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2023-2024 Legislative Session

2024 SESSION OF THE GEORGIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY LEGISLATION PASSED

This document is a comprehensive report of legislation passed by the 2024 Georgia General Assembly, with the exception of local legislation and certain resolutions. Each bill is indexed by the assigned standing Senate committee through which it was favorably reported with a brief synopsis containing the primary sponsors and effective date. If you are a member of the General Assembly and require additional information on any bill, please contact the Senate Office of Policy & Legislative Analysis to request the full summary and analysis.

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AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Senate Bill 436

Farm Use Vehicles

Senate Sponsor: Senator Watson of the 11th

House Sponsor: Representative Cannon of the 172nd

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor April 30, 2024 (Act 500)

This legislation changes the definition of ‘implement of husbandry’ to include devices primarily, instead of exclusively, used for agricultural, horticultural, or livestock-raising operations or for lifting or carrying an implement of husbandry. The operation of a farm tractor or an implement of husbandry is authorized on certain highways provided that the vehicle or device is equipped with certain brakes and its operator has taken reasonable steps to reduce its width.

Senate Bill 494

Updates to the Georgia Hemp Farming Act

Senate Sponsor: Senator Watson of the 11th

House Sponsor: Representative Corbett of the 174th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024 (Sections 14 and 21); October 1, 2024 (all other sections)

Signed by the Governor April 30, 2024 (Act 498)

This bill gives the Commissioner of Agriculture police powers to enforce laws governing matters within the Department of Agriculture’s jurisdiction as provided by Title 16. This legislation defines certain terms: ‘attractive to children’ means the use of any characters or symbols that are designed or likely to primarily appeal to individuals under 21, including depictions of children, candy, and animals; ‘consumable hemp product’ means a hemp product intended to be ingested, absorbed, or inhaled by humans or animals; ‘contaminant’ means a foreign substance or compound that may, if ingested, absorbed, or inhaled, have an adverse effect on the health of a human or animal; ‘delta-9-THC’ means delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol; ‘delta-9-THCA’ means delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinolic acid; ‘legal limit’ means a total delta-9-THC concentration that is the lesser of 0.3 percent or the federal percentage limit.

Delta-9-THC concentration must be established by either identifying the total percentage weight, on a dry weight basis where applicable, from a sample that has undergone decarboxylation such that all delta-9-THCA in the sample has been converted to delta-9-THC; or identifying the sum of the percentage by weight, on a dry weight basis where applicable, of delta-9-THCA multiplied by 0.877 plus the percentage by weight, on a dry weight basis where applicable, of delta-9-THC. In determining whether a hemp product exceeds the concentration limit, the tester must account for the applicable measurement of uncertainty for the test used to measure delta-9-THC levels.

Additionally, this legislation prohibits, with certain exceptions, any individual from: cultivating hemp without a hemp grower license; processing hemp without a processing permit; handling hemp without a hemp grower license, processing permit, manufacturer license, or registration as a registered laboratory; selling any consumable hemp product without a retail consumable hemp establishment license; selling or offering for sale any consumable hemp product to retail establishments without a wholesale consumable hemp license; manufacturing hemp products without a manufacturer license; or performing tests or analyses of any plant within the genus Cannabis, unless registered with the department as a registered laboratory. These prohibitions do not apply to employees of valid licensees, permittees, and registrants. The Department of Agriculture has the authority to issue and approve these licenses, permits, and registrations. Civil and criminal penalties for violations of these provisions are provided. The bill sets fee, bond, and application requirements for all of the above licenses, permits, and registrations.

All hemp being shipped, transported, or otherwise delivered into, within, or through Georgia must be accompanied by documentation stating that the product’s total delta-9-THC concentration does not exceed the legal limit. The sale of any consumable hemp product is prohibited unless a full panel certificate of

analysis has been conducted and made available to the public. This certificate of analysis must, at a minimum, attest to the presence and amount of certain compounds in the final packaged product and attest that the final packaged product does not contain any contaminants in excess of the maximum levels established by the department.

Any consumable hemp product sold or distributed must bear a department approved sticker warning that the product contains THC and a conspicuous label or QR code providing the information from the required full panel certificate of analysis. The department must randomly inspect and test consumable hemp products available for purchase at retail establishments to ensure compliance. If a tested or inspected product does not meet the sticker and label requirements, has a delta-9-THC concentration that exceeds the legal limit, contains excess contaminants, or has a composition that is materially different from that shown on the certificate of analysis, the product and all related products must be disposed of by the department. Any person who violates these provisions is guilty of a misdemeanor.

No consumable hemp products may be sold or distributed if the product constitutes or is a component of a food product or a beverage that contains alcohol. However, gummies are permitted. No retail establishment that sells or distributes hemp products can begin operation within 1,000 feet of any elementary or secondary educational institution. This bill prohibits individuals from knowingly selling, furnishing, or causing to be furnished, directly or indirectly, any consumable hemp product to any individual under the age of 21. Additionally, this bill prohibits a person under 21 years old from: (1) purchasing, attempting to purchase, or possessing for personal use any hemp products; or (2) misrepresenting his or her identity or age or using false identification to purchase or procure hemp products. Any person who violates these provisions is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine not to exceed \$500. Any person operating a place of business selling consumable hemp must post a sign in a conspicuous place which states that the sale of consumable hemp to individuals under 21 is illegal. Any operator or owner who does not post this sign is guilty of a misdemeanor.

House Bill 1223

Updates to the Georgia Soil Amendment Act of 1976

Senate Sponsor: Senator Anderson of the 24th

House Sponsor: Representative Leverett of the 123rd

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 567)

This legislation prohibits an individual from applying or distributing a soil amendment on a site, or on a separate site that has close geographic proximity to and is operationally connected with the underlying site when: the owner of the site or the person who has applied or distributed a soil amendment is subject to a consent order or an administrative enforcement action of or ongoing investigation by the Department of Agriculture (department) or the Environmental Protection Division (EPD), including but not limited to, actions regarding the contamination of surface water, ground water, or soil contamination, and such consent order has not been withdrawn or resolved; a notice of violation has been issued by the EPD; and the department has notified the owner of the site and the person who has applied or distributed a soil amendment on the site that application of soil amendments must cease. For the purposes of this legislation, ‘apply’ means as to put, lay, spread, or deposit a soil amendment on the land, whether topically, with or without subsequent incorporation into the soil, by surface injection, or otherwise; and ‘site’ means the site identified in the nutrient management plan submitted to the department or a portion thereof.

House Bill 1237
Agricultural Commodity Commission for Citrus Fruits
Senate Sponsor: Senator Watson of the 11th
House Sponsor: Representative Cannon of the 172nd
Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 410)

This bill removes the requirement that an individual own or operate at least five acres of citrus fruit bearing trees to be classified as a ‘producer’ eligible for Georgia Citrus Commission membership.

APPROPRIATIONS

House Bill 915
Supplemental Appropriations; State Fiscal Year July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024
Senate Sponsor: Tillery of the 19th
House Sponsor: Burns of the 159th
Effective Date: Signed by the Governor February 29, 2024 (Act 366)
Provides supplemental appropriations for FY2024.

House Bill 916
General Appropriations; State Fiscal Year July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025
Senate Sponsor: Tillery of the 19th
House Sponsor: Burns of the 159th
Effective Date: Signed by the Governor May 7, 2024 (Act 709)
Provides general appropriations for FY2025.

BANKING AND FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

House Bill 876
Titles 7, 10, and 53 Code Revisions
Senate Sponsor: Kennedy of the 18th
House Sponsor: Williamson of the 112th
Effective Date: Parts II and IV become effective on June 1, 2024; the remainder becomes effective on July 1, 2024; Signed by the Governor April 23, 2024 (Act 474)
This bill makes numerous changes throughout Titles 7, 10, and 53 concerning banks, credit unions, and other financial institutions.

House Bill 1018
Amends the Georgia Firearms Industry Non-Discrimination Act
Senate Sponsor: Summers of the 13th
House Sponsor: Ridley of the 6th
Effective Date: July 1, 2024
Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 403)

This bill makes it an unlawful discriminatory practice for a financial institution to: require usage of a firearms code to distinguish a firearms dealer from other retailers; and decline a lawful payment card transaction based solely on use of a firearms code. It requires the Attorney General to provide written notice and a time to cure before filing an action. This legislation expands the prohibition on a multijurisdictional data base of persons issued weapons carry licenses.

House Bill 1053

Prohibits Governmental Agencies from Using Central Bank Digital Currency

Senate Sponsor: Dolezal of the 27th

House Sponsor: Barrett of the 24th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 593)

This bill prohibits governmental agencies from using central bank digital currency as payment and from participating in testing the use of such currency.

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Senate Bill 324

Creates a Victim Centered Address Confidentiality Program

Senate Sponsor: Jackson of the 41st

House Sponsor: Gaines of the 120th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024 (Sections One and Two); July 1, 2026 (Section Three)

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 582)

This bill revises provisions related to stalking restraining orders by prohibiting the court from issuing or approving mutual protective orders unless the respondent has filed a verified petition as a counter petition no later than three days, not including Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays, prior to the hearing. The bill defines 'dating violence' and 'family violence'.

This bill also creates a victim centered address confidentiality program within the office of the secretary of State (the office) and provides requirements for application to the program. The office must develop and offer a training program for victim advocates to obtain certification to assist individuals in completing applications for the program. Upon receiving a compliant application, the office must: certify the individual as a participant; issue an address confidentiality card to the participant; classify the individual's listed addresses as confidential; provide information regarding how the individual may use the office as their agent for the purposes of receiving mail or service of process; and provide the participant with information regarding methods to protect a confidential address. The certification is valid for four years, and a participant may apply to renew their application. Governmental entities must only use a participant's designated address, but a participant's confidential address may be disclosed under limited circumstances.

Senate Bill 342

Revises Access to Records Concerning Child Abuse and Neglect

Senate Sponsor: Robertson of the 29th

House Sponsor: Ballinger of the 23rd

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor April 8, 2024 (Act 373)

Current law prevents the Department of Human Services (the department) from disclosing or using any record, concerning child abuse and neglect, from the child abuse and neglect registry of any other state outside of the department unless the record is being used to conduct background checks to be used in foster care and adoptive placements. This bill allows such records to also be used in locating, recovering, or providing services to a child who is determined by the department to either be missing or the victim of sexual exploitation.

This bill also allows the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children to have reasonable access to records concerning reports of child abuse for the purpose of assisting in locating, recovering, or providing services to a child who is determined by the department to either be missing or the victim of sexual exploitation.

Senate Bill 376

Clarifies Requirements of Parents, DFCS, and the Court to Improve Timely Permanent Placement of a Child

Senate Sponsor: Tillery of the 19th

House Sponsor: Gullett of the 19th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 421)

All cases of children in DFCS custody must be initially reviewed by the court within the 75 days following a child adjudicated as a dependent child's removal from his or her home. This bill requires the court to also determine whether the parent has made substantial progress toward completion of the case at this initial review. If the court finds that there is a lack of substantial progress toward completion of the case plan, the court must order DFCS to develop a case plan for nonreunification or a concurrent case plan contemplating nonreunification. The bill clarifies that these plans must be developed within 14 days of such review and requires the court to review and adopt the revised case plan within 45 days of such review or at a previously scheduled hearing.

This bill requires that the court's written findings of fact include whether the parent has made substantial progress toward completion of the case plan. The bill also requires a finding of whether the parent has made substantial progress toward completion of the case plan be included in the written findings of fact required at the permanency plan hearing. The bill provides that termination of parental rights may not be in the best interests of a child adjudicated as a dependent child when such child is being cared for by his or her relative that intends to be a permanent placement for such child in accordance with a permanency plan approved by the court and in a time frame that is consistent with the developmental needs of such child. The bill also requires the court to review DFCS's determination that filing a petition to terminate parental rights would not be in the best interests of such child at least 30 days prior to the fifteenth month a child has been in foster care and when the court deems appropriate.

Senate Bill 387

Revises Requirements Related to Personal Identification Cards for Applicants who are Homeless or in the Legal Custody of the Division of Family and Children Services

Senate Sponsor: Kirkpatrick of the 32nd

House Sponsor: Ballinger of the 23rd

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 23, 2024 (Act 467)

This bill provides that any eligible applicant child or youth 14 to 17 years of age who does not have an address or residence or is in the legal custody of DFCS is not required to have a parent, guardian, or responsible adult sign or verify the application for an identification card. The bill also prohibits the Department of Driver Services from collecting a fee for an identification card from a child or youth who is in the legal custody of DFCS or from an individual receiving extended care youth services from DFCS.

This bill authorizes DHS to establish programs that will provide a child or youth entering foster care with a photograph of himself or herself within 90 days of such child or youth entering foster care. DFCS is responsible for ensuring that the child or youth receives a photograph. The bill also requires DFCS to provide each eligible child or youth 14 years of age or older with a personal identification card within 90 days of such child or youth entering foster care.

Senate Bill 401

Implements Recommendations of the Senate Foster Care and Adoption Study Committee

Senate Sponsor: Kirkpatrick of the 32nd

House Sponsor: Ballinger of the 23rd

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 23, 2024 (Act 468)

The bill requires each juvenile court to collect data on all cases in which a child alleged or adjudicated to be a dependent child is placed in foster care. This data must be submitted in a form specified by the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) and incorporated into the Georgia Juvenile Data Exchange (Exchange) or any successor data base maintained by the AOC. The bill provides 22 types of data that, at a minimum, must be included in the information collected by the juvenile court for submission to the AOC.

Additionally, this bill requires each juvenile court to maintain a docket readily accessible to the parties to a proceeding and to utilize its case management system to collect the required data. The required data elements must be submitted through a regularly scheduled data upload into the Exchange at the maximum frequency allowed by system parameters. However, such upload must occur no less than once per week. By April 15, 2025 and annually thereafter, the AOC must submit de-identified data and an aggregated permanency report to the General Assembly. Copies of the data and report must be provided to the Lieutenant Governor and certain members of the General Assembly.

Senate Bill 483

Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children

Senate Sponsor: Hatchett of the 50th

House Sponsor: Gullett of the 19th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 425)

This bill updates the provisions of the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children. Additionally, the bill provides definitions for the following terms used in the compact: deprived; non-relative with such significant ties to the child that they may be regarded as relatives; public child placing agency; state human services administration; and unmanageable.

The bill provides the purposes of the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children. The bill also provides applicability of the provisions of the Compact; jurisdictional authority under the Compact; placement evaluations and authority of sending and receiving states; and responsibilities of the placing agency. The Compact establishes the Interstate Commission for the Placement of Children. The bill provides: the powers and duties of the Commission; bylaw requirements; meeting requirements; officers and staff; qualified immunity and indemnification; and rulemaking functions. Additionally, the bill provides requirements for the oversight, dispute resolution, and enforcement powers of the Commission. The bill also repeals Chapter 4 of Title 39 which contains the previous provisions of the Compact and makes conforming changes throughout the Code.

Senate Bill 520

Replaces “Income Deduction Order” with “Income Withholding Order”

Senate Sponsor: Cowsert of the 46th

House Sponsor: Wiedower of the 121st

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 428)

This bill aligns state law terminology with federal law by replacing the term “income deduction order” with “income withholding order” throughout Title 19 of the Code. The bill also defines income withholding and income withholding notice.

House Bill 499

Child Support for a Dependent Adult Child

Senate Sponsor: Strickland of the 17th

House Sponsor: Hitchens of the 161st

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 23, 2024 (Act 479)

This bill allows the court to direct either or both parents to provide financial assistance to a dependent adult child and provides seven factors the court must consider in determining the amount of support, the terms of support, and the rights and duties of the parents with respect to the support. The child support obligation must be modified for either party if the trier of fact determines that there has been a substantial change in such parent's or child's ability to provide support. The court may irrevocably assign the support to a special needs trust for the benefit of the dependent adult child.

The bill allows a legal proceeding to be brought to establish child support for a dependent adult child. This proceeding may be filed any time after the dependent adult child reaches 17 years and six months of age, unless such an order has already been established during the adult child's minority. Support ordered after the dependent adult child reaches 18 years of age must be paid only to such dependent adult child or his or her court appointed guardian advocate, guardian, or agent under a durable power of attorney. The court may irrevocably assign the support to a special needs trust for the benefit of the dependent adult child.

House Bill 1010

Increases Maximum Amount of Paid Parental Leave

Senate Sponsor: Strickland of the 17th

House Sponsor: Jones of the 47th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 23, 2024 (Act 464)

Currently, eligible employees may take 120 hours of paid parental leave during a rolling twelve-month period. This bill increases the amount to 240 hours per period and also provides that eligible employee includes any individual employed full time by the local education agency. Further, the bill requires employing entities to provide notice of these benefits to each eligible employee upon hiring and annually thereafter.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

Senate Bill 26

Georgia Electric Vehicle Future Act; Allows for Certain Meetings via Teleconference

Senate Sponsor: Dolezal of the 27th

House Sponsor: Jones of the 25th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor February 13, 2024 (Act 357)

This bill authorizes the establishment of a state-wide electric vehicle manufacturing program for the promotion of EV and component manufacturing in Georgia. It establishes the Georgia Electric Vehicle Manufacturing Commission. It also allows for teleconference participation by members of agencies with state-wide jurisdiction, as well as members of the public, as though the members of the bodies and public were physically present.

Senate Bill 171

Revises Development Authority Provisions

Senate Sponsor: Burns of the 23rd

House Sponsor: Gambill of the 15th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 417)

This bill limits the length of a development authority director's hold-over period after office term expires. It revises training requirements for development authorities.

Senate Bill 430

Eliminates Certain Warning Requirements on Specific Entities and Individuals Related to COVID-19 Liability Claims

Senate Sponsor: Dolezal of the 27th

House Sponsor: Barrett of the 24th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 422)

This legislation revises the rebuttable presumption of assumption of the risk by a claimant in certain COVID-19 liability claims. It repeals certain warning requirements on healthcare facilities, healthcare providers, entities, or individuals relating to COVID-19 liability claims.

Senate Bill 496

Amends the Tax Credits for the Rehabilitation of Historic Structures

Senate Sponsor: Burns of the 23rd

House Sponsor: Buckner of the 137th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor April 18, 2024 (Act 375)

This bill extends the sunset date for the tax credits for the rehabilitation of historic structures. It expands the criteria for historic homes to qualify for such credits. It also extends a provision for an automatic repeal and the sunset date for the revitalization zone tax credits.

Senate Bill 503

Creates Two Separate Licenses for Contractors

Senate Sponsor: Brass of the 28th

House Sponsor: Powell of the 33rd

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 583)

This legislation renames the general contractor license as a commercial general contractor license and makes conforming revisions throughout Chapter 41 of Title 43 related to residential and general contractors. It amends the membership, qualifications, terms, and meetings of the State Licensing Board for Residential and General Contractors. This bill requires proof of qualified financial responsibility and insurance coverages after taking the examination required for licensure. It revises the reciprocity and eligibility for licensure without examination requirements. It also changes the notification and designation requirements relating to qualifying agents. This legislation requires each business organization that has terminated its qualifying agent to furnish certain information to building inspectors. It further amends the role of building inspectors.

House Bill 353

Lottery for Education Act Revisions

Senate Sponsor: Dixon of the 45th

House Sponsor: Powell of 33rd

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 586)

This bill requires the administrative procedures and actions regarding bona fide coin operated amusement machines to be subject to the Georgia Arbitration Code. It amends the Lottery Education Account's Shortfall Reserve. This legislation creates nonrefundable late fee for Class A master and location licenses and

multiyear license options and exceptions to the amount of funds that may come from the play of bona fide coin operated amusement machines for certain historical fraternal benefit associations and veterans' organizations. It also establishes a process for the issuance of regulatory guidance letters. This bill allows for nonreloadable gift cards as a legal form of redemption for Class A and B machines and sets limitations on the permitted noncash redemption award for Class A and Class B machines. It provides for redemption for successful play of bona fide coin operated amusement machines through self-service redemption devices under certain conditions. It further provides that certain provisions to location owners or location operators by master licensees does not constitute an unfair method of competition or an unfair or deceptive act. This legislation revises the division of revenue from Class B machines. It also requires the Georgia Lottery Corporation to issue federal 1099 tax forms in certain circumstances.

