

THIS WEEK IN THE SENATE

2024 LEGISLATIVE SESSION • WEEK 8



WEEK 8

BY SEN. JOHN F. KENNEDY, PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

February 29th marked a significant milestone for the General Assembly with the completion of what is known on Capitol Hill as “Crossover Day.” This marked the deadline for all Senate bills to cross over to the House chamber and vice versa. The Senate passed a multitude of legislation throughout the week, addressing key areas such as agriculture, retirement benefits for state law enforcement and the protection of Georgia’s business sector.

This week members of the Georgia General Assembly joined Governor Brian P. Kemp on the steps of the State Capitol as he signed the amended budget for Fiscal Year 2024 into law. This budget which adjusts the current fiscal year’s budget to address changes statewide and previous unanticipated needs. I appreciate the Senate Budget and Evaluation Office and the Senate Committee on Appropriations for their hard work in crafting a balanced amended budget for the remainder of the fiscal year.

The Senate spent many hours vetting various pieces of legislation aimed at protecting Georgians from domestic swatting, foreign threats and human trafficking. Notably, Senate Bill 421, which enhances penalties for false public alarms, commonly known as swatting, received unanimous approval from the Senate this week. This bipartisan effort underscores our commitment to holding swatters accountable to the fullest extent of the law. I commend my colleagues from both sides of the aisle for their dedication to defending the interests of Georgians. Next, the bill will undergo further consideration by the House.

We will be back on the Senate floor to resume legislative business during our ninth week of the 2024 Legislative Session. As always, please do not hesitate to reach out to my office if you have any questions regarding legislative matters.

Until next week,

Senator John F. Kennedy
President Pro Tempore, Georgia Senate

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CAPITOL EVENTS



Majority Leader Steve Gooch Celebrates North Georgia Vineyard Owners

On Monday, Majority Leader Steve Gooch held a press conference on the South Steps of the Capitol to name March as “Georgia Wine Month.”

Sen. Elena Parent’s Press Conference on Contraception and IVF Legislation

On Wednesday, Sen. Parent was joined by members of the Senate, House, and advocates for reproductive freedom to discuss the importance of Senate Bills 564 and 565.



150th Anniversary of the Georgia Department of Agriculture

On Wednesday, members of the Senate and House joined Gov. Brian P. Kemp, Speaker Jon Burns, and Agricultural Commissioner Tyler Harper, to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Georgia Department of Agriculture,



Signing of the 2024 Budget

On Thursday, Gov. Brian P. Kemp signed the Amended 2024 Fiscal Year budget which passed both the Senate and the House earlier in Session.



FLOOR VOTES

HBCU Innovation and Economic Prosperity Planning Districts

Senate Bill 235, sponsored by Sen. Sonya Halpern (D-Atlanta), creates the HBCU Innovation and Economic Prosperity Planning Districts Commission. *Passed by substitute with a vote of 46 to 7. - SB 235*

Postsecondary Credit Transfer and Collaboration

Senate Bill 399, sponsored by Sen. Shelly Echols (R-Gainesville), encourages and states expectations for the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia and provides for the transfer of postsecondary course credits. *Passed by a vote of 53 to 0. - SB 399*

Georgia Model Employer Program for Disabilities

Senate Bill 384, sponsored by Sen. Billy Hickman (R-Statesboro), provides for the development and administration of the State of Georgia as a Model Employer (GAME) Program. *Passed by a vote of 51 to 1. - SB 384*

Anti-Drag Racing

Senate Bill 10, sponsored by Sen. Emanuel Jones (D-Decatur), provides for the offense of knowingly attending and facilitating an illegal drag race or a laying drags exhibition. *Passed by substitute with a vote of 46 to 6. - SB 10*

Protecting Georgia's Children on Social Media Act of 2024

Senate Bill 351, sponsored by Sen. Jason Anavitarte (R-Dallas), would require local boards of education to adopt, implement, and enforce social media policies. *Passed by substitute with a vote of 51 to 1. - SB 351*

