



Senate District 15 – Session Update – 2018

Senate Action

Creating the Integrated Population Health Data Project

Senate Bill 184 would create the Integrated Population Health Data (iPHD) Project and lay the outline for its governance to be established before January 1, 2019. Under the bill, the iPHD Project would securely receive, maintain and transmit data within Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act privacy and security guidelines.

Expanding Fiduciary Powers

Senate Bill 301, would modernize a fiduciary's legal authority to access digital assets and electronic communications. A fiduciary is a person who holds a legal or ethical relationship of trust with one or more parties. Fiduciary duties exist to ensure that those who manage other people's money act in their beneficiaries' interests, rather than serving their own interests. Under this bill, digital assets and electronic communications would be handled the same way as tangible assets.

The Georgia Agricultural Education Act

If passed, Senate Bill 330 will create an agricultural education pilot program in several elementary schools throughout Georgia. Further, under the legislation, the Department of Education would work with local school systems to establish school based agricultural education curriculum for grades six through 12.

The Consolidation of Fire Safety Services in Georgia Act

Senate Bill 319 would consolidate all fire-related safety services across the state under a new Division of Fire Safety. The bill would also create the Commissioner of Fire Safety and a Fire Safety Advisory Board. Further SB 319 requires the transfer of all duties related to fire safety from the Commissioner of Insurance to the new division, which would fall under the Georgia Public Safety Training Center (GPSTC).

Raising the Legal Burden of Proof for Minors Seeking Abortion

Senate Bill 74 seeks to raise the legal standard of evidence required for a minor to obtain a waiver to receive an abortion without parental consent. The new legal standard of clear and convincing evidence, must satisfy the juvenile court in order for the minor to receive the waiver.

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Standardizing Poll Closure Times

Senate Bill 363 would require all polling stations in Georgia to close at 7p.m. for elections, primaries and runoffs. In addition, the bill allows poll workers to begin tabulation of advance voting ballots at 6p.m. This measure passed along party lines in a 33-16 vote.

Changing City Real Estate Disposition Methods

Senate Bill 397 will allow, but not require, municipalities to hire state licensed real estate brokers to assist in real estate property sales. Currently, municipalities are required to dispose of surplus property through a bidding process or auction.

Achieving Connectivity Everywhere Act

Senate Bill 402 lays the groundwork for expanding broadband access to rural Georgia. The bill works to promote public-private partnerships. Further the legislation gives oversight to the Georgia Technology Authority to evaluate communities and create plans for broadband expansion. The bill also offers incentives for local communities, including a new community designation of “broadband ready,” which will allow them to qualify for grant programs and tax exemptions in certain areas. The legislation also requires use of existing Department of Transportation right-of-ways to lay the fiber optic networks.

Creating a Need-Based Scholarship System

Senate Bill 405 creates a new need-based grant program for students who have been accepted for enrollment in a University System of Georgia school. Through the new program students can receive up to \$1,500 per semester.

Eligibility requirements are as follows:

- Student’s household must have an annual income below \$48,000
- Student must receive a Federal Pell Grant
- Student must achieve a high school GPA between 2.3 and 3.0. S
- Student must maintain a GPA of at least 2.3 and be employed at least 15 hours a week during the semester, unless the student is an athlete.

Revising Child Support Payment Regulations

Senate Bill 427, revises Georgia code relating to child support payments, while updating current state law to comply with federal regulations. SB 427 requires the court take into consideration a parent’s assets, education level and job skills when making decisions regarding child support in situations where evidence of income is not shown. Further, Georgia currently treats incarceration as voluntary unemployment because the crime, which led to the inability to work or pay child support, is considered a voluntary act. As such, modification of child support during incarceration is not allowed. SB 427 changes that by specifying that incarceration is not treated as voluntary unemployment.