



Georgia House of Representatives

SESSION REPORT

House Budget & Research Office
(404) 656-5050

2026 Session Report – July 1 Effective Date

HB 115 Natural Resources, Department of; certain notice upon registration of a vessel; provide
By: Rep. Jesse Petrea (166th) Through the Game, Fish, & Parks Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 115 establishes policies and procedures for discovery and subsequent removal of vessels abandoned or left unattended on public property or in public waters of this state.

HB 117 Food service establishments; require notification of the country of origin of seafood items
By: Rep. Jesse Petrea (166th) Through the Agriculture & Consumer Affairs Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 117 requires all food service establishments that serve foreign imported shrimp to conspicuously display on their menus or on a placard visible to the public that the shrimp is foreign imported.

HB 134 Sales and use tax; manufactured homes; revise and expand exemption
By: Rep. Beth Camp (135th) Through the Ways & Means Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 134 amends O.C.G.A. 48-7-40, 48-7-40.1, 48-7-40.2, 48-7-40.3, and 48-7-40.4, relating to the designation of counties as less developed areas for the purpose of qualifying for various tax credits. It adds forestry manufacturing to the definition of business enterprises that qualify for a credit provided to enterprises headquartered in less developed areas of the state.

The bill provides for an extensive list of businesses that qualify as a forestry manufacturer. Any credit earned by a forestry manufacturer from January 1, 2026 to January 1, 2031 may be transferred or sold to another Georgia taxpayer.

The bill allows for a tax credit equivalent to 10 percent of the cost of all qualified investment property purchased or acquired for forestry manufacturing facilities operating in a tier 2 county designated per O.C.G.A. 48-7-40. A tax credit equivalent to three percent of the cost of all qualified investment property purchased or acquired for forestry manufacturing facilities operating in a tier 3 or 4 county designated per O.C.G.A. 48-7-40 is provided. Both of these credits sunset on December 31, 2030.

An aggregate limit of \$250 million per year is placed upon tax credits for forestry manufacturers authorized per O.C.G.A. 48-7-40, 48-7-40.1, 48-7-40.2, 48-7-40.3, and 48-7-40.4. Additionally, the aggregate limit for forestry manufacturers operation in tier 3 and 4 counties, authorized per O.C.G.A. 48-7-40 and 48-7-40.4, shall not exceed \$100 million per year.

HB 141 Revenue and taxation; allow businesses and practitioners to provide affidavits of certified public accountants in lieu of tax returns
By: Rep. Martin Momtahan (17th) Through the Ways & Means Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 141 amends O.C.G.A. 48-13-14, relating to businesses or practitioners with locations in more than one jurisdiction, to allow for affidavits of certified public accountants to be provided in lieu of tax returns.

HB 162 Georgia Bureau of Investigation; restriction and seal of First Offender Act sentences until such status is revoked; provide

By: Rep. Leesa Hagan (156th) Through the Judiciary Non-Civil Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 162 automatically restricts and seals the record of an offense by an individual after July 1, 2026 who was sentenced to Title 42, Chapter 8, Article 3 ('First Offenders Act'). A clerk will cause every document in connection with the case to be sealed within 60 days of exoneration and discharge.

Those exonerated of guilt and discharged as a first offender prior to July 1, 2026 may petition the court to have the records sealed, and the file, docket, minutes, and all other court records will be sealed and made unavailable to the public within 90 days of filing the petition.

If first offender status is revoked, then a court will unseal the records, and courts, law enforcement agencies, jails, and detention centers may disseminate the records.

When a court orders records to be sealed, the court will also order that records maintained by law enforcement agencies, jails, and detention centers be restricted and unavailable to the public. Records will always be available for the Judicial Qualifications Commission; by judges of courts of competent jurisdiction in the state; by a prosecutor or public defender who submits an affidavit to the applicable clerk; pursuant to a court order; by an individual who is the subject of sealed or restricted criminal history information; or as provided in O.C.G.A. 42-8-65 (Use of Prior Finding of Guilt in Subsequent Prosecutions).

HB 165 Income tax credit; business enterprises for leased motor vehicles; repeal and reserve

By: Rep. Lehman Franklin (160th) Through the Ways & Means Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 165 amends O.C.G.A. 48-8-3, relating to sales and use tax, by eliminating language that excludes the local portion of sales and use tax from a 50 percent exemption on the sales price of a manufactured home that has been converted to real property.

HB 219 Professions and businesses; establish a professional health program to provide for monitoring and rehabilitation of impaired healthcare professionals; authorize

By: Rep. Ron Stephens (164th) Through the Regulated Industries Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 219 authorizes both the Georgia Board of Nursing and the Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers, and Marriage and Family Therapists to establish a professional health program to monitor and provide rehabilitation services to impaired healthcare professionals.

A healthcare professional who participates in this program will be required to pay the costs associated with the program. Any company or entity that contracts with one of the boards to administer the program is immune from any civil or criminal liability incurred through its operation of the program. Both sections of the bill are contingent upon appropriation by the General Assembly, although both boards are permitted to accept and solicit private funding or public grants.

HB 244 State auditor; local governments to request and receive in certain circumstances due date extensions related to filing annual audits; provide

By: Rep. Charles Cannon (172nd) Through the Governmental Affairs Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 244 modifies local government audit requirements, depending on total expenditures by such local government entity. The bill requires specified public officers and employees to cooperate with the county government in the preparation of required financial statements and audits, subject to specified waivers.

HB 295 Local government; procedures for real property owners to make claims for compensation for loss of property value or expenses incurred; provisions

By: Rep. Houston Gaines (120th) Through the Public Safety & Homeland Security Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 295 provides procedures for real property owners to make claims for compensation from local governments for loss of property value or expenses incurred due to the local government's failure to comply with or enforce certain laws, ordinances, and resolutions, or due to the local government maintaining a public nuisance.

The bill also waives sovereign and governmental immunities for local governments and their officials and employees for a violation of the prohibition on sanctuary policies. It further allows any person aggrieved by a violation in custodial authority in relation to immigration notices shall be able to petition the superior court for mandamus relief, which will receive priority on the court's docket.

HB 304 Local government; Georgia Municipal Court Clerks' Council; create

By: Rep. Bill Yearta (152nd) Through the Judiciary Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 304 creates the Georgia Municipal Court Clerks' Council as an institution designed to improve municipal courts, assist municipal court staff, and assist in training municipal court staff. The council is a state agency comprised of the municipal court staff of all state municipal courts. The council is authorized to elect officers and an executive committee.

The bill creates the office of senior municipal judge, with the position available upon application by any former municipal court judge or judge of a court exercising municipal court jurisdiction.

HB 328 Revenue and taxation; increase annual aggregate limit for tax credits available for certain contributions to student scholarship organizations

By: Rep. Kasey Carpenter (4th) Through the Ways & Means Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 328 amends Georgia's student scholarship organization (SSO) laws by expanding eligibility and adjusting scholarship funding requirements for private school tuition scholarships.

The bill expands the list of qualifying students to access SSOs without the current six-week public school attendance requirement if they are military dependents stationed in Georgia, students with IEPs, Section 504 plans, or certain diagnosed disabilities. The legislation would apply beginning with the 2026 tax year. The bill prohibits any member of the General Assembly or a member's spouse from receiving any income from a student scholarship organization during a taxable year in which the organization receives a contribution for a tax credit per O.C.G.A. 48-7-29.16.

The bill amends O.C.G.A. 20-2A-5, relating to parent or guardian endorsement of awards, to allow for the use of an electronic signature for the deposit to be made into an account of a private school.

The bill amends Georgia's Quality Basic Education funding provisions by placing new restrictions and accountability measures on local school systems that provide virtual instruction to students who live outside the district.

The bill prohibits local school systems from offering virtual instruction to out-of-system students if the system or virtual school has a College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) score below 70 for the two previous school years. The bill prohibits counting out-of-system students toward equalization funding calculations. The section is effective July 1, 2026.

The bill amends O.C.G.A. 48-7-29.16, relating to tax credits for contributions to student scholarship organizations, to increase the aggregate cap for tax credits to \$150 million. The amount that may be used against insurance premium tax liability is changed from \$6 million to 6 percent of the aggregate amount of tax credits.

The bill amends O.C.G.A. 48-7-29.21, relating to tax credits for donations to nonprofit corporations awarding grants to public schools, to increase the aggregate amount of tax credits to \$25 million.

The bill prohibits counties from using revenue from a transportation purposes sales and use tax (TSPLIST) to provide free or reduced fares for public transit services. The bill provides that when a county holds a referendum to levy a transit purposes sales and use tax (Transit SPLIST) and voters reject it, the county is prohibited from resubmitting the referendum for eight years.

HB 334 Sickle Cell Disease Protection Act; enact

By: Rep. Omari Crawford (89th) Through the Public and Community Health Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 334, also known as the 'Sickle Cell Disease Protection Act,' requires the Department of Community Health to conduct an annual review of sickle cell disease medications, treatments, and services eligible for Medicaid coverage. Public input will be solicited and considered during these annual reviews, particularly from those with lived experience. Findings and recommendations will be submitted by January 15 annually to the presiding officers of each General Assembly chamber, and the report will be made public.

The bill requires child care learning centers and homes to provide information about the respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) to parents and guardians of enrolled children.

HB 350 Domestic relations; safe places for newborns; revise provisions

By: Rep. Mike Cameron (1st) Through the Public Safety & Homeland Security Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 350 authorizes ambulance services and public safety vehicles to accept physical custody of a newborn. The legislation allows placement of newborn safety devices, which are enclosed, locked, monitored receptacles in which a newborn can safely be placed, at medical facilities, fire stations, police stations, and ambulance services. These devices must be in a conspicuous place, visible to employees, agents, or staff members of the facility or station. The facility or station must have an emergency medical services provider on staff 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

HB 382 Controlled substances; Schedule I; psilocybin; revise a provision

By: Rep. Ron Stephens (164th) Through the Health Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 382 excludes federal Food and Drug Administration-approved drugs containing lysergide tartrate and crystalline polymorph psilocybin from the Schedule I controlled substance designation. The bill requires the pharmacist to be physically present and personally supervising the activities of any pharmacy technician in the licensed area of a pharmacy at all times, and allows a pharmacist to supervise six or fewer interns or externs.

HB 438 Employees' Retirement System of Georgia; allow certain sworn law enforcement officers to be eligible for retirement benefits at age 55; provisions

By: Rep. Clint Crowe (118th) Through the Retirement Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 438 lowers the normal retirement age from 60 to 55 for all sworn law enforcement officers under the Department of Public Safety, which would include the Office of Motor Carrier Compliance. The bill lowers the normal retirement age from 60 to 55 for the commissioner and deputy

commissioner of the Department of Public Safety. The bill is certified by the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts as a fiscal retirement bill.