House Bill 1026

Designates the Southeast Georgia Soap Box Derby as the Official Soap Box Derby of Georgia; Richard H. Smith Georgia CHIPS Advancement in Research and Economic Development Act

Senate Sponsor: Robertson of the 29th

House Sponsor: Hagan of the 156th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 591)

This legislation designates the Southeast Georgia Soap Box Derby in Lyons, Georgia, as the official soap box derby of Georgia. It directs the OneGeorgia Authority to establish grant and loan programs for the semi-conductor industry. It also authorizes the Authority to receive and administer any public or private funds. It further creates the Georgia CHIPS and Advanced Technology Consortium (GCATC). It also establishes the GCATC executive committee and its duties.

House Bill 1041

Expands the Savannah-Georgia Convention Center Authority's Powers

Senate Sponsor: B. Watson of the 1st

House Sponsor: Stephens of the 164th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 25, 2024 (Act 492)

This bill increases the maximum indebtedness of the Savannah-Georgia Convention Center Authority. It authorizes the Authority to condemn public property.

House Bill 1341

White Shrimp as the Official State Crustacean

Senate Sponsor: B. Watson of the 1st

House Sponsor: Sainz of the 180th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 25, 2024 (Act 495)

This bill designates white shrimp as the official crustacean of Georgia.

House Bill 1410

Establishes a Stable Housing Accountability Program

Senate Sponsor: Kirkpatrick of the 32nd

House Sponsor: Efstrotation of the 104th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 413)

This legislation amends who appoints members to the State Trust Fund for the Homeless Commission. It establishes a stable housing accountability program and its application process, minimum standards, and application approval criteria. This bill authorizes the disbursement of funds for approved stable housing accountability projects. It requires a performance audit by the state auditor on all expenditures from the State Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless for stable housing accountability programs.

EDUCATION AND YOUTH

Senate Bill 50

Authorizing Schools to Provide Instruction in Lifeguarding and Aquatic Safety

Senate Sponsor: Burns of the 23rd

House Sponsor: Hagan of the 156th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 414)

This bill allows local boards of education that operate schools with grades nine through 12 to establish a curriculum for and provide instruction in lifeguarding and aquatic safety. If the local board develops a lifeguarding and aquatic safety curriculum, the curriculum must: (1) incorporate the necessary psychomotor skills necessary into the instruction; and (2) include an instructional program developed by certain nationally recognized programs. This bill also requires local boards that choose to provide instruction on lifeguarding and aquatic safety to: (1) ensure that the instruction will enable students to qualify to work as lifeguards in this state upon completing the course; and (2) ensure that the course is taught by an instructor authorized to teach lifeguarding and aquatic safety by certain nationally recognized programs.

Additionally, this bill allows schools to partner with other entities with access to aquatic training facilities to facilitate students completing the lifeguarding and aquatic safety curriculum, and this bill allows the State Board of Education to accept completed lifeguarding and aquatic safety curriculum for one-half unit of elective credit. This bill also requires the State Board of Education to adopt standards for lifeguarding and aquatic safety courses no later than January 1, 2026, and adds lifeguarding and aquatic safety to the list of focused programs of study found in current law.

Senate Bill 169

Extension of Hearing Dates for Student Discipline Tribunals

Senate Sponsor: Payne of the 54th

House Sponsor: Cox of the 28th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 23, 2024 (Act 466)

This bill provides that, if the school system and parents or guardians agree to an extension, the date and time of a disciplinary hearing must be no more than 15 days after the beginning of the suspension. The parent or guardian of the student may submit a written request to the school system for a further extension, and if the school system agrees, the hearing may be held more than 15 days after the beginning of the suspension. This bill further requires the school system to provide appropriate grade-level instructional materials to any student awaiting completion of a disciplinary hearing.

Senate Bill 233

Georgia Promise Scholarship Act

Senate Sponsor: Dolezal of the 27th

House Sponsor: Jones of the 47th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor April 23, 2024 (Act 457)

This bill creates the Georgia Education Savings Authority and provides its composition, functions, duties, and powers in administering the Promise Scholarship Program. The bill also provides for the establishment of promise scholarship accounts to be funded by the state in the amount of \$6,500.00 for the first school year and an adjusted amount each subsequent school year. Promise scholarship funds may only be used for qualified education expenses, and may only be awarded to students who meet the qualifications provided by the bill. Participating schools, service providers, and parents of participating students must also meet certain requirements. The bill establishes a parent review committee to review

expenditures upon request, provides for annual testing of participating students, and provides for audits of the program by the Department of Audits and Accounts.

This bill also revises all program weights in the QBE formula. In addition, the bill revises provisions related to capital outlay funds by amending the definition of 'educational facilities' to include any voluntary pre-kindergarten programs provided by the local school system. The bill also allows the computerized student projection program methodology to include projected student counts for voluntary pre-kindergarten programs provided or anticipated to be provided by the school system.

Further, the bill authorizes student transfers without contracts between the local school system where a student resides and the local school system where the student wishes to enroll and requires the State Board of Education to provide procedures for such student transfers. The bill also provides a cap on the amount of tuition that can be charged to a student by an enrolling local unit of administration that exclusively provides virtual instruction to such student. This bill also provides that the total amount of grants awarded to the lowest 25 percent of public schools (by the Georgia Foundation for Public Education) may never be less than 200 percent of the total amount of the grants awarded to all other schools.

Finally, the bill increases the tax credit amounts for qualified education donations to \$2,500.00 for an individual or head of household and to \$5,000.00 for a joint return. In the case of separate returns, the actual amount donated per individual per tax year or \$2,500.00 per individual per tax year whichever is less. The credit for individuals who are members of an LLC, a shareholder of an S corporation, or partner in a partnership is \$25,000.00 per tax year or the amount donated whichever is less. The aggregate amount of tax credits allowed cannot exceed \$5 million for the tax year ending on December 31, 2023 or \$15 million for the tax year 2024 and all subsequent tax years. The sunset of these tax credit provisions is extended to December 31, 2029.

Senate Bill 351

Protecting Georgia's Children on Social Media Act of 2024

Senate Sponsor: Anavitarte of the 31st

House Sponsor: Hilton of the 48th

Effective Date: July 1, 2025

Signed by the Governor April 23, 2024 (Act 463)

This bill requires the State Board of Education's comprehensive character education program to include methods of promoting responsible digital citizenship and the safe and appropriate use of technology, the internet, and social media and requires the Department of Education to develop model programs educating students about online safety for students in grades six through 12 and provides topics the programs must include. The bill also revises provisions regarding acceptable-use policies for internet use and requires the Department of Education to establish compliance standards and specifications for technology protection measures to be used by local school systems. Additionally, the bill requires each local governing body to adopt a social media policy and submit such policy to the Department of Education for review. The Department of Education must also update its model policy regarding bullying.

Further, the bill prohibits a provider of a social media platform from permitting a minor to be an account holder and prohibits a provider of a social media platform from displaying certain material to or collecting personal information from minor account holders. The bill authorizes the Attorney General to enforce the provisions of this bill related to minor account holders on social media platforms and requires commercial entities to implement age verification for websites with content harmful to minors.

Senate Bill 395

Wesley's Law

Senate Sponsor: Dixon of the 45th

House Sponsor: McCollum of the 30th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 23, 2024 (Act 462)

This bill authorizes the possession of opioid antagonists on school property and requires local school systems to acquire and maintain a supply of opioid antagonists. Under this bill, school personnel may carry an opioid antagonist on his or her person and administer such opioid antagonist, but upon administration of an opioid antagonist, the local school system must notify certain parties. School personnel, who in good faith administer or choose not to administer an opioid antagonist, are immune from civil liability or professional discipline for acts or omissions related to the administration of an opioid antagonist.

The bill also requires all qualified government buildings and courthouses to maintain a supply of at least three-unit doses of opioid antagonists that are available during regular business hours and for all government entity events. Every government entity operating out of a qualified government building must establish and implement a training policy for opioid antagonist administration that meets certain enumerated guidelines. The bill provides immunity from civil liability or professional discipline for any good faith act or omission to act related to the emergency administration of an opioid antagonist to all employees, officers, agents, and contractors of government entities who receive training. Similarly, immunity from civil liability for damages is provided to a government entity failing to provide an AED or opioid antagonist.

Senate Bill 440

Accelerated Career Diploma Program

Senate Sponsor: Brass of the 28th

House Sponsor: Dubnik of the 29th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor May 2, 2024 (Act 559)

This bill revises the high school courses required for graduation and authorizes a local board to award a high school diploma to a student who has completed, at a minimum, the courses provided by the bill. The bill also revises the required technical college courses and authorizes a local board to award a high school diploma to a student who completes the courses provided by the bill. The bill establishes the ACE Grant program to award grants to students participating in the Accelerated Career Diploma Program pursuing: (A) an associate's degree program at a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia; (B) a technical college diploma program at a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia; or (C) at least two technical college certificate credit programs included in the High-demand Career List published by the State Workforce Development Board.

This bill also revises the definition of 'eligible dual credit course' to mean a dual credit course which is included in the eligible course list and which is eligible for payment under the ACE Grant program. The bill aligns dual credit course requirements with the high school course requirements provided in the Accelerated Career Diploma Program. Additionally, the bill provides that each eligible student, under the Dual Enrollment Act, is limited to a total of 30 semester hours, or the equivalent amount of quarter hours, of eligible dual credit courses funded under the Act. However, the Georgia Student Finance Commission is authorized to waive such limitation for students participating in the Accelerated Career Diploma Program to the extent necessary for such students to complete the program, subject to appropriations specifically for such purpose.

Senate Bill 464

School Supplies for Educators Act

Senate Sponsor: Dixon of the 45th

House Sponsor: Ballard of the 147th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor April 23, 2024 (Act 461)

This bill revises who serves as a voting member of the Georgia Council on Literacy and requires the State Board of Education to approve the memorandum of agreement between the Georgia Council on Literacy and the Department of Education for a list of no more than five universal reading screeners, one of which must be free. The Department of Education must publish the free universal reading screener and the list of other approved universal reading screeners on its website. Each public school and local school system must adopt and administer one of the listed screeners in order to comply with the requirements of the Georgia Early Literacy Act.

Additionally, this bill establishes the School Supplies for Educators Program (Program). The State Board of Education must: establish a program for the Department of Education to allocate funds for eligible educators to use at their discretion for the online purchase of school supplies; establish policies for the implementation of the Program; and authorize the State School Superintendent to identify one or more authorized software services providers to offer an online ecommerce platform. Each local school system must certify the eligibility of each teacher who requests a user account to participate in the Program. To be eligible, an educator must be employed in good standing at a public school in Georgia.

Senate Resolution 471

Senate Study Committee on Access to Affordable Child Care

Sponsor: Albers of the 56th

This resolution creates the Senate Study Committee on Access to Affordable Child Care. The Study Committee is tasked with undertaking a study of the conditions, needs, issues, and problems related to what measures may be necessary and appropriate to increase access to affordable childcare in this state. The Study Committee must be composed of seven members to be appointed by the President of the Senate, and the President of the Senate will designate a chairperson from the selected members. The Study Committee will stand abolished on December 1, 2024.

House Bill 51

Prohibits High Schools from Participating in Interscholastic Events under Certain Circumstances and Authorizes Local Boards of Education to Use Vehicles Other Than School Buses to Transport Students

Senate Sponsor: Robertson of the 29th

House Sponsor: Pirkle of the 169th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 23, 2024 (Act 470)

This bill revises the definition of 'athletic association' and prohibits any high school that receives QBE funding to participate in any interscholastic athletic or literary events which are conducted under the authority of any athletic association that does not include or recognize all other voluntary nonprofit school activities associations of Georgia high schools as a member. The bill also allows local boards to authorize the use of vehicles other than school buses for the transport of all students and revises provisions authorizing and requiring local boards to obtain insurance policies insuring students being transported to and from school related activities.

House Bill 318**Eligibility for Project Specific Capital Outlay Grants for Low-Wealth School Systems, Reestablishes the Office of Charter School Compliance, and Creates the Office of District Flexibility****Senate Sponsor: Echols of the 49th****House Sponsor: Hilton of the 48th****Effective Date: July 1, 2024****Signed by the Governor April 23, 2024 (Act 459)**

This bill revises eligibility criteria for certain capital outlay grants for low-wealth school systems and authorizes the State Board of Education to establish rules and regulations to implement the revised eligibility criteria. The bill also authorizes the State Board of Education and local boards to request letters of assurance from charter schools subject to certain conditions. Additionally, the bill provides conditions for the withholding of school funds by local boards and the Department of Education and requires local boards to provide state and local funding to local charter schools based on actual student enrollment up to the school-wide total enrollment cap provided in the school's charter. The bill further establishes the Office of District Flexibility within the Department of Education and provides its responsibilities and authorizes the State Charter School Commission to employ staff personnel as necessary to accomplish Commission objectives.

House Bill 409**Addy's Law****Senate Sponsor: Williams of the 25th****House Sponsor: Daniel of the 117th****Effective Date: July 1, 2024****Signed by the Governor April 23, 2024 (Act 458)**

This bill requires public school systems to consider school bus routes that do not have stops that require students to cross a roadway with a speed limit of 40 miles per hour or greater and enhances the penalties for meeting or overtaking a school bus. The bill also requires a notice of issue or renewal of motor vehicle liability insurance contain insurer contact information. Further, the bill authorizes state charter schools to utilize teachers, other instructional staff, and noninstructional staff who are employees of an education service provider.

House Bill 874**Requires Automated External Defibrillators in All Schools****Senate Sponsor: Watson of the 1st****House Sponsor: Hawkins of the 27th****Effective Date: July 1, 2024****Signed by the Governor April 23, 2024 (Act 465)**

This bill requires that each school in this state have at least one functional automated external defibrillator (AED) on site and easily accessible during all school hours and during any school related function. The bill also requires each school to establish a written emergency action plan that: adheres to nationally recognized standards; establishes specific steps to take during a cardiac emergency in a school setting; is designed to provide for an effective system for communication between members of the internal response team and other school officials; and ensures that emergency medical services personnel are led directly to the exact location of the person in cardiac arrest.

The bill also requires each school to establish a designated internal response team that is responsible for oversight of an emergency response to a person in cardiac arrest and implementation of the emergency action plan and provides the requirements for members of such team. Each school is further required to

conduct a minimum of two emergency action plan practice drills per school year and to apprise all school personnel of the location of AEDs and members of the internal response team.

House Bill 1122

Revises Provisions Related to Charter Schools

Senate Sponsor: Brass of the 28th

House Sponsor: Hilton of the 48th

Effective Date: July 1, 2025 (Sections One – Four); Upon Governor’s approval (Other Sections).

Signed by the Governor April 23, 2024 (Act 460)

This bill provides funding for local and state charter school principals and superintendents based on the number of full-time equivalent students served at each school. The bill also allows a student to attend and be enrolled in the school in which his or her parent or guardian is a part-time teacher, paraprofessional, or other employee who works at least 20 hours per school week on average, measured monthly, even if such school is not located in the local unit of administration in which the student resides. Additionally, the bill clarifies that a student whose parent or guardian is a full-time or part-time paraprofessional at the school is included in a category for enrollment preference in a start-up charter school. This bill also prohibits state charter school governing board members from being an officer, member, or executive-level employee of a local board of education or a local school system.

Further, the bill requires the Department of Education to establish the disaggregated components of the Office of Student Achievement’s individual school and school system single score ratings (on a scale from 0-100) based on the indicators of student achievement. Within 30 days of the completion of the required calculations: all single score and disaggregated component scores must be published on the public websites of the office and the Department of Education; each school system must publish its rating and the individual school ratings for each school in such system; and each public school that maintains a public website must publish its individual school rating and links to certain public websites.

House Bill 1183

Providing Information on Type 1 and Type 2 Diabetes

Senate Sponsor: Still of the 48th

House Sponsor: Dempsey of the 13th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 2, 2024 (Act 551)

Under this bill, any local board of education that provides information on immunizations, infectious diseases, medications, or other school health issues to parents and guardians of students in grades six through 12 must also provide certain information about Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes. The Department of Education and the Department of Public Health must develop and make available the information about Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes, and the Department of Education must post the information on its website.

ETHICS

Senate Bill 189

Provides Text Portion of Ballots to be Counted Instead of Any Machine Coded Portion

Senate Sponsor: Burns of the 23rd

House Sponsor: LaHood of the 175th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024 (Sections 1, 2, 3, 3.1, 5, 8, 10, 11); January 1, 2025 (Sections 4, 6, 9); July 1, 2026 (Section 7); and Upon Governor’s approval (Sections 12 and 14).

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 697)

This bill removes the Secretary of State from the State Election Board. The bill provides additional conflict of interest provisions for state-wide and local elections officers, officials, and employees relating to

businesses providing goods and services for voting equipment. Additionally, this bill revises provisions for determining residency for election purposes and provisions related to challenging electors.

This bill requires that the text portion or the machine mark of the paper ballot, as marked and printed by the electronic ballot marker indicating the voter's selection, will alone constitute the official ballot. It further provides that the official tabulation count of any ballot scanner will be based upon the text portion of such ballot or the machine mark, provided that such mark clearly denotes the voter's selection and does not use a QR code, bar code, or similar coding, and not any machine coding that is printed on the ballot.

Additionally, this bill requires the Secretary of State to create a pilot program for the auditing of paper ballot images using optical character recognition (OCR) or other related technology. This use of OCR will verify the human-readable text portion of the ballot. The audit must include all ballot types and the findings must be reported prior to the final certification of the election.

Senate Bill 212

Ends Duties of Probate Court Judges Relating to Elections

Senate Sponsor: Burns of the 23rd

House Sponsor: Kelley of the 16th

Effective Date: Upon Governor's approval (Section 5); January 1, 2025 (all other sections)

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 580)

This bill removes the performance of duties relating to elections from the list of duties within the scope of probate court judges' power. The bill requires the governing authority in any county in which the probate court judge serves as the election superintendent to create a board of elections and registration. The bill also provides rules for nominating members to election and registration boards and provides governing rules.

Senate Bill 368

Prohibits Foreign Nationals from Contributing to Candidates or Certain Committees

Senate Sponsor: Williams of the 25th

House Sponsor: Powell of the 33rd

Effective Date: Governor Vetoed May 7, 2024 (V12)

This bill prohibits foreign nationals from contributing to candidates, campaign committees, independent committees, or political action committees. Additionally, the bill prohibits candidates, campaign committees, independent committees, or political action committees from knowingly accepting any contributions from foreign nationals. Agents of foreign principals must register with the State Ethics Commissioner using the bill's registration requirements. Also, the bill requires agents of foreign principals to make certain disclosures when advocating on behalf of foreign principals.

House Bill 974

Revises Provisions Regarding Ballots and Risk-Limiting Audits

Senate Sponsor: Burns of the 23rd

House Sponsor: LaHood of the 175th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 589)

House Bill 974 requires ballots to be printed on security paper that incorporates a visible watermark that identifies the ballot as an official Georgia ballot. The bill requires the Secretary of State to establish and maintain a state-wide system for the posting of scanned paper ballots. The bill also provides requirements for the scanning of tabulated absentee ballots. The bill requires risk-limiting audits on selected contests and provides the requirements for such audits. Further, the bill requires the Secretary of State to create a pilot program for the auditing of paper ballot images using optical character recognition technology to verify the human-readable text portion of the ballot.

