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program, or the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. This change would be applicable to all tax years beginning on January 1, 2022;
- [House Bill 872](#), which would allow for dental students to be eligible for the service cancelable loan program when they agree to practice in rural counties with a population of 50,000 or less;
- [House Bill 873](#), which would codify the ability of juvenile courts to establish a juvenile treatment court division as an alternative to the traditional judicial system for juvenile delinquency cases or child in need of services (CHINS) cases. A case may be assigned to these new courts: 1) if the prosecutor or other petitioner consents prior to the entry of adjudication or disposition; 2) as part of a disposition in a case; or 3) upon modification or revocation of probation or a new petition. Each new juvenile treatment court division would establish a planning group to develop a work plan. Planning groups would be required to include: judges, prosecutors, sheriffs, public defenders, community supervision officers and probation officers. The Council of Accountability Court judges would establish standards and practices for these divisions, considering current research and findings published by experts on children's health needs/treatment options. The council would also create and manage a certification/peer review process to ensure local divisions adhere to standards/practices. Further, they would create a waiver process that divisions must apply for if they want an exception to standards/practices. The council would also create a certification process to allow a court to demonstrate a need for additional state grant funds for one or more part-time judges to operate these divisions. Divisions established on and after July 1, 2026, would be certified or receive a waiver if they have good cause. The council would also be required to develop and manage an electronic performance measurement system that accepts data consistently. On or around July 1, 2026, and every three years afterward, the council would conduct a performance peer

review of the divisions to improve the policies/practices. The court that institutes the division could request that one or more prosecutors and one or more defense attorneys serve in the division, and the clerk of the juvenile court would serve as the clerk of the division. The act would become effective on July 1, 2024;

- [House Bill 909](#), which would automatically restrict and seal the record of an individual's offense after July 1, 2024, who was sentenced under the First Offenders Act. If first offender status is revoked, then a court would unseal the records, and courts, law enforcement agencies, jails and detention centers could disseminate the records. Those who were exonerated of guilt and discharged as a first offender prior to July 1, 2024, could petition the court to have the records sealed, and those records would be automatically sealed;
- [House Bill 912](#), which would update current law relating to the definitions of motor vehicles and traffic to change the definition of "multipurpose off-highway vehicle" to mean any self-propelled, motorized vehicle originally intended for off-highway use and to not include any all-terrain vehicles, low-speed vehicles, passenger cars or personal transportation vehicles. Additionally, HB 912 would create an exemption for multipurpose off-highway vehicles from ad valorem taxation, beginning on January 1, 2025;
- [House Bill 925](#), or the "Protecting Religious Assembly in States of Emergency (PRAISE) Act," which would prohibit any governmental entity from discriminating against and closing a place of worship during an emergency or health or safety determination. It would afford to religious institutions and places of worship the same degree of freedom to meet as is afforded to the most favored entity or set of entities. HB 925 would provide for civil action for relief for any person or entity burdened or impaired by violations of this law;
- [House Bill 947](#) would revise judicial compensation so that the base salary for judges is related to the annual salary fixed for judges of the U.S. district court for the northern district of Georgia on July 1st of the second proceeding state fiscal year. Each supreme court justice would receive a maximum of 100 percent of the federal district judge's salary; each court of appeals judge would receive a maximum of 95 percent of the base salary; the judge of the state-wide business court would receive a maximum of 92 percent of the base salary; and each superior court judge would receive a maximum of 90 percent of the base salary. Locality pay may be provided to judges in lieu of and not in addition to any prior county supplements, but in no event would the annual locality pay exceed 10 percent of the state annual salary. Each superior court judge in the office on July 1, 2024, could opt-in to the new salary framework, as well as any existing locality pay, by October 1, 2024, through filing a written notification to the council of superior court judges and the governing authority of each county comprising the judge's judicial circuit. From July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025, all local laws providing compensation for a state or local official that tie that compensation to a superior court judge's compensation would be suspended with respect to any

compensation increase. None of the provisions of HB 947 would repeal or amend any local law. As of July 1, 2025, that suspension would be terminated and would not entitle any official to retroactive compensation;