HB 445 Ad valorem tax; language required to be included in notices of current assessment; revise
By: Rep. Chuck Martin (49th) Through the Ways & Means Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 445 amends O.C.G.A. 48-1-2, relating to definitions of revenue and taxation, by adding "private water systems and sewage systems with at least 10,000 connections for services" to the definition of "public utility."

The bill amends O.C.G.A. 48-5-306 relating to the annual notice of current assessment, contents, posting notice, and new assessment description by requiring that the option to appeal directly to a hearing officer for tangible personal property with a fair market value of greater than \$200,000 be included on the notice of assessment.

The bill amends O.C.G.A. 48-5-311 relating to county boards of equalization, duties, review of assessments, and appeals by allowing a taxpayer with tangible personal property having a fair market value greater than \$200,000 to appeal directly to a hearing officer.

A former or current appraiser IV or chief appraiser may serve as a hearing officer for taxable personal property other than wireless property following the submission of an application, a list of counties within which the hearing officer is willing to serve, and a resume to the Georgia Real Estate Commission and the Georgia Real Estate Appraisers Board. The hearing officer may not serve in the county of which they previously served as an appraiser IV or chief appraiser.

HB 447 Crimes and offenses; crimes of gift card theft, gift card forgery, and gift card fraud; provide
By: Rep. Joseph Gullett (19th) Through the Judiciary Non-Civil Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 447 creates three new sets of criminal penalties for gift card theft, forgery, and fraud.

Gift card theft is committed when either: a person has intent to defraud and acquires or retains possession of a gift card or gift card redemption information without consent of the cardholder, card issuer, or gift card seller; or a person has intent to defraud and uses, for the purposes of obtaining money, goods, services, or anything else of value, a gift card or gift card information that has been obtained in violation of subsections (b), (c), or (d) of the Code section.

Gift card forgery is committed when a person has intent to defraud, and alters or tampers with a gift card or its packaging.

Gift card fraud is committed when a person has intent to defraud and devises a scheme to obtain a gift card or gift card information from a cardholder, card issuer, or gift card seller by means of false or fraudulent pretenses, representations, or promises.

A person convicted of any violation of these new crimes will be imprisoned for between one and 10 years and a maximum fine of \$5,000.

HB 455 Bingo; properties used for games; limit number of sessions; provisions
By: Rep. Alan Powell (33rd) Through the Regulated Industries Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 455 allows applicants to conduct bingo games at multiple locations and clarifies that these games can be played on property leased by the non-profit, tax-exempt organization and which can be used for purposes other than the operation of a bingo game.

The bill allows a licensee to operate 31 bingo sessions per month and to award a maximum of \$6,000 in cash or gifts of equivalent value. The maximum amount that can be paid to individuals assisting in the operation of bingo games is increased to \$150 per session.

HB 466 State symbols; marsh tacky horse as official Georgia heritage horse breed; designate
By: Rep. Mike Cameron (1st) Through the Special Rules Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 466 designates the Marsh Tacky horse as the official heritage horse breed of Georgia. It also designates the Pineywoods cattle as the official heritage cattle breed of Georgia.

HB 530 Courts; authorization for electronic filing of pleadings in probate court; provide
By: Rep. Rob Leverett (123rd) Through the Judiciary Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 530 requires all probate courts on or before January 1, 2029, to provide electronic filing of all pleadings and any other documents related to civil matters in probate court. A court's electronic filing service provider may charge a fee not to exceed \$30 per filer per case, in addition to a convenience fee for credit card and bank drafting services. A fee will not be charged for the filing of pleadings or leaves of absences.

A portion of the transaction fee will be retained by the probate court and remitted to the local governing authority. An attorney will be allowed unlimited access to view and download electronically filed documents, and the judge and their staff will have access to all electronically filed pleadings and documents.

HB 541 Education; tuition equalization grants; expand definition of an approved school to include certain institutions which offer programs in nursing
By: Rep. Katie Dempsey (13th) Through the Higher Education Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 541 expands tuition equalization grant eligibility to include higher education institutions that offer baccalaureate programs in nursing, have a current physical presence in Georgia for at least 10 years, have received accreditation from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, and have accreditation from either the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools or a regional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

These institutions must also have a four-year average passage rate of at least 80 percent for the National Council Licensure Examination, and admit students who have a high school diploma or equivalency or a degree from an accredited postsecondary institution. Such institutions are only considered as approved institutions for the tuition equalization grant program, not the Dual Enrollment program or HOPE scholarships/grants.

HB 549 Peace officers; extend time frame for which reimbursement of total training expenses by a subsequent employer may be sought
By: Rep. Devan Seabaugh (34th) Through the Public Safety & Homeland Security Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 549 extends the time frame for reimbursement of total training expenses by a subsequent employer of a peace officer to be sought to 36 months. The total expense of training to be reimbursed includes equipment costs, the officer's salary for the time that they attended a basic training course, and up to 90 days of their salary during the time that they participated in a field training program.

HB 651 Motor vehicles; use of automated traffic enforcement safety devices in school zones; revise provisions

By: Rep. Alan Powell (33rd) Through the Motor Vehicles Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 651 pertains to automated traffic enforcement safety devices in school zones. Such devices are exempt from regulation by the Department of Public Safety (DPS) and are instead regulated by the Department of Transportation (DOT), including through the approval and issuance of permits. The devices must include lights which flash yellow when authorized to issue citations. Citations may be issued when the speed of a motor vehicle exceeds the posted speed limit by more than 10 miles per hour, within an hour before and an hour after the school's starting and dismissal time. Local governing bodies may enact further limitations on such hours.

DPS is authorized to issue a \$2,500 fine for a first violation and \$5,000 for a second violation to local governments or law enforcement in violation of this chapter. Upon a third violation, DPS can suspend or revoke a local government's device permit. If fines or civil monetary penalties exceed 35 percent of the relevant law enforcement agency's budget, there is a rebuttable presumption that they are employing devices for purposes other than public health, welfare, and safety. The bill provides for hearing and appeal processes in cases of the suspension or revocation of a permit.

The bill reduces the electronic processing fee for civil monetary penalties that may be assessed to motor vehicle owners from \$25 to \$10. Citation notifications in the mail must prominently display the name and seal or logo of the governing body on the envelope. Local governments are prohibited from adding taxes or fees to the civil monetary policies and from using money collected to fund the salaries of law enforcement officers or personnel.

The bill provides that contracts for such devices must be approved by local referendum every six years. If such a referendum is rejected, the local government may not resubmit the question for three years. The bill is effective July 1, 2026, except the requirements for flashing lights and local referendums, which are effective July 1, 2027.

HB 659 Health; rural assistance; expand medical education funding and the service cancelable loan program to include optometrists

By: Rep. Gerald Greene (154th) Through the Rural Development Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 659 expands funding for medical education and the service cancelable loan program to include optometrists. The bill adds GLP-1 medications to the list of medications that may be administered by a qualified medication aide in personal care homes.

HB 668 Crimes and offenses; change references to assistance and guide dogs to service dogs

By: Rep. Brad Thomas (21st) Through the Public and Community Health Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 668, also known as the 'Mara Jade Act,' extends the right to use service dogs to physically or mentally impaired persons. "Service dogs" are defined as domestic canines trained to assist with tasks associated with one's disability. Dogs are not considered service dogs if they have been trained solely to provide comfort, companionship, or emotional support to someone regardless of disability status.

The bill provides penalties for crimes against service dogs, which includes interference, harm, and aggravated harm or causing death. The bill establishes penalties and fines for each offense, and allows the court to order restitution to the owner of a service dog when applicable.

Individuals who raise and train service dogs must adhere to certain standards. Anyone who misrepresents themselves to use or train a service dog will be guilty of a misdemeanor, which is punishable by a maximum \$2,000 fine and/or 30 days imprisonment.

HB 717 Medical Practice Act; regulation of the administration of psychedelic-assisted treatment and therapy; provide**By: Rep. Sharon Cooper
(45th)*****Through the Public and Community Health Committee***

Final Bill Summary: HB 717 requires the Georgia Composite Medical Board to establish rules and regulations for the administration of psychedelic-assisted treatment and therapy in clinics that provide such services no later than December 31, 2026. All licensed clinics will be subject to such rules and regulations on and after July 1, 2027, and the board will review their license biennially.

Such treatment at a clinic can only be administered by: a licensed physician with advanced airway management training; a licensed certified registered nurse anesthetist (CRNA) under a licensed physician; a licensed anesthesiologist assistant under a licensed anesthesiologist; a licensed nurse practitioner with a minimum of five years of experience and board approval; and a licensed physician assistant with advanced airway management training and a minimum of five years of experience. Any person administering treatment without a license is engaged in the unlawful practice of medicine.

A clinic is required to be owned by licensed CRNAs and physicians who maintain advanced airway management training. This requirement will not apply to clinics that are not wholly or jointly owned by a physician and CRNA by the effective date. These provisions do not apply to use of psychedelic-assisted treatment and therapy in clinical trials approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

HB 944 Motor vehicles; federal regulations regarding safe operation of commercial motor carriers and commercial vehicles; update reference date**By: Rep. Lauren McDonald III
(26th)**

Final Bill Summary: HB 944 updates the definition of "present regulations" related to motor vehicles to mean regulations in effect on January 1, 2026.

HB 945 Banking and finance; holds on accounts of eligible adults for suspected financial exploitation; provide**By: Rep. Bruce Williamson
(112th)*****Through the Banks & Banking Committee***

Final Bill Summary: HB 945 revises a number of provisions in banking and financial law within the jurisdiction of the Department of Banking and Finance. The bill provides definitions and revises statute to give financial institutions the discretion to place holds on individual transactions of elderly or disabled adults for up to 15 days if the financial institution reasonably believes the transaction may be tied to financial exploitation of an elderly or disabled person.

Institutions may enable customers or members to designate a trusted contact that the institution may contact in case of suspected exploitation. After placing a transaction hold, a financial institution must initiate an investigation to be completed after 15 days, subject to a 15-day extension. The Department of Human Services is authorized to share otherwise confidential information pertaining to financial exploitation of elderly or disabled persons.

Statutory language relating to merchant acquirer limited purpose banks (MALPB) is revised to prohibit entities from using the term MALPB if they are not actually that type of entity, as well as requiring MALPB to send the Department of Banking and Finance proposed amendments to their articles of incorporation for review.

Language with respect to virtual currency kiosks is revised, requiring virtual currency kiosk operators to disclose in clear writing that, among other notices, virtual currency is not backed or insured by the

government, that losses due to fraudulent or accidental transactions may not be recoverable, that virtual currency volatility and unpredictability may result in significant losses, and that transactions are irreversible.

Terms of transactions must be disclosed to the customer, the customer must acknowledge the receipt of all disclosures, and the operator will provide a receipt to the customer. The total amount of any fee or charge related to the transaction will not exceed 18 percent of the amount of exchanged or transmitted currency. Procedures related to transaction limits, identity protection, and refunding of transactions are included in the bill.