House Bill 1207

Revises Provisions Related to Reopening Qualification, Proofing of Ballots by Local Superintendents, and Interfering with Poll Officers

Senate Sponsor: Burns of the 23rd

House Sponsor: Fleming of the 114th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 599)

This bill provides that any person employed or retained by a county election superintendent to undertake any election related duties must be a citizen of the United States and provides that qualifying must be reopened in any case where no candidate has qualified. This bill also requires local superintendents to proof ballots and make such proofs available to candidates. Additionally, the bill requires that the badge for state-wide poll watchers include a statement that such poll watcher is entitled to serve at any location in this state. Further, the bill clarifies the powers of poll watchers and the areas poll watchers may access. Finally, the bill clarifies that provisions regarding interference with poll officers also apply to election officials and credentialed poll watchers.

FINANCE

Senate Bill 340

Exemption Related to Sale or Use of Diesel Exhaust Fluid

Senate Sponsor: Kirkpatrick of the 32nd

House Sponsor: Campbell of the 171st

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 30, 2024 (Act 497)

Provides an exemption for sales and use taxes related to diesel exhaust fluid for agricultural uses.

Senate Bill 344

Income Tax Exclusion Related to Broadband Investment

Senate Sponsor: Anavitarte of the 31st

House Sponsor: Camp of the 135th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 610)

Excludes certain grants for broadband investments from taxable income.

Senate Bill 366

Tax Expenditures Transparency Act of 2024

Senate Sponsor: Senator Hufstetler of the 52nd

House Sponsor: Rep. Blackmon of the 146th

Effective Date: January 1, 2025

Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 419)

This bill requires that the general appropriations bill, upon its first reading in the Senate, be referred by the President of the Senate to the Appropriations Committee of the Senate. In the event such bill is reported out of the Appropriations Committee as 'do pass by substitute' or 'do pass as amended,' neither the committee of the whole nor the Senate can consider the bill until at least 24 hours after the substitute or the amendments, as the case may be, have been printed and placed on the desk of each member. Further, upon receipt of the Governor's budget report the House Budget and Research Office and Senate Budget and Evaluation Office must make available to each member of such office's respective chamber the Governor's budget report, including specified information. The bill also provides for economic analysis requirements.

Each year, the Department of Audits and Accounts must complete at least 12 economic analyses determined by specific conditions. The bill makes further provisions relating to these analyses.

House Bill 82

Rural Physician Tax Credit Revision

Senate Sponsor: Burns of the 23rd

House Sponsor: Jackson of the 128th

Effective Date: May 15, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 19, 2024 (Act 386)

Current law provides a tax credit for certain rural physicians. Persons qualifying as a rural physician are allowed a credit up to \$5,000. The bill requires that no rural health care professional who on May 15, 2024, is currently practicing in a rural county is eligible to receive the credit. No credit is allowed for a rural health care professional who has previously practiced in a rural county, unless after May 15, 2024, that rural health care professional returns to practice in a rural county after having practiced in a county other than a rural county for at least three years. This bill sunsets on December 31, 2029.

House Bill 461

Local Government Regulatory Fee Revisions

Senate Sponsor: Hickman of the 4th

House Sponsor: Thomas of the 21st

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 572)

This bill provides that the proceeds of a regulatory fee must be used to fund such regulatory activity and not the general operations of the local government, and also that the local government must not be required to establish separate accounts for such proceeds. The bill also revises methods to determine the amount of a regulatory fee related to construction projects that are classified as new construction or for extensive renovation projects.

House Bill 581

Ad Valorem Taxation of Property Revisions

Senate Sponsor: Hufstetler of the 52nd

House Sponsor: Blackmon of the 146th

Effective Date: January 1, 2025

Signed by the Governor April 18, 2024 (Act 379)

This bill provides numerous updates relating to ad valorem property taxation. The bill revises provisions relating to the establishment of millage rates and provides for a homestead exemption from ad valorem taxes in an amount equal to the amount by which the current year assessed value of that homestead, including any final determination of value on appeal, exceeds its previous adjusted base year assessed value. The bill also allows for imposition of a special sales and use tax for a limited period of time for the limited purpose of property tax relief.

House Bill 808

Ad Valorem Tax Exemption Increase

Senate Sponsor: Albers of the 56th

House Sponsor: Cheokas of the 151st

Effective Date: January 1, 2025

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 581)

This bill increases an ad valorem tax exemption for certain tangible personal property from \$7,500 to \$20,000.

House Bill 946

Revisions to Special District Mass Transportation Sales and Use Tax

Senate Sponsor: Echols of the 49th

House Sponsor: Hawkins of the 27th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 578)

The bill revises provisions relating to the special district mass transportation sales and use tax to require a county and all qualified municipalities therein to execute an intergovernmental agreement. The bill provides that if an intergovernmental agreement is entered into by a county and one or more qualified municipalities within the special district, and the combined population of the territory of all qualified municipalities lying within the special district which are absent from the agreement is less than one-half of the total population of the territory of all qualified municipalities lying within the special district, then the rate of the tax may be up to 1 percent, provided that such intergovernmental agreement provides for the percentage or the proceeds of the tax collected pursuant to this part that each absent municipality is to receive, which must not be less than the absent municipality minimum percentage. This bill adds that if an intergovernmental agreement is entered into by a county and all qualified municipalities within the special district, the maximum period of time for the imposition of the tax must not exceed six years.

House Bill 1015

Lower Income Tax Rate

Senate Sponsor: Hatchett of the 50th

House Sponsor: McDonald of the 26th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 18, 2024 (Act 378)

This bill lowers the income tax rate to 5.39 percent from 5.49 percent.

House Bill 1019

Homestead Exemption Maximum Amount Increase

Senate Sponsor: Hickman of the 4th

House Sponsor: Reeves of the 99th

Effective Date: Governor Vetoed May 7, 2024 (V5)

Increases the maximum amount of a statewide homestead exemption from certain ad valorem taxes from \$2,000 to \$4,000.

House Bill 1021

Revising Deduction for Dependents

Senate Sponsor: Goodman of the 8th

House Sponsor: Daniel of the 117th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 18, 2024 (Act 377)

This bill revises the deduction allowed for each dependent of a taxpayer from \$3,000 to \$4,000.

House Bill 1023

Match Income Tax Rate for Corporations and Individuals

Senate Sponsor: Hufstetler of the 52nd

House Sponsor: Williamson of the 112th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 18, 2024 (Act 376)

Current law requires corporations, electing Subchapter 'S' Corporations, and electing partnerships, pay an income tax equivalent to 5.75 percent of its Georgia taxable net income. This bill would remove the 5.75

percent requirement and instead tax said entities at the same rate of the tax imposed on individuals under subsection (a.1) of Code Section 48-7-20 for the corresponding taxable year.

House Bill 1162

Annual IRC Conformity

Senate Sponsor: Hickman of the 4th

House Sponsor: Knight of the 134th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 408)

This bill revises various code sections to conform with Internal Revenue Code updates.

House Bill 1181

Tax Credit Revisions

Senate Sponsor: Albers of the 56th

House Sponsor: Martin of the 49th

Effective Date: January 1, 2025

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 598)

This bill revises carry-forward periods for numerous tax credits and adds a sunset date of December 31, 2029 for numerous tax credits and tax exemptions.

House Bill 1192

Creates the Special Commission on Data Center Energy Planning

Senate Sponsor: Albers of the 56th

House Sponsor: Carson of the 46th

Effective Date: Governor Vetoed May 7, 2024 (V7)

This bill creates the Special Commission on Data Center Energy Planning. The Commission's duties include, but are not limited to: reviewing the existing electric grid and energy supply and making recommendations for data center locations; making recommendations for energy generation, transmission, and distribution expansion; examining future trends related to the data center industry; and propose legislation and budget recommendations.

Currently, from January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2031, high-technology data center equipment to be incorporated or used in a high-technology data center that meets the high-technology data center minimum investment threshold and other conditions provided for under relevant laws are exempted from sales and use taxes. Under this bill, from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2026, the state revenue commissioner must suspend the issuance of any new certificates of exemption except for any high-technology data center customer that is subject to an ongoing contract that was entered into prior to July 1, 2024, with a high-technology data center that has applied for a certificate of exemption prior to July 1, 2024, unless otherwise provided by an Act of the General Assembly based on the findings of the Special Commission on Data Center Energy Planning.

GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT

Senate Bill 19

Requires Quarterly Reporting of Passport Application Fees and Processing Fees

Senate Sponsor: Kirkpatrick of the 32nd

House Sponsor: Carson of the 46th

Effective Date: January 1, 2025

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 603)

County clerks of the superior courts and probate court judges are permitted under federal law to collect fees, such as passport application and processing fees, for the performance of passport duties. This bill requires the clerk of the superior court or judge of the probate court to file quarterly written reports with

their county governing authority disclosing the total amount of all passport application or processing fees, sums, or other remuneration received by the clerk or judge during the previous quarter.

Senate Bill 337

Georgia Colonel; Amends Process of Appointment to Governor's Personal Staff

Senate Sponsor: Kirkpatrick of the 32nd

House Sponsor: Sainz of the 180th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 608)

This bill eliminates rank restrictions, variations, and associated requirements for service history in the Governor's appointment to positions on the Governor's personal staff. Instead, the bill enables the Governor to appoint one or more persons each year with the honorary title of Georgia Colonel. Appointments must be based upon history of distinguished service to the State of Georgia. Appointments to the position of honorary Georgia Colonel will be lifetime appointments.

The bill also enables the General Assembly to designate through joint resolution one or more persons each year with the honorary title of Georgia Lieutenant Colonel. The selection will be based on noteworthy contributions to the designee's community and without regard to previous military service, sex, or age limit. Appointments to the position of honorary Georgia Lieutenant Colonel will be lifetime appointments.

Senate Bill 341

Eliminating and Revising Various Boards and Commissions

Senate Sponsor: Kirkpatrick of the 32nd

House Sponsor: Hilton of the 48th

Effective Date: January 1, 2025 (Part V); Upon Governor's approval (all other sections)

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 609)

Senate Bill 341 eliminates and revises the scope of several State Authorities, Committees, Councils, and Commissions. This bill also extends confidentiality to communications between the Office of Legislative Counsel and officers and staff of the General Assembly; clarifies that the duties of the Department of Administrative Services and the Attorney General include representation of the General Assembly; allows the Legislative Services Committee to assign the duty to oversee the provision of legal services for the legislative branch to legislative staff or an office; and revises when the Speaker of the House of Representatives and President Pro Tempore of the Senate serve as presiding chairperson of the Legislative Services Committee.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Senate Bill 198

Amends Reimbursement Methodologies Utilized by PBMs

Senate Sponsor: Harrell of the 40th

House Sponsor: Hawkins of the 27th

Effective Date: Governor Vetoed May 7, 2024 (V10)

This bill revises the reimbursement methodologies utilized by PBMs.

Senate Bill 293

Amends the Manner of Selection and Qualifications of District Health Directors

Senate Sponsor: Watson of the 1st

House Sponsor: Cooper of the 45th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 19, 2024 (Act 383)

This bill revises the qualifications of district health directors and chief executive officers and transfers the appointment power of a director as the chief executive officer to the DPH Commissioner. It clarifies that the approval of a district health director must be determined by majority vote of the county boards of health of the constituent counties. This legislation requires district health directors that are not licensed physicians appoint a chief medical officer. It also transfers supervision of district health directors to the DPH Commissioner and authorizes the DPH Commissioner to appoint an interim district health director.

Senate Bill 348

Amends the Notification Requirement for Suspicious or Unusual Deaths

Senate Sponsor: Williams of the 25th

House Sponsor: Corbett of the 174th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 23, 2024 (Act 477)

This legislation modifies the notification requirement for suspicious or unusual deaths to a coroner or county medical examiner. It adds deaths in long-term care facilities under certain circumstances to not be considered a death unattended by a physician.

Senate Bill 377

Requires a Qualified Residential Treatment Program to be Licensed

Senate Sponsor: Tillery of the 19th

House Sponsor: Dempsey of the 13th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor April 19, 2024 (Act 382)

This bill amends the definition of qualified residential treatment program under the Juvenile Code to conform with federal laws. It includes qualified residential treatment programs as child-caring institutions required to have a DHS license under the Children and Youth Act.

Senate Bill 456

Authorizes Family Members and Guardians of Disabled Persons to Use the Caregiver Registry

Senate Sponsor: Strickland of the 17th

House Sponsor: Cooper of the 45th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 619)

This legislation allows family members and guardians of a disabled person to utilize the caregiver registry.

Senate Bill 480

Creates a Student Loan Repayment Program for Mental Health and Substance Use Professionals Serving in Certain Capacities

Senate Sponsor: Hodges of the 3rd

House Sponsor: Cooper of the 45th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor April 19, 2024 (Act 381)

This bill provides for a student loan repayment program for mental health and substance use professionals serving in certain capacities. It establishes eligibility and continued eligibility requirements. It also creates student loan repayment agreements, conditions, and maximum amounts.

Senate Bill 495

Establishes a Term of Validity for Low THC Oil Registration Cards

Senate Sponsor: S. Watson of the 11th

House Sponsor: Ridley of the 22nd

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 620)

This bill creates a term of validity for a low THC oil registration card. It also imposes specific delivery requirements on DPH with regard to such cards.

Senate Resolution 542

Encourages the Changing of the Minimum Age of Colorectal Cancer Screenings

Senate Sponsor: Butler of the 55th

House Sponsor: NA

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

This Resolution encourages the need to change the age of colonoscopy screenings for average-risk individuals as well as for first degree relatives of CRC in the medical and insurance communities.

House Bill 181

Revises the Regulation of Kratom

Senate Sponsor: Brass of the 28th

House Sponsor: Townsend of the 179th

Effective Date: January 1, 2025

Signed by the Governor May 2, 2024 (Act 546)

This bill prohibits the sale or transfer of possession of kratom to an individual under 21 years of age; the ingestion of kratom through a heating element or vaporizing mechanism; and the selling of heating elements or vaporizing mechanisms used to ingest kratom. It provides requirements and limitations relating to the sale of kratom products in Georgia and requires processor to maintain a registered agent in Georgia. This legislation amends label packaging requirements. It also establishes penalties and criminal punishments for violations of this legislation.

House Bill 502

Amends the Georgia Cosmetics Laser Services Act

Senate Sponsor: Kirkpatrick of the 32nd

House Sponsor: Silcox of the 53rd

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 393)

This legislation removes the on-site supervision requirement for assistant laser practitioners to conduct cosmetic laser services. It revises the type of services that are considered cosmetic laser services.

House Bill 571

Amends the Georgia Alzheimer's and Related Dementias State Plan

Senate Sponsor: Kirkpatrick of the 32nd

House Sponsor: Silcox of the 53rd

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 2, 2024 (Act 548)

This bill requires the Georgia Alzheimer's and Related Dementias State Plan to be updated every four years. It also requires the report submitted by the Alzheimer's and Related Dementias State Plan Advisory Council to be submitted every four years.

House Bill 663

No Patient Left Alone Act

Senate Sponsor: Hatchett of the 50th

House Sponsor: Hatchett of the 155th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 573)

This legislation establishes certain rights of minors and adults admitted to hospitals and long-term care facilities. It authorizes the designation of essential caregivers. It also authorizes hospitals and long-term care facilities to require designated essential caregivers and visitors to wear personal protective equipment.

This bill requires hospitals and long-term care facilities to post certain information on their websites. It further prohibits certain actions by state agencies against hospitals and long-term care facilities. This legislation prohibits the waiver or termination of certain rights.

House Bill 872

Modifies the Service Cancelable Loans Program to Include Dental Students

Senate Sponsor: Kirkpatrick of the 32nd

House Sponsor: Hawkins of the 27th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 19, 2024 (Act 385)

This bill modifies the application criteria for service cancelable loans to allow a dental student to qualify for this loan program when such a student is actively enrolled as a fourth-year student in an accredited dental education program located in the United States and is either a citizen or national of the United States.

House Bill 991

Extends Automatic Repeal of the Hospital Medicaid Financing Program

Senate Sponsor: Hufstetler of the 52nd

House Sponsor: Blackmon of the 146th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 400)

This legislation extends the automatic repeal date for the Hospital Medicaid Financing Program until June 30, 2030.

House Bill 1028

Authorizes the State Health Officer to Issue a Standing Order for Post-Exposure Prophylaxis Drugs

Senate Sponsor: B. Watson of the 1st

House Sponsor: LaHood of the 175th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 404)

This bill allows the state health officer to issue a standing order prescribing post-exposure prophylaxis drugs. It amends the definition of sexually transmitted diseases. It also repeals the Georgia Diabetes Control Grant Program and pilot program for pre-exposure prophylaxis drug assistance or services. It further clarifies that DPH does not conduct inspections of detention facilities or inmates.

House Bill 1072

Amends the Drug Repository Program

Senate Sponsor: Brass of the 28th

House Sponsor: Cooper of the 45th

Effective Date: Upon Governor's approval; Sections 2-6 become effective on January 1, 2025

Signed by the Governor April 23, 2024 (Act 473)

This legislation authorizes the Georgia State Board of Pharmacy to increase the maximum ratio of pharmacists to pharmacy technicians for closed-door pharmacies. It also clarifies that two technicians must be certified when a pharmacist directly supervises more than the maximum ratio of technicians. It further amends the pharmacist to pharmacy technician ratios for DPH's drug repository program. This bill requires reverse drug distributors to make and document diligent efforts to donate drugs rather than destroy them. It allows for substitution of drugs in some instances. It also provides exemption from sale and use taxes.

House Bill 1078

Establishes the Georgia Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE)

Senate Sponsor: B. Watson of the 1st

House Sponsor: Petrea of the 166th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 405)

This bill creates the Georgia Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) as part of the state's medical assistance program. It establishes a new adult day center licensure exclusion. It also exempts PACE organizations from the requirement to obtain a certificate of authority as a health maintenance organization.

House Bill 1083

Extends the Grace Periods Related to Licensing of Adult Residential Mental Health Programs

Senate Sponsor: B. Watson of the 1st

House Sponsor: Williamson of the 112th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor April 23, 2024 (Act 475)

This legislation extends the grace periods related to the licensing of adult residential mental health programs.

House Bill 1326

Controlled Substances Schedule Update

Senate Sponsor: B. Watson of the 1st

House Sponsor: Stephens of the 164th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 411)

This bill adds and removes a number of drugs and substances on Georgia's drug schedules.

House Bill 1335

Amends Staffing Requirements for Certain Medical and Care Institutions

Senate Sponsor: B. Watson of the 1st

House Sponsor: LaHood of the 175th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 30, 2024 (Act 502)

This legislation revises the staffing requirements for personal care homes, assisted living communities, and memory care centers.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Senate Bill 399

Articulation Agreements

Senate Sponsor: Echols of the 49th

House Sponsor: Dubnik of the 29th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 2, 2024 (Act 552)

This bill empowers the State Board of the Technical College System to provide a report, in collaboration with the University System of Georgia, which, at a minimum, includes: a list of the courses that have been approved to be transferable between units of the university system and the technical college system; the baccalaureate program(s) for which each such course has been approved by the Board of Regents to be a

degree prerequisite; and a summary of efforts undertaken to align transferable courses and degree completion to the High-demand Career List developed and approved by the State Workforce Development Board.

The report must also: identify the technical college system degree program(s) for which each listed course has been approved by TCSG to be degree prerequisites; a summary of efforts undertaken by TCSG to reduce barriers to degree completion by students who have earned course credits in the university system, technical college system, or both; and a summary of efforts undertaken to develop plans and procedures for reverse transfers. This bill also empowers TCSG to certify all courses that have been approved by the Board of Regents to be transferable units of the university system and identify the university system baccalaureate degree program(s) for which each such course has been approved by the Board of Regents to be a degree prerequisite.