Small Business Protection Act of 2024

Senate Bill 429, sponsored by Sen. Greg Dolezal (R-Cumming) would establish procedures for legislation and regulations, including the preparation of small business impact analyses. *Passed with a vote of 40 to 13. - SB 429*

County Boards of Health

Senate Bill 293, sponsored by Sen. Ben Watson (R-Savannah), would revise the manner of selection and qualifications of district health directors. *Passed by substitute with a vote of 37 to 15. - SB 293*

FLOOR VOTES

Medical Assistance

Senate Bill 455, sponsored by Sen. Brian Strickland (R-McDonough), would revise certain provisions with federal law, prevent third-party payers from denying payment based solely on lack of prior authorization, and mandate a response to state inquiries on health care claims within 60 days. *Passed by a substitute with a vote of 45 to 2. - SB 455*

Central Caregiver Registry

Senate Bill 456, sponsored by Sen. Brian Strickland (R-McDonough), would add disabled persons to the Central Caregiver Registry. *Passed by substitute with a vote of 49 to 0. - SB 456*

Provisions Relating to Income Withholding Orders

Senate Bill 520, sponsored by Sen. Bill Cowsert (R-Athens), clarifies and changes provisions related to income withholding orders. it also aligns state law with federal terminology, replacing “income deduction order” with “income withholding order.” *Passed with a vote of 49 to 0. - SB 520*

‘Georgia Hemp Farming Act’

Senate Bill 494, sponsored by Sen. Sam Watson (R-Moultrie), the “Georgia Hemp Farming Act,” would further regulate hemp processor license guidelines. *Passed by substitute with a vote of 43 to 5. - SB 494*

Reporting of Accidents

Senate Bill 417, sponsored by Sen. John Albers (R-Roswell), would relate to the reporting of accidents relative to elevators, dumbwaiters, escalators, manlifts, and moving walks. Furthermore, it would remove from service such equipment involved in an accident. *Passed by substitute with a vote of 48 to 4. - SB 417*

Boundless Opportunities for Georgia Students Act

Senate Bill 147, sponsored by Sen. Shawn Still (R-Norcross), would permit student transfers between local school systems without contracts between the local school system where the student resides and the local school system where the student seeks to enroll. *Passed by substitute with a vote of 38 to 14. - SB 147*

Victim-Centered Address Confidentiality Program

Senate Bill 324, sponsored by Sen. Kim Jackson (D-Stone Mountain), would provide for a victim-centered address confidentiality program. *Passed by substitute with a vote of 51 to 0. - SB 324*

FLOOR VOTES

Government Transparency & Campaign Finance

Senate Bill 368, sponsored by Sen. Rick Williams (R-Milledgeville), prohibits foreign nationals from contributing to candidates or campaign committees and prohibits such groups from accepting contributions from foreign nationals. *Passed by substitute with a vote of 52 to 0. - SB 368*

Development Authorities

Senate Bill 171, sponsored by Sen. Max Burns (R-Sylvania), would propose limitations on a director's hold-over period, mandating yearly continuing education for directors, and suspending voting rights for directors who fail to meet training requirements. *Passed by substitute with a vote of 50 to 2. - SB 171*

Instruction Permits

Senate Bill 402, sponsored by Sen. Frank Ginn (R-Athens), revises restrictions upon the operation of Class C motor vehicles and by Class D license holders with certain passengers in the vehicle. *Passed by a vote of 35 to 17. - SB 402*

The Donor Intent Protection Act

Senate Bill 433, sponsored by Sen. Bill Cowser (R-Athens), prohibits charitable organizations from violating the terms of charitable contributions. *Passed by substitute with a vote of 44 to 9. - SB 433*