- [House Bill 977](#) would set the risk-limiting audit probability limit at a decreasing percentage beginning with eight percent in 2024 and concluding with a rate of two percent in 2030. The bill would clarify which contests, in addition to specified top-of-the-ballot contests, must be selected for a risk-limiting audit and how they are selected;
- [House Bill 984](#) would allow certified law enforcement officers within the Department of Insurance and the office of the Safety Fire Commissioner to use a department vehicle while off-duty under certain circumstances. The bill would also allow for developmentally or physically disabled individuals to remain on their parent or guardian's insurance beyond the cutoff age;
- [House Bill 988](#), which would define the term "artificial intelligence" and revise the responsibilities of the Georgia Technology Authority. It would require the authority to conduct an inventory of all systems that utilize artificial intelligence and are in use by any agency. Inventory would include information such as the system's name, vendor details, general capabilities, independence in decision-making, and whether impact assessments were conducted before implementation. The authority would be mandated to develop and establish procedures that govern the development, implementation, and assessment of artificial intelligence systems used by agencies to prevent unlawful discrimination against individuals or groups. The authority would be required to prepare an annual report regarding the inventory of artificial intelligence systems in use by agencies and to make this report available to certain state offices;
- [House Bill 991](#), which would reauthorize the Hospital Medicaid Financing program until June 30, 2030;
- [House Bill 997](#), which would require an individual disqualified from operating a commercial motor vehicle by notice from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) to be reinstated only when they have received notification from the FMCSA;
- [House Bill 1033](#), or the "Utility Worker Protection Act," would add enhanced penalties for the protection of utility workers harmed while acting within the course/scope of their employment or while performing official duties. The bill includes a definition for "utility worker," which includes independent contractors and would apply to both private and public entities. The sentencing enhancement is added to the following crimes: simple assault, making it a high and aggravated misdemeanor; aggravated assault, making the term of imprisonment between three and 20 years; simple battery, making it a high and aggravated misdemeanor;

and aggravated battery, making the term of imprisonment between one and 20 years. These enhancements would apply to all offenses committed on or after July 1, 2024;

- [House Bill 1044](#), which would increase the contract value amount from \$100,000 or less to \$250,000 or less for specified contracts that are exempt from specified contracting and bidding requirements;
- [House Bill 1058](#), which would address federal regulations for safe operations for drivers and vehicles transporting hazardous materials and would change an effective date from January 1, 2023, to January 1, 2024;
- [House Bill 1083](#), which would extend deadlines for the implementation of updated adult mental health licensure rules and regulations;
- [House Bill 1162](#), which would amend current law relating to income tax definitions by providing an update to the definition of "Internal Revenue Code" to include provisions from the Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act of 2024 and the Veterans Auto and Education Improvement Act of 2022, which was signed into law on January 5, 2023;
- [House Resolution 449](#), which would recognize the fourth Wednesday in February as Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy Awareness Day;
- [House Resolution 804](#), which would propose an amendment to the Georgia Constitution to change the payable date of temporary loans for counties and municipalities from December 31 of each year to within 12 months of the initial funding;
- [House Resolution 1019](#), which would establish the Georgia House of Representatives' support for increased protection for America's borders in the pursuit of ending illegal immigration;
- [Senate Bill 353](#), which would allow for the call of a caucus for a Department of Transportation board election to be sent via email rather than by mail. The bill would clarify language relating to contracting for public-private partnerships and alternative contracting methods. The bill would amend the current law governing the length of modular unit transporters to allow for an increased length from 80 feet to 84 feet when a permit is purchased. Current law would be amended to allow any coroner or county medical examiner to delegate to medical personnel the power to perform the duties of the coroner or county medical examiner when an accident on an interstate highway or limited-access road results in a death and a significant disruption to the flow of traffic. The Department of Transportation would be added to the code section relating to when public disclosure is not required by a state agency and would add the data of vehicle information or

personally identifiable information to those records that are not required to be disclosed.