Senate Bill 497

Public Service Apprenticeship Program

Senate Sponsor: Hickman of the 4th

House Sponsor: Hong of the 103rd

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor May 2, 2024 (Act 560)

This bill redesignates the High-demand Career Initiatives Program as the High Demand Apprenticeship Program and revises contract award amounts and other contract requirements under the program. Contract awards, given upon completion of an apprenticeship contract, cannot exceed \$10,000.00 per apprentice for contracts entered into before July 1, 2024 and \$5,000.00 per apprentice for contracts entered into on or after July 1, 2024. Also, employer sponsors are only eligible to enter into contracts for up to five apprentices per year through the end of Fiscal Year 24 and ten apprentices per year beginning in Fiscal Year 25 and each fiscal year after.

Additionally, the bill provides for the creation of the Public Service Apprenticeship Program. A public service sponsor may apply to the State Board of TCSG (Board) to enter into a contract to conduct an apprenticeship program for a specific apprentice. Each sponsor is only eligible to enter into contracts for up to ten apprentices per year. Upon successful completion of a contract, the Board must provide a contract completion award not exceeding \$5,000.00 to the sponsor. Further, the bill provides the minimum rules the Board must adopt for implementation of the program.

House Bill 130

Student Loan Repayment for Peace Officers

Senate Sponsor: Hatchett of the 50th

House Sponsor: Gambill of the 15th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor May 1, 2024 (Act 514)

This bill authorizes the Georgia Student Finance Authority (authority) to provide for the repayment of student loans held by a recipient in consideration of the recipient performing services as a full-time peace officer. Before being granted student loan repayment, each recipient must enter into a student loan repayment agreement with the authority agreeing to the terms and conditions upon which repayment is granted. The bill establishes eligibility and continued eligibility requirements for loan repayment and provides the requirements for student loan repayment agreements. The authority has the power to terminate an agreement at any time for any cause it deems sufficient, so long as this power is not arbitrarily or unreasonably exercised.

House Bill 228

Tuition Equalization Grants at Private Colleges and Universities

Senate Sponsor: Burns of the 23rd

House Sponsor: Dempsey of the 13th

Effective Date: Governor Vetoed May 7, 2024 (V1)

Under current law, private colleges and universities must satisfy certain criteria to be eligible for receipt of tuition equalization grants. The bill requires such institutions to be located in Georgia since or before January 1, 2021 and meet all other requirements by January 1, 2021 to be eligible for tuition equalization grants. The bill also revises the definition of approved school by requiring that the institution has at least one instructional campus that has been physically located in Georgia for at least ten years. However, only such institution's baccalaureate degree programs in nursing are deemed an approved school for the purposes of tuition equalization grants.

House Bill 970

Expands REACH Scholarship Eligibility to Victims of Human Trafficking

Senate Sponsor: Hickman of the 4th

House Sponsor: Dickey of the 145th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 2, 2024 (Act 553)

This bill provides that students who qualify for the federal free or reduced lunch program or are a victim of human trafficking may qualify for the REACH Scholarship if they also meet the other requirements. The bill also requires REACH participating school systems to identify eligible students who are victims of human trafficking as part of the school system's application process to select REACH scholars. The number of REACH Scholars participating school systems are eligible to designate each school year is subject to available appropriations. The bill also revises the scholarship amount REACH Scholars receive after their first year in the program. Instead of the tier system that is currently in place, all participating school systems are responsible for providing \$1,000.00 for each REACH Scholar enrolled and the Georgia Student Finance Authority is responsible for providing \$9,000.00.

House Bill 982

Develops a High-demand Career List

Senate Sponsor: Hatchett of the 50th

House Sponsor: Gambill of the 15th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 2, 2024 (Act 554)

This bill requires the State Workforce Development Board (Board) to create a High-demand Career List (List) that identifies those careers most critical to the Georgia's current and future workforce needs. The List must include the skills, certificates, licenses, diplomas, degrees, or other credentials of value required by employers for the high-demand careers included on the List. Also, the List must be published annually by December 31st on the Board's public website. All state agencies, including local school systems, must utilize the List to inform their use of funding for education programs that lead to credentials of value in careers on the List to ensure alignment with the List and effective use of funding. The Office of Student Achievement must audit and report on the effectiveness of employment, wage attainment, and retention of students in programs that align with the List.

House Bill 985

Abolishes the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation

Senate Sponsor: Burns of the 23rd

House Sponsor: Martin of the 49th

Effective Date: June 30, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 399)

This bill abolishes the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation by repealing the entirety of Part 2 of Article 7 of Chapter 3 of Title 20, which provides the statutory framework for the Corporation. Any outstanding obligations or liabilities of the Corporation are transferred to and vested in the Georgia Student Finance Authority. The right, title, interests in, and ownership of all assets of the Corporation are also transferred to and vested in the Georgia Student Finance Authority. However, such assets must be used for educational purposes. Additionally, this bill makes conforming changes through the code by removing

provisions relating to the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation in Titles 2, 7, 12, 20, 26, 33, 43, and 48. The bill also reverses the repeal of the Private Colleges and Universities Authority.

House Bill 1231

Expands HOPE Scholarship Eligibility

Senate Sponsor: Beach of the 21st

House Sponsor: Holcomb of the 81st

Effective Date: Governor Vetoed May 7, 2024 (V8)

This bill provides that an institution which was previously accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, but is now accredited by the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools, is deemed to be an approved school for the purposes of tuition equalization grants.

Additionally, this bill allows students who continuously meet the achievement standards (1) while concurrently seeking both a baccalaureate degree and a first professional degree; or (2) who, within 18 months of earning a baccalaureate degree, commence a graduate program at an eligible postsecondary institution to use the full number of hours of HOPE scholarship eligibility. The number of hours for which a student is eligible to receive the HOPE scholarship for a first professional degree or graduate degree must be reduced by the number of credit hours the student received for completing postsecondary courses while participating in the dual enrollment program. The bill also provides that a former foster youth, who has not previously received a HOPE scholarship or met the eligibility requirements for a HOPE scholarship, is deemed eligible for a HOPE scholarship for up to 30 semester or 45 quarter hours if such former foster youth meets certain eligibility requirements and does not meet any ineligibility criteria and maintains satisfactory academic progress.

INSURANCE AND LABOR

Senate Bill 334

Amends the Qualifying Conditions for Insurance Coverage for Certain Firefighters

Senate Sponsor: Albers of the 56th

House Sponsor: Lumsden of the 12th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 563)

Currently, a legally organized fire department must provide and maintain sufficient insurance coverage on each member of the fire department to pay claims for cancer diagnosed after the firefighter has served 12 consecutive months as a firefighter with such fire department. This bill modifies the qualifying conditions for such insurance coverage by removing the requirement that the 12 consecutive months of service must be with the same fire department. Instead, the firefighter may serve 12 consecutive months with any legally organized fire department in the state.

Senate Bill 362

Amends Eligibility Requirements to Receive Economic Development Incentives

Senate Sponsor: Hodges of the 3rd

House Sponsor: Wade of the 9th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 418)

This bill amends eligibility criteria for employers seeking economic development incentives by prohibiting employers from engaging in certain conduct with respect to any work or service for which the economic development incentive is to be based. Under this legislation, works or services that are prohibited include: 1) voluntarily granting recognition rights for the employer's employees solely and exclusively on the basis

of signed labor organization cards when the selection of a bargaining representative may instead be conducted through a secret ballot election; 2) voluntarily disclosing an employee's personal contact information to a labor organization, or a third party acting on behalf of the labor organization, without the employee's prior written consent, unless otherwise required by law; or 3) requiring a subcontractor to engage in these prohibited activities.

This bill establishes a payback penalty on employers who engage in any of these prohibited activities. Under this penalty, the employer must repay any and all economic development incentives received over the life of the project. Additionally, this prohibition does not apply to any agreement between the state and an employer that was executed before January 1, 2025. The bill also amends the responsibilities of DCA by empowering them to investigate potential violations under this legislation as they relate to the statutory and discretionary incentives authorized under relevant laws.

Senate Bill 384

Creates the State of Georgia as a Model Employer (GAME) Program

Senate Sponsor: Hickman of the 4th

House Sponsor: Franklin of the 160th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor May 2, 2024 (Act 558)

This bill establishes the State of Georgia as a Model Employer (GAME) Program for individuals with disabilities. The program must be developed and implemented by the State ADA Coordinator who must assist state agencies with the recruitment, hiring, advancement, and retention of qualified individuals with disabilities. Each state agency must submit to the State ADA Coordinator a report analyzing barriers in existing employment related to qualified individuals with disabilities and the adoption of strategies to address such barriers.

Senate Bill 389

Appoints the Adjutant General as the Official Sponsor of the State Sponsored Life Insurance Program

Senate Sponsor: Payne of the 54th

House Sponsor: Carson of the 46th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor April 24, 2024 (Act 488)

This bill appoints the adjutant general of the Georgia National Guard to be the official sponsor of the state sponsored life insurance program. The state sponsored life insurance program is the life insurance program offered exclusively to all members of the Georgia National Guard. In this role, the adjutant general must: 1) allow, facilitate, and coordinate all efforts to make the program available to all members of the Georgia National Guard; 2) provide an opportunity for the members to purchase products of the program; 3) allow, facilitate, and coordinate requested allotments with the appropriate United States Property and Fiscal Officer for purposes of this program; 4) allow representatives of the program to provide information on the program to the members through briefings during annual training and inactive duty periods; and 5) allow all members to designate or change beneficiaries under this program.

This legislation also requires the National Guard Association of Georgia to select the insurer used to provide this program.

House Bill 63

Amends When an Insurer is Required to Furnish Claims Experience to a Group Policy Holder

Senate Sponsor: Harbin of the 16th

House Sponsor: Williams of the 148th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 387)

Currently, all insurers must furnish (regardless of the rating methodology used) claims experience to group policyholders within 30 days of any policyholder's request except when such information has been furnished

to the group policyholder within the last six months. Additionally, the claims experience must be furnished for all groups of 51 or more covered employees, members, or enrollees (excluding dependents). However, insurers that utilize provider contracting methods including financial devices such as global fee arrangements to cover all medical expenses may make an application to the Insurance Commissioner for approval of the use of an alternative form of claims experience reporting.

This bill lowers the threshold that triggers an insurer being required to provide claims experience to group policyholders upon request from the policyholder from 51 to 20 or more covered employees, members, or enrollees. Additionally, this legislation expands the category of insurers that may make an application to the Commissioner for use of an alternative form of claims experience reporting from insurers that utilize provider contracting methods to include insurers that utilize other methods to calculate premiums.

House Bill 279

Discount for New or Retrofitted Properties that Better Resist Loss Due to Catastrophic Events

Senate Sponsor: Robertson of the 29th

House Sponsor: Gambill of the 15th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 23, 2024 (Act 476)

This bill requires insurers to provide premium discounts or insurance rate reductions for property owners who build new or retrofit single-family residential property, commercial property, or modular homes that resist loss due to certain catastrophic events. All property and casualty insurers must provide such a premium discount or insurance rate reductions by March 1, 2025.

House Bill 384

Requires Annual Notification by Insurers for Prostate-Specific Antigen Tests

Senate Sponsor: Brass of the 28th

House Sponsor: Henderson of the 113th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 23, 2024 (Act 472)

This bill requires every insurer to begin notifying each male insured, upon such a male attaining the age of 40 years old, that at the age of 45 years old or older (or if ordered by a physician, at the age of 40) that he is eligible for coverage for annual prostate-specific antigen tests. Additionally, each insurer must send this notice out to each male insured annually thereafter.

House Bill 451

Ashley Wilson Act

Senate Sponsor: Robertson of the 29th

House Sponsor: Seabaugh of the 34th

Effective Date: January 1, 2025

Signed by the Governor May 1, 2024 (Act 511)

This bill requires a public entity to provide and maintain sufficient insurance coverage to pay benefits to eligible first responders with covered conditions arising from a traumatic event experienced while performing first responder services for the public entity. Benefits to a first responder with a covered condition include: 1) one lump sum benefit per lifetime of \$3,000.00; and 2) an income replacement disability benefit. This bill requires the Commissioner of Insurance to submit an annual report summarizing the use of these benefits.

House Bill 935

Establishes the Back the Blue Fund

Senate Sponsor: Walker III of the 20th

House Sponsor: Vance of the 133rd

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 570)

This bill establishes the Back the Blue Fund for the purpose of providing bonuses to certified peace officers in Georgia. The State Revenue Commissioner (Commissioner) is designated as the custodian of the Fund and must administer the Fund as the bill requires. No later than January 1, 2025, the Commissioner must include on the form for vehicle registration a place for an applicant for registration to elect to contribute \$5.00 to the Fund. Such a contribution must be at the applicant's discretion and must be paid at the time of application in addition to the payment of any other fees required under applicable law. This legislation requires county agents to hold amounts voluntarily contributed to the Fund in a fiduciary capacity and weekly report and remit these funds to the Commissioner.

By January 1, 2026 and annually thereafter, the Commissioner must distribute moneys from the Fund to the Georgia Sheriffs' Association. These funds must be distributed in equal portions to each sheriff in the county throughout Georgia. Money distributed from the Fund may only be used for bonus payments to certified peace officers. Each sheriff must have sole discretion in determining the allocation of bonus payments to certified peace officers employed under the sheriff.

House Bill 984

Provides for the Off-Duty Use of Motor Vehicles by Certain Law Enforcement Officers; Allows for Continuation of Coverage of Certain Disabled Dependent Children

Senate Sponsor: Walker III of the 20th

House Sponsor: Lumsden of the 12th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024 (Section 4); Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 398)

This bill provides for the off-duty use of office motor vehicles by certified law enforcement officers employed by the office of the Safety Fire Commissioner and the Department of Transportation (with exceptions). Additionally, the bill allows for continuation of coverage of developmentally or physically disabled dependent children under certain insurance policies. The bill authorizes a health benefit plan sponsor, on behalf of a covered person, to consent to the delivery of the plan by electronic transmittal or posting.

House Bill 994

Revises Liability of a Boat Livery Under Certain Conditions

Senate Sponsor: Brass of the 28th

House Sponsor: Powell of the 33rd

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 590)

This bill provides that the operator of a boat rented, leased, or chartered from a boat livery will be liable for any injury or damage caused by the negligent operation of certain vessels. The renter operator will be liable for any injury or damage caused by negligent operation whether the negligence consists of a Georgia statutory violation or neglecting to observe such ordinary care as required by common law. In the case of such negligence by the renter operator, the boat livery will not be liable under ordinary boat owner liability, and the livery will only be liable for any tort caused by a vessel that the boat livery rented, leased, or chartered under certain conditions.

House Bill 1049

Insurance Business Transfer Act

Senate Sponsor: Walker III of the 20th

House Sponsor: Williamson of the 112th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 592)

This bill provides for the transfer or assumption of blocks of insurance business via an insurance business transfer plan. This plan does not require the affirmative consent of the policyholders or reinsureds. The bill provides requirements for notice and disclosure and standards and procedures for the approval of the transfer and novation by the Insurance Commissioner and the Superior Court of Fulton County. The bill provides for a three-step process: 1) application to the Commissioner for approval of an insurance business transfer plan; 2) petition to the court for approval of the insurance business transfer plan and an

implementation order; and 3) the issuing of an approval order by the court of an insurance business transfer plan and implementation order.

An approval order and an implementation order of an insurance business transfer plan will effect a transfer and novation of the transferred contracts of insurance or reinsurance. The result will be that the assuming insurer becomes directly liable to the policyholders of the transferring insurer. The transferring insurer's insurance obligations, risks, rights, or any combination thereof, under the contracts are extinguished. This bill also establishes the requirements for notice.

House Bill 1114

Data Analysis for Tort Reform Act

Senate Sponsor: Kennedy of the 18th

House Sponsor: Wade of the 9th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 407)

This bill provides for data collection from certain insurers, insurance rating organizations, and state agencies. The bill requires the Insurance Commissioner to request data from insurers, licensed rating organizations, and state agencies to create reports and requires the Commissioner to analyze data submitted and make determinations regarding the assessment of tort related risks by insurers. Also, the bill requires the Commissioner to generate a subsequent report that is substantially similar to the initial report that includes: historic and predictive trends based on submitted data; the effects of any enacted tort reform legislation; and any further determinations or recommendations for legislative action.

JUDICIARY

Senate Bill 13

Sale of Property by Local Authorities

Senate Sponsor: Albers of the 56th

House Sponsor: Smith of the 18th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

SB 13 revises the process for judicial sales of property taken under execution by limiting the authority to do so to sheriffs and permitting the process be done online. It then specifies then appropriate time and place for foreclosure sales of real estate. The legislation also authorizes commissioner tax sales may also be done online, and sheriffs or levying officers are appropriate parties for executing those sales.

This legislation also revises the content for certain notices to taxpayers created by county boards of tax assessors. The appeals process for those county boards is revised to include hearing officers under specified circumstances. Lastly, the bill revises who may serve as hearing officers for any county.

Senate Bill 83

Settlements as Bilateral Contracts

Senate Sponsor: Jackson of the 41st

House Sponsor: Leverett of the 123rd

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 415)

SB 83 revises the Georgia Civil Practice Act as it applies to offers to settle tort claims arising from motor vehicle collisions. The legislation provides that such offers are bilateral contracts and the terms that must be included for the offers to be valid.

Senate Bill 232

Probate Court Fees

Senate Sponsor: Kennedy of the 18th

House Sponsor: Jones of the 25th

Effective Date: January 1, 2025

Signed by the Governor May 1, 2024 (Act 515)

O.C.G.A. §15-9-60 provides for the fees that must be charged by judges and clerks of probate courts. This legislation strikes the entirety of this Code section and replaces it to establish a fee schedule that may be charged and collected by probate courts and their clerks. All fees will be paid to the county treasury unless otherwise specified and due at the time of filing unless a party files an affidavit of indigence.

Other fees are also affected by this legislation. First, an existing fee collected for marriage licenses is redirected from the State Treasury to the State Children's Trust Fund. The legislation provides additional civil actions where a fee is applied. Lastly, fees paid to probate courts for public fireworks display permits and a compensation structure for judges who are made custodians or distributors for incapacitated adults or minors are both eliminated.

Senate Bill 332

Prosecuting Attorneys Qualifications Commission

Senate Sponsor: Robertson of the 29th

House Sponsor: Gullett of the 19th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor March 13, 2024 (Act 368)

SB 92 (2023) created the Prosecuting Attorneys Qualification Commission and required that the Commission's rules be reviewed and adopted by the Georgia Supreme Court to be effective. On November 22, 2023, the Court in Matter No. S24U0190 announced that it declined to take any action on the Commission's drafted standards of conduct because it was not constitutionally permitted to do so. This legislation removes the provision that the Commission's standards and rules be effective only after they are reviewed and adopted by the Georgia Supreme Court.

Senate Bill 335

Safeguarding Adopted Children Against Sexual Violence Act

Senate Sponsor: Albers of the 56th

House Sponsor: Ballinger of the 23rd

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 561)

This legislation expands the definition of incest to include family members related by adoption. Familial relationships by adoption considered incest by this legislation include: siblings; grandparents and grandchildren; and aunts or uncles and nieces or nephews.

Senate Bill 414

Personal Privacy Protection Act

Senate Sponsor: Kennedy of the 18th

House Sponsor: Reeves of the 99th

Senate Committee: Judiciary

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 613)

SB 414 limits how state agencies may seek and handle the personal information of individuals related to membership in or support of nonprofit organizations and provides some exceptions. The legislation also provides for civil action against any individual who maliciously or corruptly discloses protected personal information.