Appellate Court Judges

Senate Bill 450, sponsored by Sen. John F. Kennedy (R-Macon), clarifies that neither superior court nor a state court shall have appellate jurisdiction. It also will guide the payments of certain sums into the registry of the trial court of appeals to the Court of Appeals or the Supreme Court. *Passed by substitute with a vote of 50 to 0.*

Georgia Consumer Privacy Protection Act

Senate Bill 473, sponsored by Sen. John Albers (R-Roswell), enacts the “Georgia Consumer Privacy Protection Act,” which protects the privacy of consumer personal data in Georgia. *Passed by substitute with a vote of 37 to 15. - SB 473*

Safety & Welfare for All Individuals Study Committee

Senate Resolution 570, sponsored by Sen. Randy Robertson (R-Cataula), creates the Senate Supporting Safety and Welfare for All Individuals in the Department of Corrections Facilities Study Committee. *Adopted by a vote of 53 to 0. - SR 570*

FLOOR VOTES

Road Dedicated in Dr. Robert F. Sullivan's Memory

Senate Resolution 583, sponsored by Sen. Bo Hatchett (R-Cornelia), honors the life of Dr. Robert F. Sullivan and dedicates a road in his memory. *Adopted by substitute with a vote of 52 to 0.*

Roundabout Named in Princess Trahlyta's Memory

Senate Resolution 609, sponsored by Sen. Steve Gooch (R-Dahlonega), dedicates roundabout in Princess Trahlyta's memory. *Adopted by substitute with a vote of 53 to 0. - SR 609*

Austin's Law

Senate Bill 465, sponsored by Sen. Russ Goodman (R-Cogdell), provides for felony offense of aggravated involuntary manslaughter. *Passed by substitute with a vote of 49 to 3. - SB 465*

High-Demand Apprenticeship Program

Senate Bill 497, sponsored by Billy Hickman (R-Statesboro), renames Georgia's High-Demand Initiatives Program to High-Demand Apprenticeship Program, adjust contract awards, and establish the public service Apprenticeship Program to promote registered apprenticeships. *Passed by substitute with a vote of 52 to 1. - SB 497*

Emergency Medical Services

Senate Bill 515, sponsored by Sen. Bo Hatchett (R-Cornelia), provides for a two-year pilot program to provide additional ambulances to certain areas to Georgia. *Passed by substitute with a vote of 53 to 0. - SB 515*

Constitutional Amendment Regarding Sports Betting

Senate Resolution 579, sponsored by Sen Bill Cowser (R-Athens), proposed an amendment to the Constitution of the State of Georgia to authorize the Georgia General Assembly to provide by general law for sports betting in this state. *Adopted by a vote of 41 to 12. - SR 579*

Anti-Swatting Legislation

Senate Bill 421, sponsored by Sen. Clint Dixon (R-Gwinnett), enhances penalties for the offense of transmitting a false public alarm. *Passed by substitute with a vote of 53 to 0. - SB 421*

Georgia Religious Freedom Restoration Act

Senate Bill 180, sponsored by Sen. Ed Setzler (R-Acworth), further guides policy regarding religious freedoms from governmental interference. *Passed by a vote of 33 to 19. - SB 180*

FLOOR VOTES

Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Innovation Commission

Senate Bill 198, sponsored by Sen. Sally Harrell (D-Atlanta), creates the Georgian's with Intellectual Disabilities and Developmental Disabilities Innovation Commission. *Passed by substitute with a vote of 50 to 2. - SB 198*

Outdoor Learning Spaces Pilot Program

Senate Bill 202, sponsored by Sen. Sheikh Rahman (D-Lawrenceville), authorizes the Department of Education to establish a pilot program that would provide for an outdoor learning spaces pilot program. *Passed by a substitute with a vote of 51 to 0. - SB 502*

Education Impact Fees

Senate Bill 208, sponsored by Greg Dolezal (R-Cumming), authorizes local school boards of education high growth school systems to impose education impact fees. *Passed as amended by a vote of 49 to 2. - SB 208*