The bill clarifies language related to the 'Georgia Residential Mortgage Act' by providing definitions and language to only exempt licensed mortgage brokers or lenders from filing an application with the department to acquire an interest in a licensee.

Revisions with respect to litigation financing registration requirements are included in the bill, defining financial institutions and authorizing the department to obtain conviction data of applicants, registrants, and persons acting as directors, officers, partners, or owners of an applicant. The department can issue cease and desist orders to entities or individuals operating without a license.

HB 946 Game and fish; authorize hunting and trapping of feral hogs under certain circumstances
By: Rep. Rob Clifton (131st) Through the Game, Fish, & Parks Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 946 allows hunters to trap feral hogs without a hunting or trapping license, as long as the hogs are killed upon capture. The bill repeals provisions related to a wildlife control permit for feral hogs. Feral hogs may be hunted on private property from motor vehicles, and unmanned aircraft systems may be used to locate feral hogs.

HB 956 Solid Waste Trust Fund; authorize use of funds for implementation of provisions of a solid waste management program

By: Rep. John Corbett (174th) Through the Natural Resources & Environment Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 956 amends the Solid Waste Trust Fund to add a sixth provision in which money appropriated to the fund may be used. The added provision allows the fund to be used to implement a solid waste management program in Georgia, particularly as it relates to permitting, monitoring, regulation or guidance development, inspections, and enforcement.

HB 983 Conservation and natural resources; prescribed burning for silviculture purposes is exempt from certain burning notice and permit requirements; clarify

By: Rep. Leesa Hagan (156th) Through the Natural Resources & Environment Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 983 allows for additional notice and permit requirements for prescribed burning by counties and municipalities, provided it does not restrict prescribed burning. The bill revises the definition for "prescribed burning" and creates a definition for "silviculture."

HB 985 Veterans affairs; revise terms of eligibility for persons to be buried in Georgia veteran cemeteries

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

Final Bill Summary: HB 985 revises several provisions related to eligibility for burial in Georgia veteran cemeteries. A "full term of service" is redefined as those who served in the U.S. armed forces or, if conscripted, for at least 24 consecutive months. A Georgia resident who served honorably in the Hmong Laotian special guerrilla unit from February 28, 1961 to May 7, 1975 and submits necessary documentation is eligible for burial.

Additionally, provisions relating to service date, dependency, prohibitions, and fee collection are updated in accordance with federal regulations.

HB 986 Motor vehicles; personal delivery devices; revise operation procedures and restrictions

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

Final Bill Summary: HB 986 updates safety and operating standards for personal delivery devices by requiring them to emit a sound while in motion and within six feet of a vehicle or pedestrian. The bill increases the maximum allowable speed of these devices to seven miles per hour in specified areas.

HB 987 Voluntary Portable Benefit Plan Act; enact

By: Rep. Todd Jones (25th) Through the Industry and Labor Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 987 establishes the 'Voluntary Portable Benefit Plan Act,' allowing any person or entity to voluntarily contribute funds to a portable benefit account of an independent contractor. The bill defines relevant terms, including that a "portable benefit plan" is a plan held by an independent contractor that provides for various benefits, such as health and unemployment insurance.

Voluntary contributions may be made using funds withheld from compensation owed to the independent contractor, as long as the withholding is expressly and clearly provided in a written agreement, the withholding is voluntary and requires the independent contractor to opt in, and the independent contractor can opt out at any time. Voluntary contributions from a person or entity to an independent contractor will not create an employer-employee relationship.

HB 998 Public utilities; authorize certain Tier 2 local exchange companies to elect to become subject to rate of return regulation

By: Rep. Rob Leverett (123rd) Through the Energy, Utilities & Telecommunications Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 998 gives Tier 2 local exchange electing companies the option of rate of return regulation until August 1, 2026. A sunset of December 31, 2040 is established to receive reimbursements from the Universal Access fund. Distribution of reimbursements cannot exceed \$50 million annually.

HB 999 Magistrate courts; collecting sums and fees authorized by law; revise provisions

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

Final Bill Summary: HB 999 clarifies that costs collected in court-connected alternative dispute resolution programs are in addition to fees and costs collected by magistrate courts. The bill clarifies that legislation passed in 2026 for the non-partisan election of magistrates will go into effect in 2027, regardless of whether a constitutional amendment related to the non-partisan election of probate judges is ratified prior to 2027. The bill increases the maximum dollar amount of claims to be heard in magistrate courts from \$15,000 to \$25,000.

HB 1015 Self-insurers Guaranty Trust Fund; revise certain funded levels

By: Rep. William Werkheiser (157th) Through the Industry and Labor Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 1015 revises funded levels of the Self-insurers Guaranty Trust Fund. The bill requires that annual assessments against participants who have paid at least three prior assessments will cease when the fund reaches a funded level of \$25 million net of all liabilities. The board of trustees may levy a special assessment against participants if the fund is reduced to an amount below \$10 million net of all liabilities.

HB 1020 Judicial Retirement System; payment of monthly retirement benefits for creditable service as a district attorney at the age of 65 years; provide

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

Final Bill Summary: HB 1020 revises district attorney compensation to have the annual salary of each district attorney set by the General Assembly, with that salary not exceeding 88 percent of the annual salary fixed for judges of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia. The new structure caps the locality pay for each district attorney at the lesser of 10 percent of the state annual salary or \$20,608.05. District attorneys have the ability to opt into the new structure, with that option having been exercised no later than January 1, 2034.

In the event the annual salary exceeds \$206,805, the maximum locality pay will be capped at the difference between \$20,608.05 and half the amount by which the salary exceeds \$206,805. The bill does not alter retirement benefits that were previously in existence.

All local laws, ordinances, and resolutions in effect that tie a state, county, or local salary to that of any district attorney's salary will be suspended until July 1, 2027, with that state, county, or local salary remaining the same during that period of suspension.

The bill amends the Judicial Retirement System (JRS) to effectively require district attorneys hired after June 30, 2026, to reach age 65, rather than 60, to receive full retirement benefits. The bill establishes different benefit rules based on when a member first joined the system. The bill is certified by the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts as a non-fiscal retirement bill.

HB 1024 Property; debtor's aggregate interest in real property or personal property used as a residence; revise exemption

By: Rep. Soo Hong (103rd) Through the Judiciary Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 1024 revises the maximum values of property exempted for purposes of bankruptcy from \$21,500 to \$50,000 for an individual, and from \$43,000 to \$100,000 for a married couple when that property is the primary residence of both spouses. Procedures for adjusting for inflation are included in the bill.

HB 1030 Math Matters Act; enact

By: Rep. Sandy Donatucci (105th) Through the Education Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 1030 creates the 'Math Matters Act' to strengthen math education in Georgia by requiring schools to expand advanced math opportunities, increase core math instruction time, and improve math teacher preparation.

The Department of Education will provide guidance and technical assistance to local education agencies in developing and implementing advanced math courses in grades six and seven. By January 1, 2027, the State Board of Education must create new state standards for advanced middle and high school math courses. By the 2027-2028 school year, students who achieve a score of distinguished learner on the state-wide end-of-grade math assessment will be automatically enrolled into advanced math (with opt-out options). Parents of students who score proficient may request the student be enrolled into an advanced math course.

The bill requires at least 60 minutes of daily math instruction in the fourth and fifth grades. The bill updates teacher certification requirements to ensure educators are trained in evidence-based math instruction and the core skills needed to teach math effectively.

HB 1075 Sexual offenses; modify penalty for offenders previously convicted of the offense of trafficking of persons for labor or sexual servitude

By: Rep. Johnny Chastain (7th) Through the Judiciary Non-Civil Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 1075 requires that a person convicted of a fourth or subsequent misdemeanor under Title 16, Chapters 5 or 6, will be deemed to have committed a felony and be punished by imprisonment for one to 10 years. The first year will not be suspended, probated, deferred, or withheld. Multiple qualifying misdemeanors occurring on the same date constitute only one qualifying misdemeanor.

HB 1086 Preston Fant and Brant Chesney Firefighter Safety Act; enact

By: Rep. Johnny Chastain (7th) Through the Regulated Industries Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 1086 creates the 'Preston Fant and Brant Chesney Firefighter Safety Act,' which requires the owner of any commercial or industrial building or structure, or any multiunit residential building or structure with three units or more to post a notice that the building was constructed using light-frame truss-type construction. The commissioner of insurance creates rules and regulations regarding the type, placement, and time of placement of the notice sign or symbol.

HB 1096 Public Health, Department of; provide that if certain employees of a county board of health become employees of such department such employees will retain accrued annual and sick leave

By: Rep. Darlene Taylor (173rd) Through the Public and Community Health Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 1096 allows eligible county board of health employees to retain accrued annual and sick leave when they become employed by the Georgia Department of Public Health.

HB 1097 Mental health; criminal background, license status, and registry checks for owners, applicants, and employees of certain mental health facilities; provide

By: Rep. Jesse Petrea (166th) Through the Public and Community Health Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 1097 allows the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) to conduct national background checks for authorized facilities serving those with developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, and substance use disorders. National background checks may be used for facility owners, employees, contractors, and license applicants.

The bill allows all state agencies to request national background checks from the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) in accordance with the federal 'National Child Protection Act of 1993.'

HB 1107 Excellent Teacher Preparation Act; enact

By: Rep. Carmen Rice (139th) Through the Education Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 1107 creates the 'Excellent Teacher Preparation Act,' a state-wide accountability system for teacher preparation programs requiring the Professional Standards Commission to develop and publish annual performance measures for every educator preparation provider (EPP) in Georgia.

The bill tracks outcomes like exam pass rates, job placement, retention, employer and graduate satisfaction, and student performance, while protecting individual privacy. It requires EPPs to provide data to the state, mandates regular review of results, and directs the Office of Student Achievement to include these findings in its annual educator workforce report, aiming to strengthen teacher quality and program transparency across the state.

HB 1112 Commerce and trade; rounding of total price of sale of goods or services when using legal tender; provide

**By: Rep. Carter Barrett
(24th)**

Through the Banks & Banking Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 1112 implements rounding with respect to cash transactions in the state, with prices being rounded up or down to the nearest five cents. Transactions where the total amount is one or two cents will be rounded up to five cents. This does not apply to purchases where payment is made by electronic payment or other similar instrument. Exact payment with a one-cent piece will be accepted while the one-cent piece remains legal tender.

HB 1118 Public officers and employees; 120 hours of maternal birth leave; provide

**By: Rep. Sandy Donatucci
(105th)**

Through the Public and Community Health Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 1118 provides 120 hours of paid maternal leave for eligible state employees. A person must be employed with the state entity for at least six continuous months and leave must be used within three weeks after delivery. Employers are prohibited from interfering with leave or discriminating against an eligible employee for exercising maternal leave.

HB 1121 Cordele Judicial Court; change certain terms of court

**By: Rep. Noel Williams
(148th)**

Through the Judiciary Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 1121 revises the terms of court for the Cordele Judicial Circuit to January 1 and July 1.

