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Happy Valentine's Day – Criminal Justice

SB448 would allow police officers who arrest someone, with or without a warrant, or for a traffic violation to ask for proof of citizenship.

HB1134 would provide for what is called "concurrent authority" of prosecuting attorneys and the Attorney General in cases involving gang activity. If a local prosecutor must recuse him or herself from a case, or if the crime crosses county lines—often the case with gang-related activity—the Attorney General can prosecute it. This dovetails with the Governor's budget proposal to create a new Gang Prosecution Unit in the Attorney General's office. Prosecuting gangs has been one of his top priorities since taking office.

SB257 would make all misdemeanor theft offenses eligible for sealing and expungement. People who have been pardoned would get a clean record, making it easier to get a job, sign a lease or take out a loan. It would also expedite expungement for human trafficking victims. This builds on SB288, passed in 2020, which removed economic barriers for more than 4 million Georgians. Sex crimes, violent offenses and DUIs do not qualify. The new bill passed the Senate almost unanimously and goes to the House for review.