Private Review Agents

Senate Bill 307, sponsored by Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick (R-Marietta), authorizes health insurers to implement and maintain a selective application of reduction program in prior authorization requirements under certain circumstances. *Passed by substitute with a vote of 50 to 1. - SB 307*

Tallapoosa Judicial Circuit

Senate Bill 347, sponsored by Sen. Jason Anavitarte (R-Dallas), provides for additional judge or the superior courts of the Tallapoosa Judicial Circuit by the appointment of the Governor. *Passed with a vote of 51 to 0. - SB 347*

Daniel D. Podsiadly, Jr. Act

Senate Bill 371, sponsored by Sen. Brian Strickland (R-McDonough), requires the State Board of Workers' Compensation to investigate claims related to catastrophic injuries to determine if an employee is an eligible peace officer. *Passed by a vote of 53 to 0. - SB 371*

Prohibition of Taxpayer Funds to American Library Association

Senate Bill 390, sponsored by Sen. Larry Walker III (R-Perry), prohibits the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia from using any taxpayer or privately donated funds on any materials, services, or operations offered by the American Library Association or any of its affiliates. *Passed by substitute with a vote of 33 to 20. - SB 390*

FLOOR VOTES

Wesley's Law

Senate Bill 395, sponsored by Sen. Clint Dixon (R-Gwinnett), authorizes the possession of opioid antagonists in schools, as well as authorize trained school personnel to administer opioid antagonists. *Passed by substitute with a vote of 54 to 0. - SB 395*

Raesha Danielle Heard Act

Senate Bill 407, sponsored by Sen. Donzella James (D-Atlanta), requires the documentation of certain information in incidents of family violence. *Passed with a vote of 52 to 1. - SB 407*

Personal Privacy Protection Act

Senate Bill 414, sponsored by Sen. John F. Kennedy (R-Macon), restricts the ability of public agencies to seek and handle personal information, with exceptions. *Passed by substitute with a vote of 33 to 22. - SB 414*

Prohibition of Foreign Ownership of Agricultural Land

Senate Bill 420, sponsored by Sen. Jason Anavitarte (R-Dallas), prohibits the acquisition of a possessory interest in certain land by certain foreign by persons and entities. *Passed by substitute with a vote of 41 to 11. - SB 420*

Electric Membership Corporation Disclosure and Investment Reform

Senate Bill 422, sponsored by Sen. Clint Dixon (R-Gwinnett), modifies the percentage limitation as to the amount of investments an electric membership corporation may make and maintain in a gas affiliate. *Passed by substitute with a vote of 51 to 1. - SB 422*

Georgia Electronic Legal and Notarial Services

Senate Bill 425, sponsored by Sen. Blake Tillery (R-Vidalia), provides for the modernization of certain legal, notarial, and court services using electronic means. *Passed by substitute with a vote of 51 to 4. - SB 425*

Prohibition of Taxpayer Funds to American Library Association

Senate Bill 437, sponsored by Sen. Randy Robertson (R-Cataula), authorizes the Department of Agriculture to enforce certain criminal laws and regulate consumable hemp products. *Passed by substitute with a vote of 49 to 1. - SB 437*

FLOOR VOTES

Preserving Lawful Utilization of Services for Veterans Act of 2024

Senate Bill 451, sponsored by Sen. Nabilah Islam Parkes (D-Lawrenceville), places certain requirements on the Department of Veterans Services to create a voluntary loan program at certain financial institutions to assist veterans. *Passed by substitute with a vote of 52 to 1. - SB 451*

Alimony and Child Support

Senate Bill 454, sponsored by Sen. Brian Strickland (R-McDonough), provides for guidelines for child support award calculation. *Passed with a vote of 52 to 0. - SB 454*

Public Utilities and Public Transportation

Senate Bill 457, sponsored by Sen. Sen. Chuck Hufstetler (R-Rome), reestablishes a consumer utility counsel to represent consumers in matters before the Public Service Commission or other agencies concerning public utilities. *Passed with a vote of 53 to 0. - SB 457*