HB 1123 Quality Basic Education Act; require certain schools that offer after-school programs to make such programs available to pre-kindergarten students

By: Rep. Jan Jones (47th)

Through the Education Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 1123 amends O.C.G.A. 20-2-308 to require public schools that offer after-school programs and operate Georgia Pre-K programs to allow pre-K students to participate in those after-school programs starting in the 2026-2027 school year. The bill allows schools to request a temporary one-year waiver from the Department of Early Care and Learning if the school can show extenuating circumstances which prevent the school from offering the after-school program to pre-K students.

HB 1128 State Board of Workers' Compensation; notice of eligibility for compensation to an injured employee to his or her legal guardian; provide

**By: Rep. Devan Seabaugh
(34th)**

Through the Public Safety & Homeland Security Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 1128 allows a public safety officer, or their legal guardian, to submit an application for indemnification in respect to a total permanent disability claim between July 1, 2026, and August 1, 2026. The applicant must have a total permanent disability due to brain damage incurred in the line of duty before July 1, 2024, or when the brain damage required extended recovery impaired the applicant from filing an application within the original required time frame. This will be repealed on July 1, 2030.

HB 1129 Local government; designation of enterprise zones; provisions

**By: Rep. Devan Seabaugh
(34th)**

Through the Governmental Affairs Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 1129 prohibits a local governing body from designating or redesignating a geographic area as an enterprise zone, on or after July 1, 2031. The bill prohibits the exemption of state sales and use tax for any redevelopment projects used to qualify an area for designation as an enterprise zone, unless specifically exempted by the governor.

The bill prohibits the use of revenue bond principal funds to be used in specified instances. The bill limits the number of enterprise zones that can exist within an urban redevelopment area to a maximum of four.

HB 1131 Criminal procedure; personal service of process for notice of a warrant application hearing; provide

By: Rep. Soo Hong (103rd) Through the Judiciary Non-Civil Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 1131 amends O.C.G.A. 17-4-40 and 17-4-41 to require attempting to provide notice by personal service (or any other approved means) to the person whose arrest is sought before conducting a warrant application hearing. If an affidavit is made or a warrant is issued for arrest, then the accused person must be informed by personal service of the specific charge against them and of other basic, relevant information.

The bill amends O.C.G.A. 17-6-15 to exclude persons posting cash bonds on behalf of immediate family members from the requirement that no more than three cash bonds may be posted per year by any individual.

HB 1161 Motor vehicles; proper operation upon approach by an authorized emergency vehicle or by a law enforcement vehicle for purposes of a traffic stop; provide

By: Rep. Marvin Lim (98th) Through the Public Safety & Homeland Security Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 1161 requires drivers to move over to the furthest right-hand side of the roadway when emergency vehicles are approaching in an official capacity. It also adds a minimum penalty of 30 days in jail for every mile that a driver eludes a Department of Public Safety Officer or vehicle.

Sections 5-7 pertain to automated traffic enforcement safety devices in school zones. Such devices must display an accurate depiction of the driver's speed and are required to have yellow flashing lights when the device is operable to issue citations. Local governing bodies that utilize such devices must submit an annual report on the revenue generated to the Department of Public Safety. Local governing bodies that apply for a permit for placement upon any highway with more than two lanes must demonstrate a prior history that justifies such need. No permits may be issued for highways with four lanes that do not have a crosswalk.

HB 1164 Education; require State Board of Education to appoint an audit committee

By: Rep. Will Wade (9th) Through the Education Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 1164 amends O.C.G.A. 20-2-6 by creating a State Board of Education audit committee to review fiscal reports for school systems, state charter schools, and completion special schools designated as high risk or moderate risk.

The committee will be made up of board members and meet no less than six times each fiscal year. The bill requires annual audit readiness certification attesting that audit requirements have been met by the Department of Audits and Accounts by December 31st of each year. The legislation expands risk designations (moderate/high-risk) tied to repeated audit problems.

Section 11 creates O.C.G.A. 50-6-6.1, which sets up a four-tier state-wide fiscal monitoring and intervention system through the Department of Audits and Accounts, and increases required reporting and public transparency for financially troubled systems.

The bill provides the State Board of Education and the Office of Student Achievement stronger tools to combat financial mismanagement, like reviewing waiver use, conducting additional audits, limiting superintendent contract extensions in high-risk districts, and allows contract changes or termination under severe fiscal conditions.

HB 1181 Motor vehicles; application for certificate of title; provisions

By: Rep. Bethany Ballard (147th) Through the Motor Vehicles Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 1181 requires the application for a certificate of title to a vehicle to, in cases where the vehicle was previously registered in another state in the name of a decedent owner and the applicant is receiving the vehicle upon inheritance, devise, or bequest, include the last certificate of title for that vehicle by the other state to the decedent owner.

HB 1185 Courts; certain shareholder claims to be brought before the Georgia State-wide Business Court; provide

By: Rep. Chuck Efstration (104th) Through the Judiciary Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 1185, relating to the jurisdiction of the Georgia State-wide Business Court, permits a corporation through its bylaws to require internal entity claims such as proceedings related to court-ordered inspection of corporate records to be brought solely and exclusively in the business court.

Additionally, internal entity claims are permitted to be heard in the Business Court if the entity is a public company, a private company that conducts particular federal securities actions, or an entity composed exclusively of individuals or entities who would otherwise qualify as particular accredited investors under federal law.

HB 1202 Georgia Motor Vehicle Crime Prevention Advisory Board; correct a scrivener's error in a cross-reference

By: Rep. John Corbett (174th) Through the Motor Vehicles Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 1202 corrects a scrivener's error in Code, referencing Code Section 35-6A-16 instead of Code Section 35-6A-15.

HB 1208 Civil practice; require depositions to be taken before certified court reporters

By: Rep. Stan Gunter (8th) Through the Judiciary Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 1208 revises statute related to court reporting by removing requirements that stenographic means be used, but rather a certified court reporter or by any means permitted by the Board of Court Reporting.

HB 1230 Aviation; prohibit operation of unmanned aircraft systems over a place of incarceration

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

Final Bill Summary: HB 1230 makes it unlawful to operate an unmanned aircraft system over a place of incarceration or to allow another person to do so from one's property.

The bill classifies unmanned aircraft systems used in this manner as contraband and authorizes law enforcement to take reasonable mitigation measures when there is a reasonable suspicion that an unauthorized unmanned aircraft is operating over a correctional facility.

HB 1234 State Employees' Assurance Department; assignment of certain group term life insurance benefits to pay for funeral services of a deceased individual who was a member of certain retirement systems; provisions

By: Rep. Darlene Taylor (173rd) Through the Retirement Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 1234 allows a named beneficiary of a group term life insurance benefit from the State Employees' Assurance Department to assign payment directly to a licensed funeral director or embalmer for the cost of funeral services.

HB 1254 Professions and businesses; move regulation of various professions from individual boards to Secretary of State

By: Rep. Matt Reeves (99th) Through the Regulated Industries Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 1254 reorganizes multiple licensing boards under the Office of the Secretary of State. The bill creates the Cemeterians Advisory Group that consists of four members appointed by the secretary to advise on matters regarding fees, disciplinary actions, appeals, denials or revocations of registrations, and facilitate development of materials relating to maintaining a cemetery for the public. It further requires every cemetery owner to implement and maintain procedures regarding a business continuity and succession plan.

The bill dissolves the Georgia Auctioneers Commission and gives authority to the Office of the Secretary of State to issue and revoke licenses related to auctioneers. The secretary has full authority to investigate any violations of the rules and regulations set forth in this Code section relating to the licensure of auctioneers.

The secretary of state will also serve as the successor administrator to the Georgia Auctioneers Commission's auctioneers education, research, and recovery fund for the sole purpose of administering, defending, and paying claims arising from conduct of licensees, and to fund continuing education for auctioneers.

The bill removes the State Board of Registration Geologists and moves all the duties of the board to the Office of the Secretary of State for issuing and revoking licenses for geologists.

The bill transfers all authority of the licensure and revocation of licenses of those who dispense hearing aids and dispenser permits to the State Board of Speech-Language Pathology, Audiology, and Hearing Aid Dispensing.

HB 1261 Revenue and taxation; level 1 freeport exemptions for certain goods in inventory for electric utilities; provide

By: Rep. David Huddleston (72nd) Through the Ways & Means Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 1261 amends O.C.G.A. 48-5-48.2, relating to level 1 freeport exemptions, to exempt electric utility equipment held in inventory by an electric utility. An ad valorem exemption will not be provided if the equipment has been incorporated into operating electric generation, distribution, or transmission facilities.

A corresponding change is made in O.C.G.A. 48-5-48.1, relating to applications for the level 1 freeport exemption, to require a summary of inventory related to electric utility taxpayer's operations.

HB 1266 Watercraft; use of certain motors on vessels being operated on the Ogeechee River; repeal a provision

By: Rep. Jason Ridley (6th) Through the Game, Fish, & Parks Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 1266 amends O.C.G.A. 52-7-13(c), pertaining to a section of the Ogeechee River, to remove a restriction on motor size for watercraft and to restrict the use of personal watercraft.

HB 1268 Official Code of Georgia Annotated; revise, modernize and correct errors in omissions

By: Rep. James Burchett (176th) Through the Code Revision Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 1268 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. The bill provides for other matters relating to revision, reenactment, and publication of the Code.

HB 1275 Medical practice; ensure that stem cell therapies are used to advance medical treatments and improve patient outcomes in an ethical manner that does not involve stem cells derived from aborted fetuses

By: Rep. Mark Newton (127th) Through the Health Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 1275 allows for use of non-FDA approved stem cell therapies under specified conditions.

HB 1277 Conservation and natural resources; increase project cost threshold for public roads or airports requiring environmental evaluations

By: Rep. Matt Barton (5th) Through the Transportation Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 1277 is the annual housekeeping bill for the Department of Transportation (DOT). The bill raises the upper cost threshold from \$100 million to \$200 million for projects that do not require environmental evaluations, except in certain cases, and allows for the department to annually adjust the threshold up to the rate of inflation.

The bill strikes language relating to various reports and benchmarks, and instead requires the department to develop and publish an annual fiscal year report. The DOT must also maintain a detailed status report for each programmed project on its website.

The bill removes the requirement for design-build contracted projects to be less than 50 percent of the total amount of construction projects.

The bill provides for the disposition of property for right-of-way. The value threshold below which the department or local government may negotiate a sale for the disposition of property is increased from \$75,000 to \$150,000, with the ability to annually adjust the threshold up to the rate of inflation. The price of the sale negotiated by the DOT must be at least 15 percent less than the market value at the time the department decides the property is no longer needed. The sale can be negotiated via an online public auction.

The bill amends provisions related to the regulation and taxation of electricity used as motor fuel and electric vehicle charging stations, to set the effective date of such provisions as January 1, 2028.