Senate Bill 421

Offenses of Drive-by Shooting and Unlawful Request for Emergency Services (Swatting)

Senate Sponsor: Dixon of the 45th

House Sponsor: Reeves of the 99th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor May 1, 2024 (Act 512)

This bill expands the offense of aggravated assault to include the act of discharging a firearm from within a vehicle or immediately after exiting a vehicle toward another person, occupied motor vehicle, or occupied building. The bill expands the offense of criminal damage to property in the first degree to include the act of knowingly causing damage to a building by discharging a firearm while inside a motor vehicle or immediately after exiting a vehicle. This bill also creates the offense of drive-by shooting when a person in or near a motor vehicle used for the person's transport discharges a firearm toward a person or an occupied dwelling, building, or motor vehicle with intent to injure a person or damage property. That offense is included among those classified as criminal gang activity.

This bill also revises and increases penalties for the offense of making an unlawful request for emergency services assistance. A second conviction for that offense will be a felony punished by imprisonment of one to 10 years, a minimum fine of \$5,000, or both. A third or subsequent conviction will be a felony punished by imprisonment of 10 to 15 years, a minimum fine of \$25,000, or both. Current law also requires that when an unlawful request for emergency services assistance results in harm or death from the public safety agency, a first conviction will be a felony punished by maximum imprisonment of 10 years, a minimum fine of \$5,000, or both. This legislation applies that same punishment for a first conviction if the location of the unlawful request is a building or structure intended for residential use or a place of worship.

Senate Bill 424

West Georgia Judicial Circuit

Senate Sponsor: Robertson of the 29th

House Sponsor: Smith of the 138th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 615)

This legislation creates the West Georgia Judicial Circuit comprised of Carroll and Heard counties and provides for the appointment then election of a district attorney and four judges. It also provides for the jurisdiction and funding of the new judicial circuit and its officers. Lastly, the Coweta Judicial Circuit is restructured due to the removal of Carroll and Heard counties to the new judicial circuit.

Senate Bill 426

Joining Motor Carriers and Insurance Carriers to a Cause of Action

Senate Sponsor: Tillery of the 19th

House Sponsor: Burchett of the 176th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 616)

This legislation limits the ability of persons to join a motor and insurance carrier in the same cause of action so it may only occur when one or more of motor carriers to the cause of action is insolvent or bankrupt or personal service cannot be effected after reasonable diligence on the motor carrier or the driver of its vehicle. A plaintiff must then file an amended complaint to be properly served on the insurance carrier.

Senate Bill 448

Code Revision Commission Recommended Edits to the Official Code of Georgia Annotated

Senate Sponsor: Hatchett of the 50th

House Sponsor: Yearta of the 152nd

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 701)

This legislation makes various revisions for punctuation, grammar, terminology, and other updates across various Titles. It also provides for the reenactment of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated.

Senate Bill 450

Appeals Process for Certain Courts and Proceedings

Senate Sponsor: Kennedy of the 18th

House Sponsor: Leverett of the 123rd

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 424)

This legislation revises the appellate jurisdiction of state and superior courts over certain probate court orders. It also maintains magistrate court jurisdiction over certain decisions reversed by superior or state courts and provides requirements for appeals of dispossessory proceedings. Lastly, the legislation revises references regarding temporary letters of administration.

Senate Bill 454

Amended Child Support Guidelines

Senate Sponsor: Strickland of the 17th

House Sponsor: Gaines of the 120th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024 (Section 1(o)); January 1, 2026 (Section 1(i.1), (p), and (g))

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 618)

SB 454 revises the methods and factors used to calculate child support obligations. This includes specifications for how child support is calculated in cases where parents share custody and the requirement that a low-income adjustment be made according to a revised child support table.

Senate Bill 465

Austin's Law

Senate Sponsor: Goodman of the 8th

House Sponsor: Burchett of the 176th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor April 30, 2024 (Act 504)

SB 465 creates the offense of aggravated involuntary manslaughter. This offense occurs when a person causes the fentanyl overdose death of another human being, without the intent to cause the death of said human being, by intentionally manufacturing or selling any substance that contains fentanyl after representing that such substance was any controlled substance. A person convicted of this offense must be sentenced to 10-30 years or life imprisonment. This offense is considered a separate offense which may not be merged with other charges. For purposes of a criminal prosecution, the bill explicitly states that a defendant's knowledge of the chemical identity of the substance manufactured or sold is not an essential element of the offense, and the state does not have the burden of proving that a defendant knew the chemical identity of such substance in order to be convicted of this offense.

Senate Bill 493

Offenses by and Supervision of Sexual Offenders

Senate Sponsor: Hatchett of the 50th

House Sponsor: Anderson of the 10th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 426)

SB 493 amends the offense of intentionally photographing a minor by a sexual offender without consent to include the use of drone systems to capture images. The legislation also provides punishments for multiple violations and allows judges to restrict ownership of drones as a condition of probation for sexual offenders. Lastly, SB 493 revises the procedures for sexual offenders to petition for removal from the sexual offender registry.

Senate Bill 517

Authorized Use or Threat of Force

Senate Sponsor: Robertson of the 29th

House Sponsor: Seabaugh of the 34th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor May 2, 2024 (Act 545)

SB 517 provides criminal immunity to individuals threatening or using deadly force when claiming a defense of justification or when law enforcement does so to apprehend a suspected felon. Under those same circumstances, this legislation also prevents an individual or law enforcement from being held tortiously liable.

Senate Bill 533

Process after Accused is Found Mentally Incompetent to Stand Trial

Senate Sponsor: Strickland of the 17th

House Sponsor: Smith of the 18th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 621)

This legislation revises the procedure after an accused individual is found mentally incompetent to stand trial so that DBHDD has the sole discretion in determining the proper treatment for restoring competency. It also permits treatment occur in secure facilities or jail-based competency programs.

House Bill 30

Agency Consideration of Antisemitism when Enforcing Antidiscrimination Laws

Senate Sponsor: Kennedy of the 18th

House Sponsor: Carson of the 46th

Effective Date: Signed by Governor January 31, 2024 (Act 356)

HB 30 defines “antisemitism” according to the definition provided by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance and requires agencies to consider the definition when enforcing antidiscrimination laws. It also requires the state to consider antisemitism when determining if enhanced penalties are authorized when prosecuting a defendant who intentionally selected a victim based on such characteristics.

House Bill 158

DeKalb Judicial Circuit

Senate Sponsor: Parent of the 42nd

House Sponsor: Mitchell of the 88th

Effective Date: January 1, 2025

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 585)

This legislation renames the Stone Mountain Judicial Circuit to the DeKalb Judicial Circuit.

House Bill 166

Constable Qualifications

Senate Sponsor: Strickland of the 17th

House Sponsor: Mathiak of the 74th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 574)

HB 166 revises the qualifications of constables to require they be at least 21 years of age, a United States citizen, a registered voter, and have a high school diploma or its equivalency. It also allows additional qualifications to be imposed by local law.

House Bill 218

Admissible Statements from Mentally Incapacitated Individuals

Senate Sponsor: Albers of the 56th

House Sponsor: Hilton of the 48th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 24, 2024 (Act 482)

HB 218 allows certain out of court statements from mentally incapacitated individuals to be considered admissible testimony when offered in court by another party.

House Bill 220
Enforcement of Owners' Association Instruments

Senate Sponsor: Strickland of the 17th

House Sponsor: Leverett of the 123rd

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 388)

HB 220 permits condominium and home owners' associations to seek injunctive relief against owners for noncompliance with the association's instruments without first seeking other remedies. This legislation also requires the owners in every planned subdivision with 15 or more plots to comply with all lawful covenants and permits any common interest association created pursuant to such covenants to seek civil action for lack of compliance.

House Bill 404
Safe at Home Act

Senate Sponsor: Hufstetler of the 52nd

House Sponsor: Carpenter of the 4th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 392)

HB 404 requires residential leases or similar agreements provide a clause that premises are fit for human habitation. It also provides that cooling services are among those utilities that landlords are prohibited from suspending without a final disposition of dispossessory proceedings. Lastly, the Safe at Home Act provides that landlords must wait at least three days after a tenant fails to pay obligations before they may commence judicial eviction proceedings.

House Bill 456
Appointment and Removal of Municipal Court Judges

Senate Sponsor: Hatchett of the 50th

House Sponsor: Gunter of the 8th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 575)

This legislation increases the minimum term for municipal court judges to two years while preserving a locality's authority to provide longer terms. It also outlines provisions that must not be included in written agreements between judges and municipalities and procedures for municipalities and judges when breach of those agreements is alleged.

House Bill 500
Arson of a Law Enforcement Vehicle

Senate Sponsor: Albers of the 56th

House Sponsor: Silcox of the 53rd

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 2, 2024 (Act 547)

SB 500 creates the offense of arson of a law enforcement vehicle and assigns punishments. It also adds this offense to the list of offenses that are only bailable in front of a superior court judge.

House Bill 563
Complaint Process under the Fair Employment Practices Act of 1978
Senate Sponsor: Anavitarte of the 31st

House Sponsor: Leverett of the 123rd

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 395)

HB 563 amends the process for complaints made by public employees to an administrator within the Commission on Equal Opportunity. It requires certain hearings related to those complaints occur before an administrative law judge, allows complaints to be amended prior to an administrator's decision, and provides procedures when an administrator is unable to make an initial determination or complete an investigation. This legislation also reduces the number of potential special masters that may be requested by an administrator and authorizes the administrator to order discovery for complaints. Lastly, appeals processes by adversely affected parties are clarified in addition to what constitutes unlawful practice.

House Bill 827

Department of Agriculture's Authority, Criminal Trespass, and Livestock Theft

Senate Sponsor: Goodman of the 8th

House Sponsor: Smith of the 18th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 30, 2024 (Act 499)

This legislation expands the police powers of the commissioner of the Department of Agriculture and those employed, designated, or deputized for the purpose of enforcement. It also defines the offense of criminal trespass involving a wild animal and increases penalties for the offense of livestock theft.

House Bill 873

Juvenile Treatment Court Divisions

Senate Sponsor: Hatchett of the 50th

House Sponsor: Gunter of the 8th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 576)

HB 873 creates juvenile treatment court divisions to provide an alternative to the traditional justice system in appropriate cases. In furtherance of this, it provides the Council of Accountability Court Judges with powers and duties related to these divisions. And, this legislation provides criteria for the implementation of juvenile treatment court divisions and handling of program participants.

House Bill 896

Name Change upon Divorce

Senate Sponsor: Anavitarte of the 31st

House Sponsor: New of the 64th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 397)

This legislation provides individuals with additional opportunities to petition a court for a name change after a divorce decree and judgment are entered. It also revises the name change process following a divorce so publication in a legal organ is unnecessary and so courts may enter an order without a hearing.

House Bill 906

Additional Judge for Tifton Judicial Circuit

Senate Sponsor: Summers of the 13th

House Sponsor: Yearta of the 152nd

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 30, 2024 (Act 503)

HB 906 expands the Tifton Judicial Circuit by adding a third superior court judge. The legislation requires the Governor to appoint the additional judge for a term beginning on July 1, 2024. It also enumerates the powers, duties, compensation, and administration of the new judge's position.

House Bill 926
Second Chance Workforce Act
Senate Sponsor: Cowsert of the 46th
House Sponsor: Reeves of the 99th
Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 2, 2024 (Act 550)

HB 926 revises the list of serious delinquent acts that must be reviewed by a court to determine if a child should be detained. The legislation also requires a child be at least 13 years of age to be eligible for arrest by a law enforcement officer when the child has been accused by certain misdemeanor violations through the issuance of a prior citation.

HB 926 also revises procedures for law enforcement officers to issue citations for offenses rather than arresting an individual. The legislation further amends when a person's driver's license may be suspended or reinstated while final adjudication of claims is pending. The list of noncommercial vehicles a person is permitted to operate with certain classes of driver's licenses and a requirement of first responders to search a person for documentation of donor status are also amended.

House Bill 934
Self-Service Storage Facility Agreements
Senate Sponsor: Anavitarte of the 31st
House Sponsor: Momtahan of the 17th
Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 577)

HB 934 allows self-service storage facility agreements to be executed electronically. It also establishes standards for enforcing and terminating rental agreements for those facilities.

House Bill 992
Additional Judge for Houston Judicial Circuit
Senate Sponsor: Kennedy of the 18th
House Sponsor: Blackmon of the 146th
Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 401)

HB 992 expands the Houston Judicial Circuit by adding a fourth superior court judge. The legislation requires the Governor to appoint the additional judge for a term beginning on July 1, 2024. It also enumerates the powers, duties, compensation, and administration of the new judge's position.

House Bill 993
Offenses Related to Minors
Senate Sponsor: Hatchett of the 50th
House Sponsor: Powell of the 33rd
Effective Date: July 1, 2024

HB 993 eliminates a defense to the offense of sexual exploitation of children. The legislation also creates the offense of grooming a minor and specifies where prosecution may occur.

House Bill 1017
Georgia Squatter Reform Act
Senate Sponsor: Setzler of the 37th

House Sponsor: Seabaugh of the 34th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor April 24, 2024 (Act 483)

HB 1017 provides penalties for unlawful squatting violations. The legislation also provides requirements for proceedings in magistrate court against intruders or those who commit unlawful squatting.

House Bill 1033

Utility Worker Protection Act

Senate Sponsor: Cowsert of the 46th

House Sponsor: Leverett of the 123rd

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 566)

This legislation provides punishments for simple and aggravated assault upon a utility worker. It also provides punishments for battery, simple battery, and aggravated battery upon a utility worker.

House Bill 1123

Adult Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation Multidisciplinary Teams

Senate Sponsor: Kennedy of the 18th

House Sponsor: Barrett of the 24th

Effective Date: Governor Vetoed May 7, 2024 (V6)

HB 1123 amends the law pertaining to Adult Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation Multidisciplinary Teams to require a team be established in each judicial circuit if a supervising coordinator position is funded in the Prosecuting Attorneys' Council. The legislation then creates the Adult Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation Multidisciplinary Coordinator Program. Lastly, it creates the elder justice coalition and appoints stakeholders who will study, report, and train on methods of protecting disabled adults or the elderly.

House Bill 1165

Members of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council

Senate Sponsor: Albers of the 56th

House Sponsor: Mainor of the 56th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 409)

This legislation removes the chairperson of the Governor's Office of Children and Families from the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council and replaces them with the commissioner of the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities.

House Bill 1172

Public Use of Navigable Streams

Senate Sponsor: Hatchett of the 50th

House Sponsor: Burchett of the 176th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 597)

HB 1172 revises the public right to use navigable streams.

House Bill 1201

Relief for First Offenses

Senate Sponsor: Strickland of the 17th

House Sponsor: Gaines of the 120th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor April 24, 2024 (Act 490)

This legislation provides courts with the authority to vacate the sentences of defendants who are victims of human trafficking if they are directly related and the sentences of individuals sentenced as first offenders or for a first offense of possession of a controlled substance. Courts may also restrict the criminal history of those first offenders. Lastly, this legislation defines "commercial sexual exploitation recovery center" in multiple sections of the Code.

House Bill 1203**Evictions by Off-Duty Sheriffs****Senate Sponsor: Hatchett of the 50th****House Sponsor: Kelley of the 16th****Effective Date: Signed by the Governor April 24, 2024 (Act 484)**

HB 1203 allows landlords to employ off-duty sheriffs, marshals, constables, or POST certified officers to execute writs of possession within their appropriate jurisdiction. This may be done after a certain amount of time has passed and solely at the expense of the landlords.

House Bill 1240**Uniform Commercial Code Modernization Act of 2024****Senate Sponsor: Kennedy of the 18th****House Sponsor: Reeves of the 99th****Effective Date: July 1, 2024****Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 600)**

HB 1240 amends the Commercial Code according to the recommendations of the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws.

House Bill 1267**Georgia Tax Court Act of 2025****Senate Sponsor: Strickland of the 17th****House Sponsor: Martin of the 49th****Effective Date: July 1, 2024 (Section 3-1); January 1, 2025 (Section 1-2); Otherwise effective July 1, 2026. Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 601)**

This legislation creates the Georgia Tax Court and provides its powers, proceedings, jurisdiction and administration. It also creates a small claims division within the court and outlines the process for appeals. The Georgia Tax Court Act repeals and replaces references to the Georgia Tax Tribunal with the new court. Also, this legislation places the Georgia Tax Court and the Georgia State-wide Business Court under the Administrative Office of the Court's budget for administrative purposes.

House Bill 1292**Real Property Interests and Notaries****Senate Sponsor: Goodman of the 8th****House Sponsor: Okoye of the 102nd****Effective Date: January 1, 2025 (Part I); Otherwise upon Governor's approval.****Signed by the Governor May 2, 2024 (Act 549)**

HB 1292 requires superior court clerks to accept real property transactions submitted electronically by self-filers and gives the Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority (Authority) the ability to create rules related to those transactions. The legislation also revises provisions related to notaries public related to verifying photo identification, maintaining records, and training prior to appointment. Lastly, the legislation allows actions to be taken to prevent fraudulent real estate transactions and imposes notice requirements on unsolicited offers for real property.

House Bill 1409**Limited Liability for Mental Health Care Providers****Senate Sponsor: Strickland of the 17th**

House Sponsor: Leverett of the 123rd

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 568)

HB 1409 limits the liability of mental health care providers by requiring a standard of gross negligence. Further, it specifies how jury instructions must be provided by a court in cases involving mental health care liability claims. And, the legislation limits the availability of punitive damages in actions against mental health care providers.

House Resolution 598

Georgia Tax Court

Senate Sponsor: Strickland of the 17th

House Sponsor: Martin of the 49th

Effective Date: January 1, 2025 (Once Ratified)

HR 598 amends the Georgia Constitution to create the Georgia Tax Court and vest it with judicial power. It also provides for the court's judges and their appointment and approval.

NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

House Bill 43

Council on American Indian Concerns Membership Revision

Senate Sponsor: Senator Anavitarte of the 31st

House Sponsor: Representative Lim of the 98th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 571)

This legislation revises the membership of the Council on American Indian Concerns to include at least one member representing each of the American Indian Tribes identified by current law as: the Georgia Tribe of Eastern Cherokee, the Lower Muscogee Creek Tribe, and the Cherokee of Georgia Tribal Council; and updates the addresses of tribes, bands, groups, or communities which the state of Georgia officially recognizes as legitimate.

House Bill 244

Department of Natural Resources Updates

Senate Sponsor: Senator Watson of the 1st

House Sponsor: Representative Petrea of the 166th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 25, 2024 (Act 493)

This bill extends the date by which rules and regulations promulgated by the Board of Natural Resources must be in effect for purposes of establishing criminal violations from January 1, 2022 to January 1, 2024. The use of recorded calls, including electronically imitated or amplified calls or sounds, is generally prohibited, but this legislation provides an exception for the hunting of bobcats and foxes. This legislation requires licensed seafood dealers who have not engaged in any commercial fishing activity within a given month to report such non-activity to the Department of Natural Resources.

In relation to shellfish, this bill defines 'cage' as a containment unit of any size that contains or may contain shellfish for commercial sale; for a larger outer unit that holds smaller units inside, the entire unit is treated as a single cage. Master harvester and harvester permits may be denied pursuant to code provisions requiring training. This bill removes the three year authorization revocation mandate stating instead that upon a first conviction, a harvester permit must not be revoked if the harvester satisfactorily completes retraining as specified by the department sanitation program. Language requiring shellfish mariculture permit holders to obtain permits establishing the maximum number of cages that may be deployed along

with other related cage provisions is removed. Shellfish mariculture cages are required to have an attached, department approved identification tag. All intertidal gear is exempt from these requirements.