Advanced Practice Registered Nurse and Physician Assistants

Senate Bill 460, sponsored by Sen. Clint Dixon (R-Gwinnett), revises provisions relating to the number of advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants that physician can authorize and supervise at any one time. *Passed as amended with a vote of 40 to 11. - SB 460*

School Supplies for Educators Act

Senate Bill 464, sponsored by Sen. Clint Dixon (R-Gwinnett), provides for financial and technical assistance to teachers who purchase school supplies online. *Passed as amended with a vote of 52 to 1. - SB 464*

College Success 529 Expansion Act

Senate Bill 469, sponsored by Sen. Jason Esteves (D-Atlanta), increases the maximum amount of contributions allowed per beneficiary of savings trust accounts for higher education expenses. *Passed as amended with a vote of 54 to 0. - SB 469*

Combatting Organized Retail Crime Act

Senate Bill 472, sponsored by Sen. John Albers (R-Roswell), revises the type of sales or transactions that must follow the Informed Consumers Act and amends the requirements for a seller to be considered a high-volume third-party seller. *Passed with a vote of 52 to 0. - SB 472*

FLOOR VOTES

Secondary Metals Recyclers

Senate Bill 479, sponsored by Sen. Bo Hatchett (R-Cornelia), exempts several convertors from regulations related to the purchase of regulated metal property from certain sellers. *Passed by substitute with a vote of 50 to 1. - SB 479*

Georgia Board of Health care Workforce

Senate Bill 480, sponsored by Sen. Mike Hodges (R-Brunswick), provides for student loan repayment for mental health and substance use professionals serving in certain capacities. *Passed with a vote of 44 to 1. - SB 480*

Felony Offense for Eluding Police

Senate Bill 490, sponsored by Sen. Bill Cowsert (R-Athens), revises penalties for fleeing or attempting to elude a police officer, making a third of subsequent conviction for such crime a felony. *Passed by substitute with a vote of 52 to 1.*

Sexual Offender Risk Review Board

Senate Bill 493, sponsored by Sen. Bo Hatchett (R-Cornelia), provides for additional penalties for registered sexual offenders convicted of photographing a minor without consent of the minor's guardian. *Passed by substitute with a vote of 53 to 1. - SB 493*

Low THC Oil Patient Registry

Senate Bill 495, sponsored by Sen. Sam Watson (R-Moultrie), creates a term of validity for low THC oil registration cards and imposes specific delivery requirements on DPH with regard to the cards. *Passed by substitute with a vote of 51 to 3. - SB 495*

Ad Valorem Taxation of Property

Senate Bill 496, sponsored by Sen. Max Burns (R-Sylvania), provides for the extension of preferential assessment periods for certain historic properties relating to general provisions relative to ad valorem taxation of property. *Passed with a vote of 47 to 6. - SB 496*

Department of Administrative Services

Senate Bill 502, sponsored by Sen. Clint Dixon (R-Gwinnett), prohibits state agencies from contracting for advertising or marketing services with certain companies or from supporting certain companies. *Passed by substitute with a vote of 34 to 19. - SB 502*

FLOOR VOTES

Residential and General Contractors

Senate Bill 503, sponsored by Sen. Matt Brass (R-Newnan), renames the general contractor license as a commercial general contractor license and makes conforming changes throughout. *Passed with a vote of 55 to 0. - SB 503*

Georgia Board of Health care Workforce

Senate Bill 505, sponsored by Sen. Blake Tillery (R-Vidalia), revises provisions relating to the required publication by a hospital of certain financial documents on its website and provide for uniform reporting requirements. *Passed as amended with a vote of 54 to 0. - SB 505*

American First License Plate

Senate Bill 507, sponsored by Sen. Steve Gooch (R-Dahlonega), establishes an “American First” specialty license plate. *Passed with a vote of 34 to 19.*