HB 1278 Professions and businesses; improve efficiencies in issuance of permits for dentists to administer conscious sedation and general anesthesia

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

Final Bill Summary: HB 1278 allows the board, or a designee of the board, to certify that a dental office is properly equipped to administer conscious sedation to a patient.

HB 1283 Family Justice Center Act; enact

By: Rep. Esther Panitch (51st) Through the Judiciary, Juvenile Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 1283, the 'Family Justice Center Act,' allows for the creation of Family Justice Centers, multiagency centers that provide coordinated services to victims of family violence, sexual assault, child abuse, elder abuse, human trafficking, and associated crimes.

A Family Justice Center can be organized and operated by a county or municipal government, a district attorney's office, or a nonprofit corporation designated to operate the center. The bill includes requirements for how these centers must be governed, depending on whether they are operated by a government entity or a nonprofit corporation.

A peace officer employed by a law enforcement unit participating in a Family Justice Center may respond to an emergency call for assistance or provide a safety response anywhere within the center's service area, even if the response would be outside the officer's normal jurisdiction, limited to emergency circumstances.

The Criminal Justice Coordinating Council may administer grants, enter into contracts, and distribute funds for the establishment and support of Family Justice Centers, prioritizing proposals with broad multidisciplinary collaboration, significant need, sustainability plans, service to underserved or rural communities, and measurable outcomes in victim safety and offender accountability. The council must submit annual state-wide reports on Family Justice Center performance to the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the House of Representatives.

No information shared by a victim within a Family Justice Center will be disclosed without informed, written consent, except as required by law or court order. Actions by Family Justice Center officials are government functions. Records maintained by Family Justice Centers are not public records and are subject to protection consistent with discovery and privacy laws.

If a victim chooses not to report an alleged sexual assault to law enforcement at the time of evidence collection, law enforcement will maintain the evidence for 10 years from the date it was collected.

HB 1284 Education; awarding of high school diplomas to high school students who are at the end of life; provide

By: Rep. Deborah Silcox (53rd) Through the Education Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 1284 allows high school students with a terminal medical condition who are receiving end-of-life care to be awarded their high school diploma. A parent or guardian must submit a written request to the local superintendent, along with medical documentation confirming the student's condition. Within 14 days, the local board will petition the State Board of Education to waive normal graduation credit requirements. If approved, the student will be granted a diploma.

The bill allows diplomas to be awarded posthumously, if necessary, and directs the State Board of Education to create rules to make sure the process happens quickly and respectfully.

HB 1302 Education and Workforce Strategy Act; enact

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

Final Bill Summary: HB 1302 restructures and modernizes Georgia's education and workforce development system. The bill renames the "Office of Student Achievement" to the "Office of Education and Workforce Strategy," and expands its role in coordinating education, workforce planning, and data systems across agencies. It requires development of a combined 'Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act' (WIOA) Plan and Perkins State Plan, aligning secondary, postsecondary, and adult workforce programs with regional labor market needs and federal requirements.

The bill designates the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) as the state apprenticeship agency, and renames the High Demand Apprenticeship Program to the Top State for Talent Pre-Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship Program. It expands support for pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship sponsors, provides

financial incentives (including contract completion awards), prioritizes high-demand careers, and updates definitions and reporting requirements related to apprenticeships.

The bill creates an "Education Data Governance Board," and directs the Office of College and Career Academies within TCSG to support workforce-aligned education programs.

HB 1310 State symbols; cotton as official state fabric; designate

By: Rep. Jaclyn Ford (170th) Through the Special Rules Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 1310 designates cotton as the official Georgia state fabric.

HB 1328 University of North Georgia military scholarships; authorize selection committee to select additional scholarship recipients

By: Rep. Will Wade (9th) Through the Higher Education Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 1328 increases the maximum number of persons that can receive the University of North Georgia military scholarships.

HB 1374 Insurance; methods of payment to healthcare providers; provide certain requirements

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

Final Bill Summary: HB 1374 addresses the ability for a healthcare provider to choose the method in which they receive payment from an insurance company. Section 2 of the bill clarifies prequalification requirements, and contract bidding and renewal processes.

HB 1379 Foreign Funding Transparency and Accountability Act; enact

By: Rep. Houston Gaines (120th) Through the Higher Education Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 1379 creates the 'Foreign Funding Transparency and Accountability Act.' The bill requires each public educational institution to submit either a report detailing all funding received from a foreign source of concern during a specified time period, or a report affirming that no such funding has been received during a specified time period.

HB 1408 Veterinarians; authorize licensed veterinary technicians to administer antirabies vaccinations to animals

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

Final Bill Summary: HB 1408 allows county boards of health to permit a licensed veterinarian or a licensed veterinary technician to be able to vaccinate a canine or feline against rabies. A veterinarian or whoever is directly supervising the administration of an anti-rabies vaccine may collect a fee for vaccine administration.

The bill adds language to "practice veterinary medicine" or "practice of veterinary medicine" to not include the administration of an anti-rabies vaccination by a licensed veterinary technician. "Practice veterinary technology" is expanded to include the administration of an anti-rabies vaccination. If a licensed veterinary technician is working under a licensed veterinarian's supervision, they may administer an anti-rabies vaccination to animals the state requires to be vaccinated.

HB 1415 Stone Mountain Memorial Association; hold all real property obtained before January 1, 1971, in trust; require

By: Rep. Devan Seabaugh (34th) Through the Game, Fish, & Parks Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 1415 requires the Stone Mountain Memorial Association to maintain an inventory of all real property owned by the association. Funds from the sale of any real property will be remitted to the association for purposes consistent with O.C.G.A. §12-3-194.

The association must hold in trust any real property acquired prior to January 1, 1971, and will not be authorized to sell such property, except when necessary for a public road right of way.

HB 1434 Aviation; air facilities; identification of airport affected areas; provide

By: Rep. David Jenkins (136th) Through the Transportation Committee

Final Bill Summary: HB 1434 defines "airport affected area" to mean any area of air, land, or water, lying beneath a civil airport imaginary surface, which is defined in federal code.

The bill requires that local governments or other political subdivisions that own or control an airport identify the airport affected area for their airports and notify any local governments that have a portion of the area within their limits, by January 1, 2027. All governing bodies that contain the airport affected area will adopt, administer, and enforce regulations for the area within their limits by July 1, 2027. Regulations may include provisions to limit the height of buildings, structures, and objects of natural growth. They must meet federal standards, can be added into local zoning policies, and can be enforced through permitting or other methods. The Department of Transportation (DOT) must assist the relevant local governments in the development, amendment, and repeal of such regulations.

When variance from a regulation is requested that would create an airport obstruction, the local government must notify the entity owning or controlling the airport, who makes the decision. Any governing body with a portion of an airport affected area within its limits that fails to enact or enforce such regulations will be ineligible for funds through DOT's local maintenance and improvement grant program for up to three years or until they are in compliance.

HB 1470 Torts; abusive litigation based on alleged website access violations under federal and state law; create a cause of action

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

Final Bill Summary: HB 1470 requires that when a civil action brought by a claimant alleging that the opposite party operates a website that violates the Americans with Disabilities Act, and that claim is either adjudicated on the merits, involuntarily dismissed, or dismissed on standing grounds, the claimant will be entitled to recover the greater of actual damages or \$10,000, reasonable attorney fees, and treble damages. Any action will be brought within two years after the entry of judgment in the underlying unsuccessful action.

SB 111 "Georgia Consumer Privacy Protection Act"; enact

By: Sen. John Albers (56th) Through the Judiciary Committee

Final Bill Summary: SB 111 amends the definition of "rural hospital organization" to include "rural freestanding emergency department." The organization must also have its primary campus in a rural county and be licensed to provide maternal/newborn services, or have at least five percent of its annual net revenue categorized as indigent care, charity care, or bad debt.

SB 143 Georgia Firefighter's Pension Fund; certain members to retire at age 50; provide

By: Sen. John Albers (56th) Through the Retirement Committee

Final Bill Summary: SB 143 allows firefighters who complete at least 25 years of service to qualify for full retirement benefits, payable beginning at age 55. The bill permits retirees to continue working or volunteering as firefighters without a break in service while receiving benefits, although they cannot accrue additional service credit.

Section 3 of the bill authorizes individuals employed full time by the Georgia Tax Court to become members of the Judicial Retirement System (JRS). Any individual hired at the Georgia Tax Court in a full-time capacity after July 1, 2026, would be a member of JRS.

Members can take any creditable service earned in the Employees' Retirement System (ERS) to JRS. ERS would be required to transfer all employer and employee contributions, with interest, to JRS. The transferring member would be required to pay an additional cost to cover the full actuarial cost of the creditable service. The bill is certified by the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts as a fiscal retirement bill.

SB 146 Health, Local Government, and Property; regulations and protections of cemeteries and burial grounds; provide

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

Final Bill Summary: SB 146 allows for a person to apply for a disturbance permit for individuals whose relatives' burial remains are interred on another's private property. The permit would allow relatives to visit those remains once the permit is approved.

The bill establishes requirements for a permit authorizing a family burial plot to be: at least one-half acre; subject to easement granting perpetual access to the family burial plot; subject to a covenant that imposes on the owner the perpetual obligation to preserve, protect, and maintain such family burial plot; not be located on a flood plain; have all human remains interred in a grave, entombed in a mausoleum, or inurned in a columbarium; be surveyed by a registered land surveyor; and not be used for the purpose of selling burial rights.

SB 148 Public School Property and Facilities; outdoor learning spaces pilot program; provide

By: Sen. Bo Hatchett (50th) Through the Education Committee

Final Bill Summary: SB 148 amends the 'Quality Basic Education Act' to allow local school boards to offer hunting safety instruction for students in grades six through 12. Each local board of education is also authorized to establish a curriculum for hunter safety instruction based on the hunter education courses offered by the Department of Natural Resources. The State Board of Education will adopt instructional standards no later than April 1, 2026.

Section 2 creates O.C.G.A. 20-2-590, which establishes an outdoor learning spaces pilot program. Private, nonprofit, and local school system funding may be utilized for community engagement, design, and construction costs. The Department of Education will provide a report on results to the House and Senate Education Committees after the third year of the pilot.

Section 3 removes the requirement of involvement from a licensed physician or other person authorized by the Georgia Composite Medical Board in automated external defibrillator programs.

Section 4 increases the number of personal days school personnel may utilize accumulated sick leave for from three days to five days.

SB 150 Retirement; permit public school systems to employ certain beneficiaries of the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia as classroom teachers; extend the program

By: Sen. Billy Hickman (4th) Through the Retirement Committee

Final Bill Summary: SB 150 extends the sunset for retired educators to return to work from June 30, 2026 to June 30, 2030. The bill requires educators who return to work in the area of English, language arts, or writing to hold a current dyslexia or reading endorsement approved by the Professional Standards

Commission (PSC). The bill is certified by the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts as a fiscal retirement bill.