House Bill 1146

Private Water Permits

Senate Sponsor: Senator Watson of the 1st

House Sponsor: Representative Stephens of the 164th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 595)

This legislation allows a private company, to which the Environmental Protection Division of the Department of Natural Resources has delegated authority, to obtain a permit to provide water for consumptive use within the coastal aquifers or to expand existing services and facilities. A private company may obtain this permit without a letter of concurrence from any local government or public entity that has the power to provide water for consumptive use as long as: the local government or public entity lacks the capability or permitted capacity to provide requested service within 18 months; and the company with delegated authority has the capability and permitted ground water capacity to provide water service as requested, within 18 months. This bill sunsets on January 1, 2029.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Senate Bill 10

Illegal Drag Races and Reckless Stunt Driving

Senate Sponsor: Jones of the 10th

House Sponsor: Neal of the 79th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 1, 2024 (Act 513)

This bill creates a new offense for being knowingly present and actively facilitating an exhibition of illegal drag racing or of laying drags. Active facilitation may be evidenced by using a vehicle to block the part of the road closest to exhibition participants allowing the event to take place. This offense is a misdemeanor that must be punished by a fine of at least \$250. This bill also increases the punishment associated with the offense of reckless stunt driving and provides for a minimum sentence under certain circumstances. The bill adds reckless stunt driving as an offense that disqualifies drivers from obtaining a Class C or D driver's license.

Senate Bill 35

Coverage for Continuous Glucose Monitors as a Benefit under Medicaid

Senate Sponsor: Merritt of the 9th

House Sponsor: Wiedower of the 121st

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 604)

This bill includes coverage for continuous glucose monitors as a benefit under Medicaid via the most cost-effective benefit delivery channel. The criteria for such coverage must be updated to align with current standards of care and must include specified requirements.

Senate Bill 37

Creation of Law Enforcement Unit for GPSTC

Senate Sponsor: Robertson of the 29th

House Sponsor: Collins of the 71st

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 1, 2024 (Act 506)

This bill allows for the creation of a law enforcement unit within the Georgia Public Safety Training Center. The bill also provides that jailers who have been certified by the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council as having successfully completed the course of training required under the 'Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Act,' are authorized to arrest any person found to be in violation of a criminal law that occurs within the jail or within the perimeter guard lines of such jail. Jailers are further authorized to exercise arrest powers upon any person for whom a complaint or arrest warrant is pending who surrenders into custody at his or her jail.

Senate Bill 63

Bonds and Schedule of Bail Revisions

Senate Sponsor: Robertson of the 29th

House Sponsor: Gaines of the 120th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 1, 2024 (Act 507)

This bill revises a variety of areas. The bill provides for the setting of bonds and schedules of bails. Under current law, the judge of any court of inquiry may by written order establish a schedule of bails, and unless otherwise ordered by the judge of any court, an accused must be released from custody upon posting bail as fixed in the schedule. This bill clarifies that the schedule is inclusive of offenses that are violations of local ordinances. The bill also clarifies that no bail schedule, local standing order, official policy, or local ordinance can mandate releasing an accused person on unsecured judicial release prior to the accused appearing before a judge.

Under current law, bail must be accepted for misdemeanor cases in a reasonable amount as may be just and fair for a person charged with a misdemeanor, so long as the sureties tendered and offered on the bond are approved by the sheriff in the county of the offense. This bill states that bail must be accepted for misdemeanor cases in a sufficient amount for a person charged with a misdemeanor, provided that the sureties tendered and offered on the bond must only include the release of a person by the use of secured means, professional bondsmen, or property as approved by the sheriff in the county of the offense. The bill also amends the list of bail restricted offenses to add several offenses.

The bill also revises surety liability and provides for return of compensation by surety to principal. The bill changes the fee for continuing education programs for bail recovery agents and revises when forfeiture of bonds occurs. Further, the bill revises procedures relating to execution hearings and revises procedures for judgments on forfeitures and remission of bond funds.

Senate Bill 159

Revises Punishments for Prohibited Items in Possession by Inmates

Senate Sponsor: Robertson of the 29th

House Sponsor: Sainz of the 180th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 1, 2024 (Act 508)

This bill revise punishment provisions relative to prohibited items in possession by inmates and provides for enhanced punishment for violations committed by department employees or contractors. The bill also revises punishment provisions relative to unauthorized photography or recording of a place of incarceration using unmanned aircraft.

Senate Bill 352

Standards Related to Modified Suspension Systems

Senate Sponsor: Anderson of the 24th

House Sponsor: Carson of the 46th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 611)

This bill provides standards regarding alteration and operation of motor vehicles with relation to modified suspension systems. The bill also prohibits the operation of a motor vehicle with broken suspension system springs.

Senate Bill 369

Issuance of License Plates Commemorating the United States of America's Semiquincentennial

Senate Sponsor: Burns of the 23rd

House Sponsor: Hagan of the 156th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor April 23, 2024 (Act 480)

This bill establishes parameters for the design of and a selection process for a license plate commemorating the United States of America's semiquincentennial. The design of the plate must be selected from designs submitted by students in sixth through eighth grades as part of a civics education and engagement program. This design must include feedback from the Georgia Commission on Civics Education Georgia Center for Civic Engagement, Georgia Historical Society, Sons of the American Revolution, and Daughters of the American Revolution. The bill provides for the issuance of said plates during the years 2026 through 2030.

Senate Bill 417

Duties of the Safety Fire Commissioner and Regulated Activities

Senate Sponsor: Albers of the 56th

House Sponsor: Vance of the 133rd

Effective Date: July 1, 2024; Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 614)

This bill revises duties of the Safety Fire Commissioner and requirements of activities regulated by that office. Current law requires the owner of an elevator, dumbwaiter, escalator, manlift, or moving walk to provide a written report to the Safety Fire Commissioner (Commissioner) of any accidents involving structural damage, personal injury, or death to an enforcement authority within seven days of the incident. This bill reduces the time of submission for those written reports to by the end of the next business day.

This bill creates the offense of knowingly and intentionally igniting a firework within range of a first responder for the purpose of hindering or disrupting the lawful discharge of their duties. The offense will be a high and aggravated misdemeanor. The bill adds and revises various other provisions related to fireworks.

The bill provides for numerous other regulations. Current law prevents the release of fire propelled balloons, parachutes, or like devices. This bill prevents the sale or offer to sell those devices. This bill revises various provisions related to inspections for boilers and pressure vessels. It also reduces the amount of time between certified inspections of certain pressure valves from three years to two. This bill revises definitions under the Public Employee Hazardous Chemical Protection and Right to Know Act of 1988 and requires employers to maintain and share related safety data sheets.

Senate Bill 443

Abatement of Nuisances Related to Promoters and Organizers

Senate Sponsor: Watson of the 1st

House Sponsor: Petrea of the 166th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor April 8, 2024 (Act 374)

Current law provides that private citizen may not generally interfere to have a public nuisance abated. A complaint must be filed by the district attorney, solicitor-general, city attorney, or county attorney on behalf of the public. However, a public nuisance may be abated upon filing of a complaint by any private citizen specially injured.

This bill adds provisions that apply to any event hosted by a promoter or organizer that is not properly permitted by the appropriate local governing authority that results in a public nuisance that impedes travel

by police, fire service, emergency medical services personnel, other public safety personnel, or employees or officials of local, state, or federal governments acting in their official capacities. Where a district attorney, solicitor-general, city attorney, or county attorney on behalf of the public files the aforementioned complaint and the complaint includes a statement that the aforementioned have been satisfied, he or she may seek in such complaint and recover on behalf of the public from a promoter or organizer of the unpermitted event reimbursement of all expenses incurred by a local governing authority associated with public safety, including, but not limited to, costs and fees for the provision of traffic control, supplemental law enforcement, fire suppression services, emergency medical technician or paramedic services, and sanitation services.

Senate Bill 472

Combating Organized Retail Crime Act

Senate Sponsor: Albers of the 56th

House Sponsor: Gaines of the 120th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024; Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 564)

Current law requires any online marketplace doing business in Georgia to require that certain information be provided by a seller within ten days of becoming a high-volume third-party seller and for the online marketplace to request updated information or confirmation that the information has not changed on at least an annual basis. A high-volume third-party seller is a participant in an online marketplace who is a third-party seller and who, in any continuous 12-month period during the previous 24 months, has entered into 200 or more discrete sales or transactions of new or unused consumer products resulting in the accumulation of an aggregate total of \$5,000 or more in gross revenues in Georgia through the online marketplace and for which payment was processed by the online marketplace or a third party. Online marketplaces are required to conspicuously disclose certain identifying information relating to high-volume third-party sellers including their full name, physical address, and contact information.

This bill amends the requirements for a seller to be considered a high-volume third-party seller by revising the definition of a high-volume third-party seller to no longer require that a payment to be processed by the online marketplace or a third party. This legislation also clarifies the type of transactions or sales that must follow the Inform Consumers Act to include transactions or sales that utilize an online marketplace not just transactions or sales done through an online marketplace.

Senate Bill 508

Restricting Availability of Judges' Personal Information

Senate Sponsor: Dixon of the 45th

House Sponsor: Reeves of the 99th

Effective Date: July 1, 2025; Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 584)

This bill requires the Administrative Office of the Courts to take steps to restrict certain personal information of judges, justices, and their spouses. The bill also creates notice requirements for judges and justices when beginning or ending a position.

Senate Resolution 570

Senate Supporting Safety and Welfare of All Individuals in Department of Corrections Facilities Study Committee

Senate Sponsor: Robertson of the 29th

This resolution creates the Senate Supporting Safety and Welfare of All Individuals in Department of Corrections Facilities Study Committee. The study committee will focus on the examination of current issues impacting the ability of the Department of Corrections to operate secure and safe facilities and to ensure the welfare of both its staff and those in its custody.

House Bill 997**Disqualifying Commercial Vehicle Drivers for Positive Drug Test****Senate Sponsor: Albers of the 56th****House Sponsor: Corbett of the 174th****Effective Date: July 1, 2024****Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 402)**

This bill provides that any person is disqualified from operating a commercial motor vehicle upon receipt of notification of a positive drug test, an adulterated or substituted drug test, or a report of a refusal to submit a test, by the department from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. The bill further provides for when such person must be reinstated upon certain notification from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

House Bill 1100**Authorizes Use of Electronic Notifications and Communications to Motor Vehicle Owners****Senate Sponsor: Albers of the 56th****House Sponsor: New of the 64th****Effective Date: Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 406)**

The bill allows the Department of Revenue to utilize electronic notifications and communications for various functions such as notice of a lapse of vehicle insurance and certificate of title. The bill revises provisions relating to registration and licensing of vehicles by providing that: vehicles owned by the State, any municipality of this state, or any other political subdivision of this state that are utilized in covert or secret investigatory police functions, assigned for the transportation of employees of the Georgia Lottery Corporation, or owned by the Department of Public Safety, must be issued regular license plates upon the filing of the properly executed application for registration and payment of the applicable license fee. The commissioner is authorized to grant a waiver of the requirements such that regular license plates may be issued upon finding issuance of such waiver to be in the best interest of public safety, public welfare, or efficient administration.

The bill also allows the commissioner to provide for the maintenance of certificate of title records in electronic format and in a system accessible by authorized users. Electronic evidence of a certificate of title maintained in such system serves as an accurate and true depiction of the state issued certificate of title for a vehicle.

House Bill 1105**The Georgia Criminal Alien Track and Report Act of 2024****Senate Sponsor: Albers of the 56th****House Sponsor: Petrea of the 166th****Effective Date: Section 10 becomes effective December 31, 2024****Signed by the Governor May 1, 2024 (Act 505)**

This bill promotes Georgia law enforcement officials and agencies to cooperate with federal authorities to assist in the enforcement of immigration laws. For instance, when no such memorandum is in effect, local agencies are required to seek, and state agencies are authorized to enter into, memorandums of understanding and agreements with the United States Department of Justice, the Department of Homeland Security, or any other federal agency for the purpose of enforcing federal immigration. The bill further provides punishments for violations of these provisions.

The bill provides for verification procedures relating to immigration status of inmates. The bill requires an individual in a supervisory role at a jail to provide a report related to inmates in the jail and certain communications regarding immigration status with federal authorities. The bill further allows for DNA to be collected from individuals convicted of a felony or misdemeanor and subject to an immigration detainer notice.

REGULATED INDUSTRIES AND UTILITIES

Senate Bill 73

Regulation of Legal Advertising; Civil Liability for Violation of Telephone Solicitation Provisions

Senate Sponsor: Tillery of the 19th

House Sponsor: Smith of the 18th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 605)

This legislation requires the State Bar of Georgia to promulgate rules and regulations for the advertisement of legal services. These rules and regulations must include prohibitions against and penalties for false representations, misrepresentations, and misleading claims. Each solicitation must include a disclosure of the location of the principal place of business of the soliciting firm or individual. This disclosure must make up at least ten percent of the solicitation's total composition. The depiction of an individual who is not employed by the soliciting entity in a manner that would lead a reasonable person to think such individual was so employed is prohibited unless such individual is an immediate family member of an entity employee. The depiction of an individual who is not a client in a manner that would lead a reasonable person to think such individual is a client is prohibited.

The State Bar of Georgia, any member of the State Bar in good standing, such member's firm, or any individual who sees or hears a solicitation that violates this legislation has a cause of action against the soliciting entity. Any soliciting individual or firm in violation of these provisions is liable for a civil penalty of 10,000 dollars per violation.

Additionally, this legislation permits individuals on the Public Service Commission's Do Not Call List who receive more than one unauthorized telephone solicitation within a 12 month period to bring an individual or class action against the person or entity the telephone solicitations were made by or on the behalf of for injunctive relief and damages.

Senate Bill 205

Reinstatement of Lapsed Licenses for Funeral Directors

Senate Sponsor: Williams of the 25th

House Sponsor: Ridley of the 6th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor April 23, 2024 (Act 478)

This legislation requires the State Board of Funeral Service to reinstate the license of a funeral director who has allowed their license to lapse for less than ten years provided that the licensee: passed their licensure examination, has not been subject to disciplinary action by the board, and successfully completes an application for reinstatement.

Senate Bill 354

Licensure Exemptions for Blow-Dry Styling, Shampooing, and Cosmetic Application

Senate Sponsor: Walker III of the 20th

House Sponsor: Ehrhart of the 36th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 2, 2024 (Act 556)

This legislation exempts individuals whose activities are limited to shampooing, blow-dry styling, or applying cosmetics from cosmetology licensure requirements. The bill defines 'blow-dry styling' as the practice of shampooing, conditioning, drying, arranging, curling, straightening, or styling hair using only mechanical devices and topical agents. In relation to this definition, flat and curling irons are not classified as mechanical devices. Additionally, facilities in which individuals exclusively perform shampooing, blow-dry styling, or cosmetic application and no other practices requiring a cosmetology license are exempt from facility licensing requirements.

Senate Bill 370

Human Trafficking Hotline Information; Regulation of Massage Therapy Licensees

Senate Sponsor: Hodges of the 3rd

House Sponsor: Hong of the 103rd

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 24, 2024 (Act 489)

This legislation requires businesses and establishments that offer massage or bodywork services by a massage therapist or a person who is not a massage therapist, convenience stores, body art studios, manufacturing facilities, and medical offices to post model human trafficking notices in each public restroom and in a conspicuous location in clear view of the public and employees.

Members of the Georgia Board of Massage Therapy are required to complete at least one-half hour of training in human trafficking awareness and prevention annually. Currently, the board has the authority to request, upon reasonable notice, on-site inspections of massage therapy businesses. This legislation gives the board the authority to initiate these inspections without the previous reasonable notice or request requirements. Additionally, massage therapy licensees are required to display a two-inch-by-two-inch photograph of themselves taken within the last two years alongside their license certificate. These items must be displayed in an appropriate and public manner at each location of practice.

Senate Bill 373

Expedited License by Endorsement for Marriage and Family Therapists

Senate Sponsor: Walker III of the 20th

House Sponsor: Powell of the 33rd

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 2, 2024 (Act 557)

This legislation reduces the number of practicum or internship hours required for licensure as an associate professional counselor or professional counselor. The definition of 'supervisor' is broadened as it relates to licensing provisions relative to professional counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists. This bill requires the Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers, and Marriage and Family Therapists to issue an expedited license by endorsement, within 30 days, to any applicant seeking licensure as a marriage and family therapist who: completes an application for licensure and pays all applicable fees; holds a current, valid, and unrestricted license to practice in another state; is in good standing with such other state and is not the subject of an investigation or a disciplinary proceeding being conducted by a professional licensing board in such other state; does not have a disqualifying criminal record; and has been verified to have a lawful presence in the United States.

Senate Bill 410

Veterinary Licensure Exemptions for Shelter Medicine and Sterilization Services

Senate Sponsor: Kirkpatrick of the 32nd

House Sponsor: Washburn of the 144th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 23, 2024 (Act 469)

This bill requires the State Board of Veterinary Medicine to adopt rules and regulations implementing a process by which veterinarians and veterinary technicians licensed in other states can obtain one-time, six-

month temporary licenses, licenses by endorsement, or a combination thereof to practice in government or nonprofit shelter medicine, nonprofit sterilization clinics, or nonprofit mobile sterilization programs registered with the state. 'Shelter medicine' is defined as veterinary practice used to manage the health of populations of animals handled by municipal animal shelters, private animal welfare organizations, or adoption agencies. 'Sterilization services' are defined as procedures that meet or exceed veterinary medical standards of care for the sterilization of dogs, cats, and pet rabbits.

In order to qualify for temporary licensure, a licensee must be in good standing with the issuing state and hold an active license. Additionally, applicants must hold a license from another state with substantially similar or greater training, experience, and testing requirements to Georgia; and must obtain a specialty, certification, training, or other experience while employed in another state which substantially meets or exceeds Georgia's licensure requirements.

Senate Bill 412

Penalties for Charitable Solicitation Violations

Senate Sponsor: Kennedy of the 18th

House Sponsor: Washburn of the 144th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 612)

Current law authorizes the Secretary of State to impose administrative sanctions upon individuals and organizations that violate charitable solicitation regulations. This bill amends the listed sanctions to allow the censure, barring, or registration revocation of an individual if they are registered as a charitable organization, paid solicitor, or solicitor agent. Additionally, the Secretary of State is authorized to issue orders against paid solicitors, charitable organizations, and solicitor agents who willfully violate the charitable solicitation code or any applicable promulgated rule or regulation. Finally, the maximum civil penalty is increased to \$10,000 for a single violation and to \$100,000 for multiple violations.

Senate Bill 420

Nonresident Alien Ownership of Agricultural Land and Land Near Military Bases and Transfer-on-Death Deeds

Senate Sponsor: Anavitarte of the 31st

House Sponsor: Pirkle of the 169th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 30, 2024 (Act 496)

This legislation prohibits nonresident aliens from directly or indirectly acquiring any possessory interest in agricultural land or land within a ten-mile radius of any military base, installation, or airport. This prohibition does not apply to residential property. Nonresident aliens are permitted to acquire a possessory interest in agricultural land in certain circumstances including by inheritance, the collection of debts, or the enforcement of liens. However, any interest acquired through the collection of a debt or the enforcement of a lien must be disposed of within two years of acquisition. Any interest acquired by devise or inheritance must be disposed of within one year of acquisition. A nonresident alien with a prohibited possessory interest as of June 30, 2024, must dispose of such interest by June 30, 2027. A nonresident alien may retain a possessory interest if, within the time required for disposal, they terminate their nonresident alien status.