Judicial Privacy and Security

Senate Bill 508, sponsored by Sen. Clint Dixon (R-Gwinnett), provides for duties of the Administrative Office of the Courts relative to the accessibility of certain personal information of state and federal judges. *Passed with a vote of 50 to 0. - SB 508*

Victims of Human Trafficking Fund Commission

Senate Bill 512, sponsored by Sen. Shawn Still (R-Norcross), creates the Victims of Human Trafficking Fund Commission, revises provisions regarding masturbation for hire, and requires hotel employees to complete a training course to identify human trafficking. *Passed as amended with a vote of 52 to 1. - SB 512*

Criminal Prosecutions

Senate Bill 517, sponsored by Sen. Randy Robertson (R-Cataula), provides immunity from certain criminal prosecutions against law enforcement officers whose threat or use of force is justified or otherwise lawful. *Passed with a vote of 34 to 17. - SB 517*

Jail-Based Competency Restoration Programs

Senate Bill 533, sponsored by Sen. Brian Strickland (R-McDonough), revises procedures after an accused individual is found mentally incompetent to stand trial. *Passed with a vote of 51 to 2. - SB 533*

FLOOR VOTES

Fair Business Practices Act of 1975

Senate Bill 534, sponsored by Sen. Derek Mallow (D-Savannah), provides that the failure of a marketplace innkeeper to provide a consumer with an itemized receipt detailing certain taxes and fees is an unlawful business practice. *Passed as amended with a vote of 53 to 0. - SB 534*

Water Rights

Senate Bill 542, sponsored by Sen. Sam Watson (R-Moultrie), removes references to the public trust doctrine relating to water rights and provides that members of the public have the right to use navigable streams for passage for hunting and fishing. *Passed by substitute with a vote of 51 to 0. - SB 542*

Provisions Relating to Bingo Games Operated by Nonprofits

Senate Bill 543, sponsored by Sen. Matt Brass (R-Newnan), allows for the operation of bingo games by certain nonprofit, tax-exempt organizations. *Passed by substitute with a vote of 47 to 4. - SB 543*

Motor Carriers and Commercial Motor Vehicles

Senate Bill 547, sponsored by Sen. Brandon Beach (R-Alpharetta), updates the reference data to federal regulations regarding the safe operation of motor carriers and commercial motor vehicles. *Passed with a vote of 52 to 0. - SB 547*

Property Revitalization Amendment

Senate Resolution 82, sponsored by Sen. Carden Summers (R-Cumming), authorizes the tax commissioner to waive certain delinquent ad valorem property taxes, penalty, and interest. *Adopted with a vote of 53 to 0. - SR 82*

Education Development Impact Fee Amendment

Senate Resolution 189, sponsored by Sen. Greg Dolezal (R-Cumming), proposes an amendment to the Constitution to provide that the Georgia General Assembly may authorize local boards of education to impose, levy, and collect development impact fees and use the proceeds to pay for a share of the cost of additional educational facilities. *Adopted as amended with a vote of 49 to 2. - SR 189*

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FLOOR VOTES

Lowering the Minimum Age for Colorectal Cancer Screenings

Senate Resolution 542, sponsored by Sen. Gloria Butler (D-Stone Mountain), encourages the changing of the minimum age of colorectal cancer screenings. *Adopted with a vote of 52 to 0. - SR 542*

Amendment for Funding of Victims of Human Trafficking Fund

Senate Resolution 616, sponsored by Sen. Shawn Still (R-Norcross), amends the Georgia Constitution to allow the General Assembly to allocate additional penalties from certain criminal cases to the Victims of Human Trafficking Fund. Additionally the funds would be used for providing care, rehabilitative, and social services to individuals in the state who have been sexually exploited. *Adopted with a vote of 55 to 0. - SR 616*

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MEETING VIDEO ARCHIVES

SENATE FLOOR SESSIONS

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