SB 162 Georgia Composite Medical Board; implement an automated credentialing system for healthcare providers in this state; provide

By: Sen. Chuck Hufstetler (52nd) Through the Public and Community Health Committee

Final Bill Summary: SB 162 requires the Georgia Composite Medical Board to implement an automated licensing data management software system for physicians, physician assistants, and anesthesiologist assistants. The system will allow a single verification process for state-wide authorization, and be accessible to other state medical boards, providers, and facilities. The system will be created no later than and fully operational by January 1, 2027.

SB 179 Education; the academic and disciplinary records of each transferring student shall be provided within five days; require

By: Sen. Clint Dixon (45th) Through the Education Committee

Final Bill Summary: SB 179 amends O.C.G.A. 20-2-149.3, to implement a new graduation requirement. Beginning in the 2031-2032 school year, students must have completed a computer science course or a career, technical, and agricultural education (CTAE) course embedded with computer science in grades eight through 12 in order to graduate. The computer science course will be in-person, in a blended learning environment, or through virtual instruction.

Section 2 amends O.C.G.A. 20-2-319.1, to increase the payment by local school systems to Georgia Virtual School from \$250 per student per semester course to \$350 per student per semester course.

Section 3 creates O.C.G.A. 20-2-324.10, to encourage local school systems to facilitate access for students to participate in citizenship, civic, and patriotic activities provided by a patriotic society. Representatives of patriotic societies must have the opportunity to speak with students to promote good citizenship. These societies include, but are not limited to, Boy Scouts of America and the Girl Scouts of the USA.

SB 195 Pharmacies; pharmacists are authorized to dispense preexposure prophylaxis and postexposure prophylaxis under certain conditions; provide

By: Sen. Chuck Hufstetler (52nd) Through the Health Committee

Final Bill Summary: SB 195 authorizes a pharmacist to dispense and administer pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP).

SB 207 Professions and Businesses; a preclearance process in the licensing of individuals with criminal records who make application to or are investigated by certain licensing boards and commissions; create

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

Final Bill Summary: SB 207 amends numerous statutes relating to various professional licensing boards. Relevant definitions are included. Applicants for professional licensure will be entitled to a hearing before the professional licensing board in a timely manner.

An individual with a criminal record may petition a professional licensing board at any time for a predetermination as to whether their criminal record will disqualify them from licensure. The bill sets forth factors that boards must consider in these licensing decisions. Procedures are established to contest erroneous licensure denials based on inaccurate criminal records. Boards must notify petitioners of

grounds and rationale for denial. An individual whose licensure application has been denied may petition for administrative review of the board's decision.

No later than March 31 each year, each occupational licensing board will file a report with the secretary of state addressing the number of applicants and licenses granted, the number of applicants with a criminal record and number of those licenses granted, and the number of predetermination petitioners and the number of those petitioners deemed eligible.

Part V requires that the clerk of court accept under seal a trafficking victim defendant's petition to vacate their sentence without need of a court order. All subsequent filings, motions, hearings, court recordings, court transcripts, orders, and other court documents related to the petition will remain under seal without need for any additional court order.

SB 216 Georgia Judicial Retirement System; membership in the system for individuals employed as the director of the Prosecuting Attorneys Qualifications Commission; provide

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

Final Bill Summary: SB 216 requires individuals hired as director of the Prosecuting Attorneys Qualifications Commission on or after July 1, 2026, to become members of the Judicial Retirement System (JRS). The bill allows current and former directors to elect to transfer to JRS by paying the full actuarial cost. The bill is certified by the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts as a fiscal retirement bill.

SB 218 Prosecuting Attorneys Qualifications Commission; shall be assigned for administrative purposes only to the Administrative Office of the Courts; provide

By: Sen. Randy Robertson Through the Judiciary Non-Civil Committee (29th)

Final Bill Summary: SB 218 revises how payments are made to the members who serve on the Prosecuting Attorneys Qualifications Commission (PAQC), when information regarding a disciplinary matter is available to the public, and who has appeal rights related to decisions made by the PAQC.

The bill moves the PAQC to the Administrative Office of the Courts for administrative purposes and allows the PAQC to employ investigators who have law enforcement powers and to issue subpoenas.

SB 220 "Putting Georgia's Patients First Act"; enact

By: Sen. Matt Brass (6th) Through the Regulated Industries Committee

Final Bill Summary: SB 220 revises the permitting structure of medical cannabis authorized by the Department of Public Health. It expands the forms of authorized medical cannabis to include vaporization, oils, and raw plant materials for qualified patients. It also removes the five percent cap on THC products used in medical cannabis and sets a 1,200 milligram per-package limit.

The bill restricts licensees from advertising or marketing medical cannabis to the public, and licensees may only provide information about products directly to physicians and healthcare providers. The information provided should not be attractive to children, false or misleading, or include any medical claim not supported by scientific evidence. The bill makes illegal the ingestion of medical cannabis through smoking or combustion. However this does not include the vaporization of medical cannabis.

The bill adds to the definition of "caregiver" to include an adult designated by a patient and a health care institution where a patient is receiving health care. The bill adds to the list of conditions a patient may use medical cannabis to include cancer except skin cancer, inflammatory bowel disease, human immunodeficiency virus, or lupus. The bill requires the Department of Public Health to issue an electronic registration card, physical registration card, or both and expands the expiration of all cards to five years.

SB 261 Magistrates Retirement Fund; early retirement benefit; provide***By: Sen. Marty Harbin (16th) Through the Retirement Committee***

Final Bill Summary: SB 261 updates the governance and benefits structure of the Magistrates Retirement Fund. The bill modifies the composition of the board of commissioners to include representation from a retired magistrate while maintaining the same total number of members.

The bill increases member contributions from 3.42 percent to four percent of monthly compensation, raises the accrual rate from four percent to five percent per year of service, and expands the maximum years of service used in calculating benefits from 20 to 28 years. The bill is certified by the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts as a fiscal retirement bill.

SB 285 Emergency Communications Authority; increase in the percentage of all 9-1-1 charges to be remitted to the Peace Officers' Annuity and Benefit Fund; increase***By: Sen. Randy Robertson (29th) Through the Ways & Means Committee***

Final Bill Summary: SB 285 amends O.C.G.A. 33-8-8.3, relating to the funding of local government services, to require each county and municipal corporation to remit 1.5 percent of all funds distributed to them from insurance premium tax collections to the Peace Officers' Annuity and Benefit Fund.

The bill requires the use of funds remitted per O.C.G.A. 33-8-8.3 to be used solely for the purpose of paying benefits to members of the Peace Officers' Annuity and Benefit Fund. The General Assembly intends to appropriate an amount equal to one-half of one percent of state insurance premium tax collections to the Peace Officers' Annuity and Benefit Fund.

The bill defines the term "funded ratio" as the actuarial value of plan assets divided by the actuarial accrued liability of the plan. Starting July 1, 2027, the board overseeing the Peace Officers' Annuity and Benefit Fund is authorized to increase the benefit multiplier from \$30 per month up to \$35 per month, provided any increase is for not less than \$1 and does not lower the funded ratio of the system below 90 percent.

SB 293 License Plates for Certain Veterans; the number of free license plates issued to certain veterans; increase***By: Sen. Lee Anderson (24th) Through the Motor Vehicles Committee***

Final Bill Summary: SB 293 relates to potential fraud by used motor vehicle dealers and the use of unregistered motor vehicles. Section 1A authorizes the Department of Revenue (DOR) to issue permits for the limited operation of unregistered motor vehicles. Permits will be for 12 months and may be interchanged from vehicle to vehicle.

Such permits must be carried in the vehicle, which is authorized to operate up to two miles from the point of departure listed on the application during daylight hours. Applicants must provide proof of liability insurance and either a surety bond of at least \$50,000 or a current license as a used motor vehicle parts dealer. DOR is authorized to refuse to issue, suspend, or revoke permits and may promulgate relevant rules and regulations.

The bill classifies the following acts as felonies: making, selling, or issuing a license plate or revalidation decal (Section 1-1); falsifying the odometer reading, the date a vehicle was sold, or the date a security interest or lien was created on a certificate of title (Sections 1-10 and 1-11); and tampering with an odometer reading (Section 1-12). The minimum fine for the latter is increased from \$1,500 to \$10,000.

The bill increases penalties for the following acts to include a fine up to \$750 and/or confinement for up to 12 months: altering, obscuring, removing, affixing, or failing to properly display a license plate with intent to conceal or misrepresent the vehicle or its owner (Sections 1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 1-5, and 1-9).

Section 1-7 removes language providing for misdemeanor convictions for improperly displaying a license plate or temporary operating permit (TOP).

Section 1-6 requires a TOP to include the vehicle identification number of the vehicle to which it is assigned. It also requires DOR to prepare an annual report to the General Assembly on their activities related to fraud and suspected fraud.

Section 1-8 provides that dealer employees are authorized to use dealer plate numbers only on vehicles owned for purposes of sale or lease, for up to six months per vehicle. Starting July 1, 2027, dealer plates must be of a metal material and feature raised text and designs created by stamping dyes. Dealer application fees are increased from \$62 to \$80, and the fee for additional dealer plates is increased from \$12 to \$15.

Section 2-1 subjects the State Board of Registration of Used Motor Vehicle Dealers and Used Motor Vehicle Parts Dealers to the 'Georgia Administrative Procedure Act.'

Section 2-2 requires dealer license applicants to be Georgia residents or list an agent for service of process who is a resident. The surety bond amount required is increased from \$35,000 to \$50,000.

Section 2-3 allows DOR to inspect the records and vehicles of licensed dealers.

Section 3 repeals conflicting laws.

SB 369 "Charter Schools Act of 1998 "; completion charter schools; provide

By: Sen. Shawn Still (48th) Through the Education Committee

Final Bill Summary: SB 369 makes changes in how Georgia handles nontraditional education programs, virtual students, extracurricular participation, and charter schools. The State Board of Education is required to create clear rules and standards for nontraditional education programs, such as dropout recovery, credit recovery, and flexible scheduling, including how their performance is measured and reported.

The bill expands and clarifies policies around dropout recovery charter schools, including how they are defined, approved, and evaluated. It requires the state to create specific standards and accountability measures for these schools, separate from traditional charter schools, while also allowing existing charter schools to convert into dropout recovery charters.

The bill amends the 'Dexter Mosley Act' by adding virtual school students to the program so they may participate in extracurricular and athletic activities at their local public schools, as long as they meet requirements like enrollment, academic performance, and tryouts.

The bill requires local school boards to consider the total cost of ownership when buying technology like laptops, tablets, or interactive boards. This includes looking at repair costs, how adaptable devices are over time, and the resale or salvage value compared to the purchase price.

Starting in 2027, school systems must submit annual reports to the Georgia Department of Education showing how many devices they use, how often devices break or need repairs, how many were fixed or taken out of service, and how much money was spent repairing or replacing them. The Department of

Education must then compile this information and submit a state-wide report to state leadership each year.