Brokers are required to disclose these provisions to clients in a timely manner. A nonresident alien who acquires land in violation of this legislation is barred from making any claim against any party for restitution of the purchase price or any kind of payment relating to loss or lack of title. The legal counsel of any county, municipality, or consolidated government in which the land is located, the Attorney General, or any individual that is not a nonresident alien and was a party to the void transaction or is a subsequent interest holder has standing to file an action to void the conveyance and have the interest revert to the previous owner. Intentional violators of these provisions are guilty of a felony and subject to a maximum fine of 15,000 dollars and imprisonment for up to two years.

In addition, this legislation permits an interest in real estate to be titled in a transfer-on-death form by the record owner executing, attesting, and recording a deed with the superior court clerk of the county where the real estate is located. Transfer-on-death deeds transfer ownership upon the death of a record owner to a designated grantee beneficiary or beneficiaries. A record owner may revoke beneficiary designation at any time prior to death by executing, attesting, and recording a revocation instrument with the superior court clerk. A record owner may change beneficiary designation at any time prior to death by executing, attesting, and recording a subsequent transfer-on-death deed with the superior court clerk, this subsequent instrument revokes all prior designations. A transfer-on-death deed executed, acknowledged, and recorded in accordance with this legislation cannot be revoked by the provisions of a will.

To accept real estate pursuant to a transfer-on-death deed, a designated grantee beneficiary must execute an affidavit affirming certain information which must then be recorded with the superior court clerk within nine months of death, or the property reverts to the deceased record owner's estate. A grantee beneficiary takes the real estate interest of the record owner at the time of death free and clear of any claims or interest of a surviving spouse who married the deceased following the execution of the transfer-on-death deed subject to certain recorded encumbrances.

If one or more designated grantee beneficiaries dies prior to the record owner, the transfer to the predeceased beneficiary or beneficiaries lapses and is deemed revoked. If the beneficiaries are designated as joint tenants with right of survivorship, the death of one or more of the beneficiaries prior to that of the recorded owner does not invalidate a validly created joint tenancy estate. A record joint owner of a real estate interest may title such interest in a transfer-on-death form, but the title to the interest must only vest in the designated grantee beneficiary or beneficiaries if the record joint owner is the last to die of all the record joint owners of the interest. A transfer-on-death deed does not sever a joint tenancy. A record owner who executes a transfer-on-death deed remains the legal and equitable owner until death and is considered an absolute owner with regard to creditors and purchasers during his or her lifetime.

Senate Bill 422

Electric Membership Corporation Investment Percentage Limits

Senate Sponsor: Dixon of the 45th

House Sponsor: Carson of the 46th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 565)

This legislation permits electric membership corporations (EMCs) to make and maintain investments in, lend funds to, and guarantee the debts and obligations of an EMC gas affiliate in total not to exceed 25 percent of such EMC's net utility plant, excluding electric generation and transmissions assets, provided certain rate and guarantee requirements are met. This bill requires EMCs to disclose such transactions to their members.

Senate Bill 433

Donor Intent Protection Act

Senate Sponsor: Cowsert of the 46th

House Sponsor: Kelley of the 16th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 423)

This legislation allows donors to bring civil actions against charitable organizations that violate endowment agreements containing donor imposed restrictions. If a charitable organization or a charitable trust violates such a restriction, the donor, that donor's lineal descendants, or the donor's legal representative may bring a civil action within four years of discovery of the breach. If the court determines that a charitable organization or trust has violated such a restriction, the court is authorized to order remedies consistent with the charitable purposes stated in the endowment agreement. The court is not authorized to order the return of contributions. This bill applies to any endowment agreement entered on or after the effective date.

Senate Bill 449

Licensure Requirement Exceptions for Military Medical Personnel and APRN Licensure

Senate Sponsor: Walker III of the 20th

House Sponsor: Blackmon of the 146th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 24, 2024 (Act 486)

This bill requires the Department of Community Health, the Georgia Board of Nursing, and the Department of Public Health to collaborate with the Department of Veterans Services to establish programs through which military medical personnel can temporarily operate, for a period of twelve months, within their scope of practice and training as certified nurse aides, licensed professional nurses, paramedics, cardiac technicians, or emergency medical technicians without meeting certain current requirements. 'Military medical personnel' is defined as an individual who has, within twelve months of seeking certification pursuant to this legislation, served as an army medic, air force medical technician, or navy or coast guard corpsman and who was honorably discharged.

Additionally, this legislation changes the statutory definition of advanced practice registered nurse (APRN). APRN means a person who is licensed by the Georgia Board of Nursing who meets licensure requirements as listed below and engages in advanced nursing practice within one of the following roles: a certified nurse midwife, a certified nurse practitioner, a certified registered nurse anesthetist, or a clinical nurse specialist or clinical nurse specialist in psychiatric/mental health; or a person who was recognized by the board as an APRN prior to June 30, 2006. On or after September 1, 2025, an applicant who meets the following requirements is eligible for APRN licensure: submits and completes a written application and fee; is currently licensed by the board as a registered professional nurse or holds a certain multistate license; has completed an accredited graduate or postgraduate level APRN program in one of the four specialized roles listed above; is currently certified by a national certifying body in an APRN program in a role and population focus appropriate for educational preparations; passes a criminal background check; and meets other board established requirements. The legislation also provides license renewal requirements.

Senate Bill 502

State Agencies and Media Reliability and Bias Monitors

Senate Sponsor: Dixon of the 45th

House Sponsor: Sainz of the 180th

Effective Date: Section 1 will become effective on July 1, 2027, all other sections will become effective on July 1, 2024.

This legislation prohibits companies in which the government of China has an ownership stake from bidding on or submitting contract proposals to state agencies for goods, services, or the procurement or purchase of certain electronic devices and accessories. This bill prohibits agencies from: entering into any contract or agreement with a media reliability and bias monitor or with any advertising or marketing agency that uses the services of a media reliability and bias monitor organization; or providing support in any form, other than nondiscretionary actions otherwise required by law, to a media reliability and bias monitor. Additionally, County Board of Health and Community Service Boards are permitted to conduct meetings by teleconference. The Georgia Environmental Finance Authority is authorized to assist in constructing, extending, rehabilitating, replacing, and renewing environmental facilities necessary for the purpose of storing, supplying, and distributing natural gas; including, but not limited to, pipelines, storage tanks and facilities, and natural gas distribution systems.

Senate Bill 505

Hospital Disclosure Requirements; Hospital Authority Vacancies

Senate Sponsor: Tillery of the 19th

House Sponsor: Knight of the 134th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 427)

This legislation requires hospitals to maintain and update links to the most recent version of specified federal and state disclosure documents annually no later than July 1 of each year or more frequently at

their discretion. The Department of Community Health must establish a uniform template and reporting requirements for these documents by December 31, 2024 and hospitals must implement and use this uniform template and reporting criteria by July 1, 2025. Each hospital must provide the department the Uniform Resource Locator to the links required no later than August 1 each year. The department must post and maintain an updated link on its website containing the Uniform Resource Locator for each hospital as provided. Any hospital that fails to comply must be suspended from receiving funds administered by the state. The department must provide a hospital 30 days' notice of any deficiency and the opportunity to correct it prior to the suspension of funds. Additionally, the bill requires county and municipal hospital authorities to fill vacancies from a list provided by the governing area of operation.

House Bill 300

Solar Power Facility Agreements

Senate Sponsor: Cowsert of the 46th

House Sponsor: Kelley of the 16th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 390)

This legislation requires solar power facility agreements to state that the grantee is responsible for removing their solar power facilities from the landowner's property upon lease termination and that the grantee must safely clear, clean, and remove all grantee devices and equipment, personal property, and improvements used to support such devices. Additionally, an agreement must require a grantee to obtain and deliver to the landowner and applicable clerk of superior court evidence of a surety or performance bond to secure the performance of the grantee's obligation to remove solar power facilities. Any person who is harmed by a violation of this legislation is entitled to injunctive relief to prevent further violations and the remedies provided in this bill are in addition to any other remedies or procedures provided by law.

House Bill 441

Authorization and Regulation of Teledentistry

Senate Sponsor: Still of the 48th

House Sponsor: Dempsey of the 13th

Effective Date: Governor Vetoed May 7, 2024 (V2)

This legislation prohibits dentists from providing dental care through teledentistry except under specified conditions. A teledentistry appointment is not equivalent to an in-person, clinical examination. An authorizing dentist is subject to certain conditions when providing dental care through teledentistry, including: the provision of care must be consistent with in person dental treatment; at the initial consultation, the authorizing dentist must establish a bona fide dentist-patient relationship by reviewing the patient's history and verifying their location; except as otherwise provided, the authorizing dentist must perform the initial consultation in person; the dentist must perform an in-person clinical examination at least once every 12 months; the referred dentist must accept a referral to treat all dental emergencies and provide all necessary care as determined by and in consultation with the authorizing dentist; and any dental hygienist performing permitted functions via teledentistry must meet certain requirements.

An authorizing dentist is only allowed to: authorize a dental hygienist to perform functions permitted under general supervision; prescribe medications that are not controlled substances; authorize the performance of digital scans by a dentist or dental hygienist; and authorize the use of store and forward technologies to transmit patient records, images, digital scans, X-rays, and other relevant information between the authorizing dentist and a dental hygienist for evaluating a patient's oral health and authorizing the performance of permitted care. Any health insurance plan issued, amended, or renewed on or after January 1, 2024, between a health insurer, contracted vendor, or a care management organization and a healthcare provider for the provision of healthcare services to a plan enrollee must provide coverage for teledentistry as directed by the Department of Insurance.

House Bill 455

Professional Program Immunity from Civil Liability

Senate Sponsor: Albers of the 56th

House Sponsor: LaHood of the 175th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 30, 2024 (Act 501)

This legislation provides that no person or entity is obligated to report information regarding a healthcare professional who is a participant in a professional program to their licensing board unless it has been determined that there is a reasonable probability that the participant is not competent to practice or is a danger to themselves, patients, or the public, unless such person or entity is otherwise under a duty to report.

Every member of any entity that functions primarily to review, evaluate, or make recommendations on a professional program is immune from civil liability for the performance of their duties while serving as a member of or consultant to such entity. Certain records and documents originating in or provided to such professional programs are not subject to discovery or introduction into evidence in any civil action except under extraordinary circumstances. This legislation does not provide any privilege to any healthcare professional, facility, or entity with respect to any factual information regarding specific patient healthcare or treatment.

House Bill 557

Prescription of Schedule II Narcotics by APRNs and PAs

Senate Sponsor: Walker III of the 20th

House Sponsor: Stephens of the 164th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 394)

This legislation allows an advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) with at least one year of post-licensure clinical experience, who is in good standing with the Georgia Composite Medical Board, to be authorized under a nurse protocol agreement to issue prescription drug orders for hydrocodone, oxycodone, or compounds thereof in emergency situations pursuant to certain requirements. This bill amends the definition of 'controlled substance' to include an exception for certain Schedule II controlled substances as authorized under applicable laws and makes conforming changes throughout the code. If a practice has an existing approved nurse protocol agreement and an alternate delegating physician or a change in the delegating physician within the same or similar specialty, such new nurse protocol agreement for the new alternative delegating physician or a change in the delegating physician must be automatically approved by the board. If a delegating physician submits a nurse protocol agreement for a new APRN and such nurse protocol agreement is substantially the same as the previously approved nurse protocol agreement for another APRN, the agreement must be deemed approved by the board upon submission.

This bill requires that certain substantially similar job descriptions for new physician assistants (PAs) and changes in supervising physicians to existing PAs be automatically approved by the board. In accordance with a job description, a physician may delegate the authority to issue a prescription drug order for any hydrocodone, oxycodone, or compounds thereof in emergency situations to a PA with at least one year of post-licensure clinical experience that is in good standing with the board pursuant to certain requirements. Both APRNs and PAs authorized to issue these prescriptions must complete additional continuing education. Additionally, this legislation authorizes an APRN or PA to execute affidavits attesting to a patient's disability for the purpose of obtaining a permanent or temporary parking permit for persons with disabilities.

House Bill 1046

Authorizes APRNs and PAs to Sign Death Certificates; Amends the Number of APRNs and PAs that a Physician Can Authorize and Supervise; Creates the Georgia Commission on Maternal and Infant Health

Senate Sponsor: Dixon of the 45th

House Sponsor: Clark of the 100th

Effective Date: Part I and Part III of this bill become effective on July 1, 2024. The remaining sections become effective on the first day of the month following the month in which it is approved by the Governor. Signed by the Governor April 23, 2024 (Act 471)

This legislation authorizes advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) and physician assistants (PAs) to sign death certificates. Additionally, this bill allows a physician to authorize and supervise a combined equivalent of eight APRNs or PAs at any one time. This combined equivalent is a maximum limit imposed on physicians with regard to the number of nurse protocol agreements; job descriptions; supervision of PAs pursuant to these agreements or descriptions; and supervision of these individuals in any emergency medical services system operated by, or on behalf of, any county, municipality, or hospital authority with a full-time medical director. The bill repeals the Governor's Commercial Transportation Advisory Committee and the Commission on the Preservation of the State Capitol and creates the Georgia Commission on Maternal and Infant Health.

House Bill 1312

Public Service Commission Elections

Senate Sponsor: Kennedy of the 18th

House Sponsor: Jasperse of the 11th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor April 18, 2024 (Act 380)

This legislation requires Public Service Commission Commissioners elected at the 2020 General Election, any person appointed to fill a vacancy in such office, and commissioners serving in seats that were scheduled to be filled in either the 2022 General Election or the 2024 General Election to serve terms as provided and until their successors are elected and qualified. These provisions are intended to address the issue created by a lack of elections for certain Public Service Commission districts in 2022 and 2024 pursuant to the injunction issued by the court in *Rose v. Raffensperger*. The bill provides dates and term lengths to maintain the traditional staggered terms of commissioners.

House Bill 1339

Certificate of Need Reform

Senate Sponsor: Cowsert of the 46th

House Sponsor: Parrish of the 158th

Effective Date: Sections 2, 9, 12, 13, and 14 will become effective upon the Governor's approval. Sections 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10 will become effective on July 1, 2024. Section 11 will become effective on January 1, 2025, and will be applicable to taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2025. Signed by the Governor April 19, 2024 (Act 384)

This legislation amends the definition of 'joint venture ambulatory service center' to authorize the use of such centers by physicians of the same specialty only. Utilizing physicians are not required to be owners or employees of the single group practice of physicians that own and operate the center. 'Single specialty surgical center' is amended to refer to a center where surgery is performed in the offices of a private physician or single practice group of private physicians if such surgery is performed in a facility that is owned and operated by the individual physician or single group practice of physicians who are of a single specialty.

This legislation retains the mandate that any new institutional health service be required to obtain a certificate of need, but eliminates the \$10 million capital expenditure threshold. Certain exempt facilities are required to provide care to Medicaid beneficiaries and, if applicable, PeachCare beneficiaries in addition to uncompensated indigent and charity care in an amount equal to or greater than the minimum amount established by the Department of Community Health on and after January 1, 2026. If a facility is not a participant in Medicaid or PeachCare, the facility must provide uncompensated care for Medicaid and, if applicable, PeachCare beneficiaries, and/or uncompensated indigent and charity care in an amount equal to or greater than the minimum amount established by the department on and after January 1, 2026.

The bill shortens the certificate of need (CON) application process and streamlines the appeal process. Additionally, the bill modifies existing CON exemptions by: removing expenditure caps; permitting facility repair; increasing permitted bed capacity; changing indigent and uncompensated care requirements for single specialty ambulatory surgical centers and joint venture ambulatory surgical centers; and extending the radius permitted for facility relocation. This legislation adds new exemptions for: new or expanded psychiatric or substance abuse inpatient programs; new or expanded basic perinatal services by rural hospitals; birthing centers; new general acute care hospitals in rural counties; new acute care hospitals where a short-stay hospital in a rural county has been closed for more than a year; certain new short stay general hospitals; and the transfer of existing beds or services from one general acute care hospital's primary campus to another campus within the same system. The bill increases limits for the Rural Hospital Tax Credit and creates the Comprehensive Health Coverage Commission.

House Bill 1344

Representation by Delegate for Behavioral Health Coordinating Council Members and Waiver of Experience Requirements for Licensure

Senate Sponsor: Kirkpatrick of the 32nd

House Sponsor: Dempsey of the 13th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 412)

This legislation allows members of the Behavioral Health Coordinating Council to be represented by a delegate at any meeting of the council or subcommittee meeting. Additionally, the Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers, and Marriage and Family Therapists is authorized to waive all or a portion of the experience requirements for any applicant licensed under the laws of another jurisdiction who has maintained full licensure in good standing in such jurisdiction for two years.

RETIREMENT

Senate Bill 105

Benefits for PSERS Retirees

Senate Sponsor: Walker of the 20th

House Sponsor: Ballard of the 147th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 606)

SB 105 increases the minimum monthly benefit for PSERS retirees for each year of creditable service and removes a cap on benefits for members who retired prior to July 1, 2012. This legislation also authorizes the PSERS Board of Trustees to grant a permanent or one-time benefit increase based on appropriations.

Senate Bill 322

Sheriffs' Retirement Fund Revisions

Senate Sponsor: Walker of the 20th

House Sponsor: Williams of the 148th

Senate Committee: Retirement

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 569)

SB 322 amends provisions of the Sheriffs' Retirement Fund to increase the costs of monthly membership dues and purchasing prior creditable service. It also increases the cost of a fee remitted to the fund when an individual undertakes civil actions before superior, magistrate, and state courts. Lastly, the legislation increases the value of death benefits paid by the fund to beneficiaries.

Senate Bill 328

Revisions to the Peace Officers' Annuity and Benefit Fund

Senate Sponsor: Albers of the 56th
House Sponsor: Crowe of the 118th
Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 562)

SB 328 makes various revisions to the Peace Officers' Annuity and Benefit Fund including updating definitions used in the determination of eligibility for benefits. It also updates the duties of the fund's Board of Commissioners and sets terms and compensation of those commissioners. Standards for membership in the fund are revised including the application process and minimum monthly dues. SB 328 further amends the maximum amount of purchasable creditable service by non-retired members, provides when a member is eligible for benefits and how those are calculated, and increases the amounts paid in death and disability benefits. Lastly, the legislation provides a process for refund of dues paid under specified circumstances.

House Bill 385

Creditable Military Service for Public Retirement System Benefits

Senate Sponsor: Payne of the 54th
House Sponsor: Thomas of the 21st
Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 391)

This legislation revises who may be eligible for military creditable service benefits from the state's public retirement systems by adding references to the United States Space Force and reserve components of the armed forces.

House Bill 481

Retirement System Fiduciaries

Senate Sponsor: Harbin of the 16th
House Sponsor: Carson of the 46th
Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 587)

HB 481 identifies retirement system officials who hold the duties and authorities to be considered program fiduciaries and provides them with corresponding duties. It also states the investment objectives of the state's retirement systems.

House Bill 825

Retirement Benefits from Counties

Senate Sponsor: Anderson of the 24th
House Sponsor: Fleming of the 125th
Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 396)

HB 825 requires specified counties to pay a retirement supplement for district attorneys. The legislation also permits Fulton County State Court judges to participate in the defined contribution retirement plan offered by the county.

RULES

Senate Bill 259

Moving Superior Court of Banks County from Piedmont Judicial Circuit to Mountain Judicial Circuit

Senate Sponsor: Hatchett of the 50th
House Sponsor: Erwin of the 32nd

Effective Date: Upon Governor's approval (For purposes of preparing and executing intergovernmental agreements pursuant to Sections 1-3); Otherwise takes effect on January 1, 2025. Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 607)

This bill provides for the transfer of Banks County from the Piedmont Judicial Circuit to the Mountain Judicial Circuit, effective January 1, 2025. It provides for administrative matters and conforming changes throughout relevant existing code sections.