Section 7 of the bill revises Georgia law related to charter schools and the approval of new local charter school petitions. It updates an incentive grant program that provides funding to local boards of education that approve new charter schools. Local school boards may receive \$250,000 per approved charter school each year for the first three years of the school's operation, subject to available funding, with a state-wide cap of \$2.25 million per fiscal year.

Finally, the bill establishes procedures for handling records if a state charter school closes, requiring the managing nonprofit to maintain records for a 180-day period before transferring them to the commission.

SB 383 Child Abuse; local child fatality review committees; modify the review

By: Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick (32nd) Through the Judiciary, Juvenile Committee

Final Bill Summary: SB 383 revises the scope and purpose of local child fatality review to focus on identifying opportunities for intervention and recommending measures to prevent future deaths in similar incidents. A local school system representative is added to the list of members required to serve on these local review committees, and the list is revised to allow either a county mental health representative or local hospital representative to serve. References that include sudden infant death syndrome are revised to include sudden infant death syndrome, sudden unexplained infant death, and sleep related infant death.

The chairperson will convene the review committee every 30 days to review reports and investigate the circumstances of all child deaths meeting the review criteria. Several time frames for reporting information and findings are extended. Each review committee will submit a copy of its annual report to the Georgia Fatality Review Panel no later than July 15 each year.

SB 395 Department of Public Health; eligible for the Low THC Oil Patient Registry; require a physician to submit certain information to the Georgia Composite Medical Board

By: Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick (32nd) Through the Public and Community Health Committee

Final Bill Summary: SB 395 authorizes the Department of Public Health to disclose information about the Low THC Oil Patient Registry to the Georgia Composite Medical Board for investigatory, compliance, and disciplinary purposes. The bill also designates ambulance services as an essential service.

SB 399 "Mason Sells AED Coordination Act"; enact

By: Sen. Marty Harbin (16th) Through the Health Committee

Final Bill Summary: SB 399 requires all emergency communications officers to be trained in telephone cardiopulmonary resuscitation (T-CPR) and instructions to facilitate the use of automated external defibrillators, in addition to the basic training already required.

SB 403 Unclaimed Property; property is presumed abandoned; provide for exceptions

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

Final Bill Summary: SB 403 amends provisions related to the disposition of unclaimed property. Definitions are modified, and provisions are amended to ensure property is not considered abandoned if an apparent owner expresses interest by adjusting the property held in the account or directing activity in the account.

A probate court order will not be required for a claimant who is an heir of a deceased owner if the claimant files an affidavit with the department that is signed by all heirs, and when the total aggregate value of unclaimed property held by the department is equal to or less than \$7,500.

SB 420 License, Permit, Tag, and Stamp Fees; fees for reef and migratory fish endorsement; provide

By: Sen. Drew Echols (49th) Through the Game, Fish, & Parks Committee

Final Bill Summary: SB 420 establishes an annual fee for reef and migratory fish endorsements to regulate both recreational and commercial offshore fishing. The bill specifies an annual \$10 fee for Georgia residents and a \$20 fee for non-residents who participate in offshore fishing, to be retained by the Department of Natural Resources. References to "rules and regulations" mean those promulgated by the Board of Natural Resources in force and in effect on January 1, 2026.

SB 427 Physicians; limited provisional licenses and a pathway to licensure for certain internationally trained physicians; provide

By: Sen. Ben Watson (1st) Through the Health Committee

Final Bill Summary: SB 427 allows the Composite Medical Board to issue a limited provisional license to an internationally trained physician to practice in Georgia. A physician that holds this limited provisional license would be eligible to apply for a full license after four years of active medical practice in a rural county, a licensed hospital, a federally qualified health center, or an accredited medical school in this state.

The bill outlines requirements that must be met, as well as situations that would cause the provisional license to be revoked. The board will submit a report to the chairperson of the House Committee on Health and the Senate Health and Human Services Committee no later than December 1, 2027.

SB 428 Medical Assistance; Department of Community Health to submit a waiver request to the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services; direct

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

Final Bill Summary: SB 428 authorizes the Department of Community Health to submit a waiver request to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to authorize Medicaid reimbursement of home and community-based services for those over the age of 21 in need of mental health services but do not require an institutional level of care.

SB 430 Taxes; certain military museums qualify as destination marketing organizations and private sector nonprofit organizations; provide

By: Sen. Randy Robertson (29th) Through the Ways & Means Committee

Final Bill Summary: SB 430, Section 1, amends O.C.G.A. 48-13-50.2, concerning definitions related to excise taxes on rooms, lodgings, and accommodations, to clarify that the term "tourism product development" applies to museums, to include military museums.

Section 2 amends O.C.G.A. 48-13-51, relating to county and municipal levies on public accommodations for program of tourism, by removing a \$500,000 tax revenue threshold for local governing authorities that triggers the ability for a local governing authority to alter or change the private sector nonprofit organization engaged to promote tourism without an agreement between the parties. If the governing authority and destination marketing organization cannot agree on a change to the designated nonprofit, the matter will be addressed by the Hotel Motel Tax Performance Review Board. The bill provides for criteria to be considered by the board when evaluating agreements.

Section 3 amends O.C.G.A. 48-13-56.1, relating to the Hotel Motel Tax Performance Review Board to require the board to meet quarterly as well as within 90 days of the receipt of a complaint. The board must transmit findings to the commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs within 30 days of a hearing.

If the commissioner deems remedial action is necessary, the subject of a complaint has 60 calendar days from the receipt of a notification of noncompliance to submit a new report specifying the rate of taxation and amounts collected and remitted. The subject of a complaint will provide a notification of noncompliance to the legal organ of the county within 30 days of receipt.

The bill adds that the commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs will notify the commissioner of the Department of Revenue of any failure to take remedial action, which can trigger compliance enforcement.

SB 433 "Rio's Law"

By: Sen. Brian Strickland (42nd) Through the Public Safety & Homeland Security Committee

Final Bill Summary: SB 433 creates a special license plate for persons with autism spectrum disorder or other developmental disability. Peace officer training will include basic training courses on interacting with a driver with this license plate.

SB 435 Georgia Development Authority; rename as the Georgia Agricultural Development Authority

By: Sen. Russ Goodman (8th) Through the Agriculture & Consumer Affairs Committee

Final Bill Summary: SB 435 replaces "Georgia Development Authority" with "Georgia Agricultural Development Authority" throughout the Code.

SB 439 "Fair Business Practices Act of 1975"; regulation of referral agencies for assisted living communities and personal care homes; provide

By: Sen. Shawn Still (48th) Through the Health Committee

Final Bill Summary: SB 439 requires disclosure to a prospective resident, or an authorized representative, if a referral agency is obtaining a referral fee from an assisted living community or personal care home.

SB 441 Local Government Investment Pool; certain pooled investments to be approved by the State Depository Board; require

By: Sen. Marty Harbin (16th) Through the Budget and Fiscal Affairs Oversight Committee

Final Bill Summary: SB 441 adds a requirement that any pooled investment, including a local government's pooled investment, for the collective of two or more local governments must be approved by the State Depository Board prior to being established. This new requirement will only apply to pooled investments made after July 1, 2026.

SB 443 Offenses Against Public Order; the punishment for the offense of obstructing highways, streets, sidewalks, or other public passages; increase

By: Sen. Carden Summers (13th) Through the Judiciary Non-Civil Committee

Final Bill Summary: SB 443 amends O.C.G.A. 16-11-43 to make the offense of purposely or recklessly obstructing any highway or street a high and aggravated misdemeanor. A person who violates this Code section may be held civilly liable for damages resulting from the offense. Purposely or reckless obstructing any sidewalk or other public passage remains a misdemeanor.

SB 447 Control of Soil Erosion and Sedimentation; denial or nonacceptance of permits; revise provisions

By: Sen. Clint Dixon (45th) Through the Natural Resources & Environment Committee

Final Bill Summary: SB 447 pertains to Title 12 of the O.C.G.A. as it relates to soil erosion and sedimentation. The bill creates a definition for "completed application" and "material addition," and local issuing authorities are required to provide clear requirements for permits.

Within the first five days after application filing, the authority must determine whether or not the application is complete. If incomplete, the authority must notify the applicant. If the authority fails to notify the applicant within the five-day period, their application is deemed complete.

If the application is denied, the applicant may resubmit a modified application, and the authority must issue or deny permit within 20 days after the first resubmission and 14 days after any subsequent resubmission. These time frames will not apply in any county which there is a locally owned airport that is adjacent to 9,000 acres or more of property that is currently or formerly owned by a municipality, unless otherwise approved through referendum.

If an authority requires compliance with additional regulatory items, all requirements are subject to review within the aforementioned time frames. If the authority does not issue or deny a permit within the provided timeframe, the authority is required to refund fees collected during permit application. Authorities are not permitted to deny applications for reasons not authorized under local, state, or federal law. If denial or nonacceptance occurs, the authority must provide a written list of reasons for denial.

An applicant may petition their local superior court for mandamus relief if they are aggrieved with the authority's compliance failure unless the county has a locally owned airport that is adjacent to 9,000 acres or more of property that is currently or formerly owned by a municipality, unless otherwise approved through referendum.

The bill amends Chapter 60 of Title 36 of the O.C.G.A. to require each local government to maintain a publicly accessible website that provides status information for all building permits for which an application has been submitted. The status information must be accurate and updated in real time.

The bill further amends Chapter 2 of Title 8 of the O.C.G.A. relating to building inspections. An approved inspection report is deemed approved as a matter of law, and the local governing authority has two business days to notify the private professional provider if there are any deficiencies in their inspection report. If deficiencies are present, the provider will submit a corrected inspection report. No deficiency in an inspection report or a correction will prevent work completion or progress.

SB 452 Retirement and Pension; maximum employer contribution to a 401(k) for certain state law enforcement officers; increase

By: Sen. Bo Hatchett (50th) Through the Retirement Committee

Final Bill Summary: SB 452 defines the term "state law enforcement officer" and requires employers to make additional contributions to a qualifying officer's 401(k) account. Officers with at least five years of creditable service who contribute a minimum of five percent of their salary will be eligible for an additional employer contribution equal to two percent of the officer's compensation for each year of service beyond five years, up to a maximum total employer contribution of 15 percent. The bill is certified by the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts as a non-fiscal retirement bill.

SB 470 "Emergency & Public Safety Signal Protection Act"; enact

By: Sen. John Albers (56th) Through the Technology and Infrastructure Innovation Committee

Final Bill Summary: SB 470, also known as the 'Emergency and Public Safety Signal Protection Act,' defines terms related to signal jammers. These are devices capable of interfering with wireless, cellular, GPS, radar, radio, or cable communication signals. The bill makes it unlawful to possess, use, or operate a signal jammer with the intent to disrupt or interfere with such communications.