Senate Resolution 443

Appointing Rick Jeffares to the State Election Board

Sponsor: Kennedy of the 18th

Appoints Rick Jeffares to the State Election Board pursuant to Code Section 21-2-30.

Senate Resolution 465

Senate Special Committee on Investigations

Sponsor: Dolezal of the 27th

Establishes a special committee to investigate claims of misconduct involving Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis.

Senate Resolution 474

Urges the Promotion of Quality Legal Representation for Parents, Children and Youth, and Child Welfare Agencies at all Stages of Child Welfare Proceedings

Sponsor: B. Watson of the 1st

This resolution identifies a need to prioritize the welfare of children and to make every effort to see that children achieve permanency through child welfare legal proceedings. Extensive research concludes that early appointment of trained and experienced counsel in child welfare proceedings can improve case planning, expedite permanency, and lead to cost savings to state and local governments.

State and local governments may obtain funding under the Social Security Act to partially offset the costs of independent legal representation provided by attorneys representing children and their parents in all stages of foster care legal proceedings. These funds may also be used to partially offset the expenses of an attorney's support staff in these proceedings.

OCA, Chatham County, and the Chatham County Juvenile Court have implemented a pilot program to provide quality legal representation for children in welfare proceedings. Since the implementation of the program, the median length of stay for children in foster care has been reduced from 29.7 months to 19.9 months, and the OCA is evaluating similar pilot programs with other counties.

The resolution urges the OCA, the Family and Children Services Division, and the boards of commissioners of each county of Georgia to promote quality legal representation for parents, children and youth, and child welfare agencies in child welfare proceedings, including partnering to maximize federal funding and collaborating with judicial partners and stakeholders interested in improving outcomes for abused and neglected children.

Senate Resolution 543

Supporting Increased Protections for America's Borders

Sponsor: Gooch of the 51st

This resolution supports increased protections for America's borders, citing the stark increase in fentanyl trafficking across the U.S. border. The resolution supports any action taken by Governor Kemp to allocate resources and assistance to protect the southern border and encourages Congress to take action regarding border security. Finally, the resolution condemns President Biden's actions relating to the southern border and urges the reinstatement of former President Trump's Executive Order 13768 and Proclamation 9844.

Senate Resolution 687

Urges the University of North Georgia to Name a Building After Former Speaker David Ralston

This resolution urges the University of North Georgia and University System of Georgia Board of Regents to dedicate and name the new academic building at the University's Blue Ridge campus "David E. Ralston Hall" to honor former Speaker David Ralston.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Senate Resolution 476

Senate Study Committee on Artificial Intelligence

Sponsor: Albers of the 56th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

This resolution creates the Senate Study Committee on Artificial Intelligence to be composed of nine members to be appointed by the President of the Senate.

STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

Senate Bill 333

Incorporates the City of Mulberry

Senate Sponsor: Dixon of the 45th

House Sponsor: Efstrotation of the 104th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor February 13, 2024 (Act 358)

This bill constitutes the charter of the City of Mulberry, contingent upon approval by the qualified voters of the proposed city at the 2024 general primary. The legislation establishes the city government structure and the powers and duties of the city government, as well as the corporate limits of the city.

Senate Bill 338

Changes Description of Education Districts of the Cobb County Board of Education

Senate Sponsor: Setzler of the 37th

House Sponsor: Carson of the 46th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor January 30, 2024 (Act 354)

This bill amends an Act providing for the election of members of the Board of Education of Cobb County, as approved March 28, 1974 and amended March 2, 2022. The bill changes the description of the education districts of the Cobb County Board of Education. Additionally, the bill provides for the continuation in office of current members, the manner of election, and repeals conflicting laws.

House Bill 206

Authorizes Development Authorities to Provide Certain Financing for Qualifying Improvements through a Commercial Property Assessed Conservation, Energy, and Resiliency Program (CPACE)

Senate Sponsor: Ginn of the 47th

House Sponsor: Sainz of the 180th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor April 25, 2024 (Act 494)

This bill authorizes development authorities to provide certain financing for qualifying improvements through a commercial property assessed conservation, energy, and resiliency program (CPACE). Powers granted to authorities under the program include the power to make and execute intergovernmental assessment agreements, assessment agreements, and agreements for grants or loans to finance qualifying improvements; to finance and refinance such qualifying improvements, including the right to do so from the proceeds of revenue bonds, notes, or other obligations; to issue revenue bonds; to extend credit or make loans or grants; and to make pledges as security for repayment.

House Bill 1073

Provides for Sunday Sale of Alcoholic Beverages in Special Entertainment Districts; Repeals Certain Additional Hearing and Notice Provisions Relating to Certain Facilities and Centers

Senate Sponsor: Kirkpatrick of the 32nd

House Sponsor: Washburn of the 144th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 594)

This bill provides for Sunday sale of alcoholic beverages for consumption on the premises in local designated special entertainment districts. A special entertainment district means contiguous properties upon which is located a festival marketplace and entertainment project which contains a minimum of 200,000 square feet of gross leasable space (with additional requirements). Municipalities may pass ordinances or resolutions to authorize such sales from 11:55 P.M. and the three hours immediately following such time and on Sundays from 11:00 A.M. until 12:00 Midnight.

This bill also repeals additional hearing and notice provisions regarding certain facilities or centers. Current law requires a local government to conduct a public hearing and provide public notice by posting of a sign and by newspaper publication when a proposed zoning decision relates to or will allow the location or relocation of a halfway house, drug rehabilitation center, or other facility for treatment of drug dependency. This bill repeals these requirements with regard to a halfway house, drug rehabilitation center, or other facility for treatment of drug dependency.

Additionally, this bill prohibits a county, municipal corporation, or consolidated government from requiring the placement of video surveillance equipment in the interior or exterior of any business or location where the retail sale of gasoline occurs.

House Bill 1149

Requires Audits of Supplemental Official Income of County Officers

Senate Sponsor: Still of the 48th

House Sponsor: Mainor of the 56th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 596)

This bill requires all annual audit reports of a county or consolidated city-county government to also contain financial statements providing a detailed account of the supplemental official income and related expenditures of certain salaried constitutional county officers. These officers include the clerk of the superior court; judge of the probate court; sheriff; tax receiver; tax collector; and tax commissioner, where such office has replaced the tax receiver and tax collector. Under this bill, 'supplemental official income' means: all funds from any source other than funds appropriated by a county or consolidated government that an individual or his or her office derives from performing duties that are within his or her official capacity as a county officer.

The bill requires the performing auditor to disclose any apparent material violation of state or local law discovered during the audit of the supplemental official income of such county officers.

House Bill 1330

The Mableton Development Authority Act

Senate Sponsor: Rhett of the 33rd

House Sponsor: Stoner of the 40th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 651)

This bill renames the South Cobb Development Authority to the Mableton Development Authority. The bill makes conforming changes throughout the existing Act and provides for the continuation of current board members, the selection of board officers, and the geographical area of operations of the authority.

House Bill 1407

Revises Provisions Related to Local Government Service Delivery Strategies

Senate Sponsor: Ginn of the 47th

House Sponsor: LaHood of the 175th

Effective Date: January 1, 2026

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 698)

This bill revises provisions for establishing, negotiating, reviewing, revising, and filing local SDS agreements. The bill requires that counties and municipalities initiate the process for developing a local SDS no earlier than April 1st and no later than July 1st of the year following any year in which the county's ten year comprehensive plan is due. In addition to the ten-year update, each county and affected municipality must review and revise the approved SDS: (1) Whenever necessary due to changes in revenue distribution arrangements; (2) In the event of the creation, abolition, or consolidation of local governments; (3) When the existing service delivery strategy agreement expires; and (4) Whenever the county and affected municipalities agree to revise the strategy.

In the case of an event triggering review, the county and municipality must initiate the process of developing a local SDS no later than 30 days following the occurrence of the event. If the county does not initiate the process for developing a local SDS within the thirty days, any municipality in the county may initiate the process. Any municipality affected by a change in service delivery strategy or revenue distribution agreements may initiate the process of amending a local SDS in conjunction with the updates of the comprehensive plan as required by current law.

This bill removes the 120-day extension from the deadline for parties to file a service delivery strategy agreement, with sanctions held in abeyance, and the possibility of total relief from sanctions if the parties enter into an agreement before the end of the 120-day period. The bill also requires the Department of Community Affairs to develop state-wide mapping standards, in consultation with the Georgia Geospatial Advisory Council, to be used for any SDS for which the parties elect to describe geographic areas for local government services within each county by using maps. Such mapping standards must be promulgated by March 1, 2026.

STATE INSTITUTIONS AND PROPERTY

House Resolution 1113

Authorization of Easements on State-Owned Properties

Senate Sponsor: Harbison of the 15th

House Sponsor: Dunahoo of the 31st

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 703)

This resolution authorizes the grant of non-exclusive easements on various state-owned properties.

House Resolution 1116

Lease and Conveyance of State-Owned Real Property

Senate Sponsor: Harbison of the 15th

House Sponsor: Pirkle of the 169th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 704)

This resolution provides for the conveyance or lease of certain state-owned real property.

TRANSPORTATION

Senate Bill 203

Trucking Opportunity Act of 2023

Senate Sponsor: Anavitarte of the 31st

House Sponsor: Bonner of the 73rd

Effective Date: Governor Vetoed May 7, 2024 (V11)

This bill provides for tuition-free programs relating to the operation of commercial motor vehicles for veterans.

Senate Bill 353

Allows for Delegation of Duties when Death Results from an Accident on a Highway in Certain Instances

Senate Sponsor: Dolezal of the 27th

House Sponsor: Thomas of the 21st

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor March 4, 2024 (Act 367)

This legislation requires meeting notices for the State Transportation Board to be sent via email. It clarifies that GDOT may utilize procurement procedures authorized by relevant laws for projects that elect to use the alternative contracting method. It increases the maximum length of a modular unit transporter to 84 feet. This bill authorizes a coroner or county medical examiner to delegate their duties for deaths that occur on interstate highways or limited-access roads under specific circumstances. It amends the public records exceptions.

Senate Resolution 158

Northwest Georgia Logistics Corridor

Senate Sponsor: Anavitarte of the 31st

House Sponsor: Gullett of the 19th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 707)

This resolution designates the Northwest Georgia Logistics Corridor as an official logistics growth corridor.

Senate Resolution 609

Senate Road-Naming Resolution: Circle of Princess Trahlyta

Senate Sponsor: Gooch of the 51st

House Sponsor: Wade of the 9th

Effective Date: Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 708)

This resolution dedicates a roundabout in honor of Princess Trahlyta.

House Bill 516

Increase Minimum Amount for a Public Road Construction or Maintenance Contract

Senate Sponsor: Dolezal of the 27th

House Sponsor: McCollum of the 30th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 588)

This bill increases the minimum amount for a public road construction or maintenance contract and creates exceptions to public comment and hearing on projects involving public-private partnerships. It also establishes an exception to the voter approval for such projects. This legislation allows for wayfinding kiosks on certain roads within a metropolitan municipality special district and prohibits the operation of certain vehicles on commercial motor vehicle restricted highways. This bill amends maximum speed limits. It also revises the allocation of funds designated to freight and logistics projects.

House Bill 617

Creates the Georgia Freight 2050 Program

Senate Sponsor: Dolezal of the 27th

House Sponsor: Jasperse of the 11th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 579)

This legislation creates the Georgia Freight 2050 Program. It requires the Director of Planning to develop a state freight and logistics implementation plan. It also imposes annual reporting on the Director.

House Bill 1058

Updating the Reference to Federal Regulations on the Safe Operation of Motor Carriers and Commercial Motor Vehicles

Senate Sponsor: Robertson of the 29th

House Sponsor: McDonald of the 26th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 1, 2024 (Act 509)

This bill updates the reference to federal regulations regarding the safe operation of motor carriers and commercial motor vehicles, so that “present regulations” refers to regulations promulgated under 49 C.F.R. in force and effect on January 1, 2024.

House Bill 1193

Requires Operation of Flashing or Revolving Amber Lights upon Certain Vehicles

Senate Sponsor: Robertson of the 29th

House Sponsor: McDonald of the 26th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 1, 2024 (Act 510)

This legislation requires the operation of flashing or revolving amber lights upon certain vehicles. It creates penalties for violations.

House Resolution 854

Road and Bridge Dedications

Senate Sponsor: Dolezal of the 27th

House Sponsor: Huddleston of the 72nd

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 702)

This resolution provides for bridge and road dedications.

House Resolution 1164

House Road-Naming Resolution: Honorable Richard H. Smith Memorial Interchange

Senate Sponsor: Robertson of the 29th

House Sponsor: Hugley of the 141st

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 705)

This resolution dedicates an interchange in honor of the Honorable Richard H. Smith.

House Resolution 1215

House Road-Naming Resolution: Speaker David E. Ralston

Senate Sponsor: Gooch of the 51st

House Sponsor: Jasperse of the 11th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 6, 2024 (Act 706)

This resolution dedicates an interstate connector, a bridge, and a highway in honor of Speaker David E. Ralston.

VETERANS, MILITARY, AND HOMELAND SECURITY

Senate Bill 144

Removing Requirements for Roster of Commissioned Officers in Annual Report and Printing and Distribution of Laws and Regulations

Senate Sponsor: Islam Parkes of the 7th

House Sponsor: Bonner of the 73rd

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 416)

This bill removes the requirement that the adjutant general include a roster of all commissioned officers in the organized militia in the annual report to the Governor. The bill also removes the requirement that the laws and regulations be indexed, printed, bound, and distributed to all forces of the militia.

Senate Bill 375

Amends the Composition of the Behavioral Health Coordinating Council

Senate Sponsor: Strickland of the 17th

House Sponsor: Washburn of the 144th

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 420)

Currently, the Behavioral Health Coordinating Council consists of 26 members. This bill adds the Commissioner of Veteran Services to that Council.

Senate Bill 398

Georgia Joint Defense Commission Revisions

Senate Sponsor: Kirkpatrick of the 32nd

House Sponsor: Bonner of the 73rd

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 24, 2024 (Act 481)

The bill revises the Georgia Joint Defense Commission, to consist of twenty-three members. Current law provides that members of the commission serve without compensation, but receive for each day of attendance at commission meetings a daily expense allowance in a specified amount, plus certain reimbursements for transportation. Further, said allowances and reimbursements are paid by funds appropriated to the Technical College System of Georgia. This bill requires that that the funds be paid by the Department of Economic Development.

Current law provides for the operations of the Joint Defense Commission. This bill makes several revisions to these operations including that the commission must advise the Governor and the General Assembly on issues relating to the military, the defense industry, defense research and technology, military families, and veterans' affairs within the state and nationally. The bill also updates several other provisions related to the Defense Community Economic Development Grant Program, which serves the purpose of awarding grants to assist military communities with grant goals. Primarily, the bill places the program under the administration of the Commissioner of the Department of Economic Development, rather than the Commissioner of the Technical College System of Georgia, as current law current requires. The bill also provides that The Department of Economic Development is authorized to administer and support the activities of the Georgia Joint Defense Commission.

Senate Bill 195
Social Work Licensure Compact Act
Senate Sponsor: Walker of the 20th
House Sponsor: Ballard of the 147th
Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor May 2, 2024 (Act 555)

This legislation enters Georgia into the Social Work Licensure Compact (Compact). The Compact's purpose is to facilitate interstate practice of regulated social workers by improving public access to competent social work services. The Compact preserves the regulatory authority of states to protect public health and safety through the current system of state licensure. The Compact is designed to achieve the following objectives: increase public access to services; reduce overly burdensome and duplicative requirements; enhance member states' ability to protect the public's health and safety; encourage cooperation in regulating multistate practice; promote mobility and address workforce shortages; support military families; facilitate the exchange of licensure and disciplinary information; authorize all member states to hold a regulated social worker accountable for abiding by applicable laws and standards; and allow for the use of telehealth to facilitate increased access.

The bill also includes provisions related to soil classifiers and professional land surveyors, so as to change the necessary experience requirements to qualify as a soil classifier to conduct soil investigations and prepare soil reports for an on-site sewage management system. The bill revises the definition of "soil classifier"; provides for educational, experience, and examination requirements for licensure as a professional land surveyor; and changes and provides certain provisions related to the issuance of land surveyor intern certificates.

Senate Resolution 527
Senate Study Committee on Veterans' Mental Health and Housing
Senate Sponsor: Payne of the 54th

This resolution creates the Senate Study Committee on Veterans' Mental Health and Housing. The Study Committee is tasked with evaluating the adequacy of public and private programs and services available in Georgia that provide vital resources to veterans. The Study Committee must be composed of five members to be appointed by the President of the Senate, and the President of the Senate will designate a chairperson from the selected members.

House Bill 299
Adding References to the United States Space Force
Senate Sponsor: Kirkpatrick of the 32nd
House Sponsor: Thomas of the 21st
Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 22, 2024 (Act 389)

This bill adds appropriate references to the U.S. Space Force in various Code sections throughout the Official Code of Georgia Annotated.

House Bill 880
Licensing for the Spouse of Service Members
Senate Sponsor: Walker of the 20th
House Sponsor: Ballard of the 147th

Effective Date: January 1, 2025

Signed by the Governor April 24, 2024 (Act 485)

This bill allows the qualifying spouse of a service member or transitioning service member stationed in the state to practice their occupation without being licensed by the applicable professional licensing board under certain conditions. To qualify, the spouse must hold a valid license in good standing with another state, file an application for an expedited license, and be lawfully hired by an in-state employer that verifies these criteria are met. Additionally, if an expedited license is not issued to the otherwise qualifying spouse within 30 days of filing, then the spouse may continue working for an in-state employer without being licensed. Should the expedited license be denied, then the spouse may not practice their occupation without being licensed by the applicable professional board. This legislation also allows the relevant professional licensing board to investigate any person exempted from licensure at its discretion and revoke licenses and license exemptions upon a determination of wrongdoing.

House Bill 995

Administration of Battery Assessment

Senate Sponsor: Kirkpatrick of the 32nd

House Sponsor: Bonner of the 73rd

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Signed by the Governor April 24, 2024 (Act 487)

This bill requires public schools to administer a nationally recognized multiple-aptitude battery assessment that measures developed abilities and helps predict future academic and occupational success in the military to students in grades 11 and 12 who choose to participate. The bill also allows parents or guardians to elect for their child not to participate.

STUDY COMMITTEES

Senate Resolution 37

Senate Property Owners' Associations, Homeowners' Associations, and Condominium Associations Study Committee

Sponsor: James of the 35th

Senate Resolution 203

Senate Safe Firearm Storage Study Committee

Sponsor: E. Jones of the 10th

Senate Resolution 251

Senate Rosenwald Schools Study Committee

Sponsor: Davenport of the 44th

Senate Resolution 323

Senate Study Committee on Improving Family Caregiver Services

Sponsor: H. Jones of the 22nd

Senate Resolution 470

Senate Study Committee on the Preservation of Georgia's Farmlands

Sponsor: Hickman of the 4th

Senate Resolution 471

Senate Study Committee on Access to Affordable Child Care

Sponsor: Albers of the 56th

Senate Resolution 476
Senate Study Committee on Artificial Intelligence
Sponsor: Albers of the 56th

Senate Resolution 527
Senate Study Committee on Veterans' Mental Health and Housing
Sponsor: Payne of the 54th

Senate Resolution 570
Senate Supporting Safety and Welfare of All Individuals in Department of Corrections
Facilities Study Committee
Sponsor: Robertson of the 29th

Senate Resolution 751
Senate Disaster Mitigation and Resilience Study Committee
Sponsor: S. Watson of the 11th

Senate Resolution 786
Senate Advancing Forest Innovation in Georgia Study Committee
Sponsor: Kennedy of the 18th