Violations are punishable as a felony, with heightened penalties if the interference targets communications involving public safety agencies, 911 call centers, or components of critical infrastructure. The bill prohibits the manufacture, sale, distribution, or importation of signal jammers in the state, with exemptions for devices authorized under federal law and for law enforcement.

SB 485 Professional Counselors; applicants for a license in social work enrolled in a master's degree program to take the master's social work licensing examination in their final semester of the program; authorize

By: Sen. Chuck Payne (54th) Through the Regulated Industries Committee

Final Bill Summary: SB 485 requires of nail technicians that on and after July 1, 2028, any applicant of registration must present a REAL ID copy of their license as part of their application and renewals of applications. All apprentices must have REAL ID on file in their place of business.

The bill adds a subsection to the Code to allow for someone in their final semester of their master's degree in social work to sit for the master's social work licensing examination.

The bill adds to Code regarding applied behavior analysis the definition of certifying entity to include that the potential successor Behavior Analyst Certification Board, Inc. must be a nonprofit organization.

SB 489 Board of Commissioners of the Judges of the Probate Courts Retirement Fund of Georgia; allow to set monthly dues

By: Sen. Russ Goodman (8th) Through the Retirement Committee

Final Bill Summary: SB 489 authorizes the board of commissioners of the Judges of the Probate Courts Retirement Fund of Georgia to set monthly member dues between \$105 and \$150, beginning July 1, 2026, based on actuarial recommendations to maintain the fund's financial soundness. The bill increases the percentage of certain probate court fees and fines that must be allocated to the retirement fund. The bill is certified by the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts as a non-fiscal retirement bill.

SB 500 Behavioral Health Care Workforce Data Base; expand to include data from licensed health care professionals

By: Sen. Mike Hodges (3rd) Through the Public and Community Health Committee

Final Bill Summary: SB 500 renames the "Behavioral Health Care Workforce Data Base" to "Health Care Workforce Data Base." The number of provider licensing boards included in the data base will be expanded from five to 15.

SB 535 Mental Health; the re-creation of community service boards; provide

By: Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick (32nd) Through the Public and Community Health Committee

Final Bill Summary: SB 535 updates provisions relating to community service boards (CSB). CSB executive directors can serve on governing boards, must be appointed by the commissioner of the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, and will become employees of the department.

Those serving as executive directors as of June 30, 2026 can continue as CSB employees if they choose to do so by August 1, 2026. CSB governing boards must incorporate minimum bylaws as established by the department.

SB 542 Sexual Offenses; clergy members to be charged with certain improper sexual contact offenses; permit

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

Final Bill Summary: SB 542 adds the offense of improper sexual contact by a clergy member in the first degree and improper sexual contact by a clergy member in the second degree when the person, while in a pastoral counseling or spiritual authority relationship with the victim and by means of coercion or intimidation knowingly engages in sexually explicit conduct or sexual contact, respectively, with the victim. A first degree punishment will be by imprisonment for between one to 25 years and by a fine, while a second degree punishment will be as a misdemeanor of a high and aggravated nature for the first conviction. A statute of limitations of 15 years is provided in the bill.

SB 547 Offenses of Pimping and Pandering; modify the penalties

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

Final Bill Summary: SB 547 removes provisions of O.C.G.A. 16-6-13 that make the first offenses of pimping or pandering high and aggravated misdemeanors. The bill makes both pimping and pandering felonies punishable by imprisonment for one to 10 years, regardless of whether it is the defendant's first or subsequent offense.

SB 551 Standard, Labeling, and Adulteration of Food; eggs; repeal provisions

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

Final Bill Summary: SB 551 repeals and reserves Article 8 of Chapter 2 of Title 26 of the O.C.G.A. relating to eggs.

SB 552 "True Patriotism and Universal Student Access (TPUSA) Act"; enact

By: Sen. Ben Watson (1st) Through the Judiciary Committee

Final Bill Summary: SB 552, the "True Patriotism and Universal Student Access (TPUSA) Act," permits students enrolled in public schools to organize partisan or non-partisan political activities and groups before, during, and after school to the same extent that students are permitted to organize other non-curricular student activities and groups during non-instructional time.

Nothing will be construed to require a public school to establish a limited open forum, but a public school will be deemed to have established a limited open forum when the school permits a student group to meet on school premises during non-instructional time.

Partisan and non-partisan groups will be given the same access to public school facilities and the same opportunity to announce meetings as is given to other groups without discrimination, provided the school uniformly ensures that meetings are voluntary, student initiated, and do not substantially interfere with educational activities, attendance, and discipline.

SB 553 Professions and Businesses; repeal Chapter 14, relating to electrical contractors, plumbers, conditioned air contractors, low voltage contractors, and utility contractors and enact a new Chapter 14

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

Final Bill Summary: SB 553 creates the State Construction Industry Licensing Board which is under the Secretary of State's Office for administrative purposes. The board consists of 27 members. It is comprised of electrical contractors, plumbers, conditioned air contractors, low voltage contractors, utility contractors, and two members who have no connection with any of the previous mentioned professions.

All members are appointed by the governor, confirmed by the Senate, and will serve for four years on the board. The board has the power to request information from state agencies, provide regulation for reciprocity with other states, establish rules and regulations, and assess civil penalties up to \$10,000 per violation of any requirement or rule of the board.

The bill creates divisions under the board for electrical contractors, plumbers, conditioned air contractors, low voltage contractors, utility contractors and each division is responsible for their own licenses. Each division is responsible to approve examinations requirements, register and license or grant a certificate and issue renewal licenses and renewal certificates biennially, investigate alleged violations, reprimand any person who is found out of compliance with rules and regulations, and review minimum standards.

The bill adds specific requirements for each profession to receive a license. A committee under the board will also determine if any current or former member of the military has received military training that can fulfill the requirements necessary to receive a license.

SB 556 HOPE Scholarship; the inclusion of advanced placement and international baccalaureate fine arts courses in the calculation of grade point averages; provide

By: Sen. Chuck Payne (54th) Through the Higher Education Committee

Final Bill Summary: SB 556 creates the Dedicating Resources to Educationally Advance More Students (DREAMS) Scholarship as a needs-based scholarship program for eligible students enrolled in eligible postsecondary institutions in Georgia. The maximum award amount per year is set at \$3,000, with a duration maximum of eight semesters or 12 quarters. The Georgia Student Finance Authority is authorized to establish and maintain a separate fund for this program, which will include public or private grants, gifts, donations, or contributions dedicated to this program.

The bill includes advanced fine arts courses in the calculation of student grade point averages for the purpose of determining HOPE and other scholarship eligibility.

The bill prevents the prohibition of possession of an opioid antagonist on university system or technical college system property or at university system or technical college system sponsored activities. The bill requires institutions and units to acquire and maintain a supply of opioid antagonists in a secure location, subject to available funding from community funding sources.

For institutions or units that maintain an automated external defibrillator, the bill requires such institutions or units to maintain an opioid antagonist storage compartment within three feet of said automated external defibrillator, subject to available funding from community funding sources. The bill authorizes university system and technical college system personnel to administer opioid antagonists when necessary in specified situations.

The bill establishes a scholarship for medical students that is conditional on the applicant agreeing to practice medicine in this state for no less than four years after graduation from an eligible medical school.

The bill raises the maximum contribution amount per beneficiary for savings trust accounts related to the 'Georgia Higher Education Savings Plan Act' from \$235,000 to \$550,000. The bill provides for a tax deduction related to certain qualified tuition programs.

The bill updates the Georgia Defined Contribution Plan to clarify that individuals performing services for an institution in which they are enrolled in either part time or full time are excluded from being considered employees.

The bill clarifies provisions related to the minimum reserve amount of the lottery shortfall reserve.

SB 570 "Georgia Human Trafficking Prevention Training Act"; enact***By: Sen. Shawn Still (48th) Through the Judiciary Committee***

Final Bill Summary: SB 570 requires hotels and third-party managed short-term rental properties' employees to complete a training course annually on identifying and reporting suspected human trafficking. Owners, operators, or managers who violate this Code section will be subject to a fine of \$500 for a first offense, \$1,000 for a second offense, and \$2,000 for a third or subsequent violation.

The provisions of the bill do not apply to short-term rental properties managed exclusively by the property owner and offered for rental fewer than 15 days per calendar year.

SB 587 Offenses Against Public Health and Morals; the establishment of an animal cruelty database; provide***By: Sen. Shawn Still (48th) Through the Judiciary Non-Civil Committee***

Final Bill Summary: SB 587, Sections 1 and 2, amends Code sections 16-5-70 and 16-5-102 to allow for court orders to locate the parent or guardian of an alleged victim of child or elder abuse. If a child, disabled adult, elder person, or long-term care facility resident is moved from a known address to an unknown location during an open investigation, the superior court for the county of the known address may grant an order to locate the parent or guardian of record upon a showing by a law enforcement official that an inquiry regarding the welfare and safety of the child is necessary to complete the investigation.

Section 3 requires the Prosecuting Attorneys' Council (PAC) of the State of Georgia to create and maintain on its website a state-wide animal cruelty database to assist shelters, animal protection and control agencies, and others in animal placement determinations.

The database must list the full names of each individual who has been convicted of or plead to bestiality; criminal trespass involving a wild animal; interfering with, harming of, or aggravated harming of a public safety animal or search and rescue animal; or dogfighting. The list must be accessible at no cost and updated at least every month. PAC may solicit input from law enforcement and prosecuting attorneys as to what additional information should be included.

The bill establishes procedures for sharing and reporting relevant information. The database will be created by January 1, 2027, subject to appropriations or other available funding.

SB 589 "Quality Basic Education Act"; the date by which a child must attain a certain age to be eligible for enrollment in kindergarten or first grade; revise***By: Sen. Matt Brass (6th) Through the Education Committee***

Final Bill Summary: SB 589 allows parents or guardians to choose to enroll their child in Georgia's voluntary pre-K program if the child is either four or five years old by September 1. It makes clear that eligible children must be allowed to enroll if a parent requests it, but a child can only participate in the program for one year.

The bill ensures that both four and five-year-olds are treated equally when it comes to selection for available pre-K spots. The changes would take effect in the 2026-2027 school year.

The bill requires Georgia public schools that issue student ID badges to students in grades six through 12 to print information about the 9-8-8 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline on those badges. The message must include that students can call or text 9-8-8 at any time for help with suicidal thoughts, emotional distress, or substance abuse challenges. The requirement applies to ID badges issued on or after July 1, 2026.

SB 591 Offenses Against Public Order; the disruption of a religious service; prohibit
By: Sen. Steve Gooch (51st) Through the Judiciary Non-Civil Committee

Final Bill Summary: SB 591 amends O.C.G.A. 16-11-34.2, relating to disorderly conduct, to prohibit disorderly conduct disrupting any religious service. Disorderly or disruptive conduct at a funeral or memorial service of an individual receiving military funeral honors is an aggravated misdemeanor.