

**Budget Week**  
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# Budget Week Legislative Report



Georgia Society  
of Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery

# 2024

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GOVERNMENT  
RELATIONS

# Budget Week

This past week, the Georgia General Assembly met for four days of Joint Appropriations hearings to determine the FY 2024 amended budget and the FY 2025 budget. Georgia has a multi-billion dollar surplus to be allocated in the FY 2024 amended budget as well as a recommended FY 2025 budget from Governor Kemp for the legislators to approve. Legislators heard from multiple state departments and agencies who gave presentations on their respective proposals and requests to determine what the budget bill will entail. Priority budget topics for the week included education, healthcare, and transportation. The budget proposal bill must now be reviewed and passed by both chambers and signed by the Governor in the coming days. The legislature will start back on Monday for Session Day 6. Please see below for a breakdown of budget week and a link to the budget hearings notes.

[Budget Hearings Notes](#)



## Health Budget Overview

The legislature heard budget proposals and requests from several Georgia health agencies and departments such as the Department of Behavioural Health and Developmental Disabilities and the Department of Community Health. Priority topics for healthcare this year include medicaid coverage expansion, continued efforts for mental health parity, and disability health.

Commissioner Kevin Tanner from DBHDD gave an overview of the Georgia Building Authority's hospital capital needs for general construction updates such as building, sewage, and utility upgrades totaling to almost \$89 million to ensure the continued safety and efficacy of treatment in Georgia's hospital buildings. The total hospital workforce for Georgia saw a 51% increase in vacant positions filled since July of 2022 which was vital after the huge employee loss from 2020 to early 2022. The yearly waiver programs (NOW and COMP) for Georgian adults with disabilities have also seen a significant increase in administrative support funding over 2023 due an increase in enrollment. The DBHDD is asking for an adjusted \$79 million going into FY25 for the NOW/COMP programs to continue to increase the capacity of the programs and stabilize the provider networks. The forensic bed waitlist has also seen a huge increase of 195.96% leading to requests for increased funding at \$3.2 million for additional staff and beds. A breakdown of the state overall adult mental health budget was also given with increased funds for certain crisis areas in the state such as Fulton County.

Commissioner Russell Carlson also addressed the Joint Appropriations Committee on behalf of the Department of Community Health. The overall FY 2024 state funds budget for DCH is \$4.6 billion distributed across 8 programs with low-income medicaid and disability services (ABD) taking up almost 90% of the budget. The amended FY 2024 budget recommendations include large increases to ABD, LIM, and PeachCare funding. The FY 2025 recommended budget totals at \$1.8 million for statewide and program changes and \$483 million in benefits for ABD, LIM, and PeachCare. Medicaid redeterminations were also highlighted with a forecasted 2.7 million redeterminations over the next 14 months.

## **Education Budget Overview**

Education in Georgia over the past five years has steadily improved with the support of the Georgia legislature and Governor Kemp. Several agencies have spoken at the capitol about past performance, upcoming expectations, and proposed budgets. This week, the DOE, TCSG, USG, DECAL, and several other organizations have presented this week, showcasing all that their organizations have done and hope to do soon.

Superintendent Richard Woods gave the DOE presentation, showcasing how between fiscal years 2019 and 2024, the state has had consistent increases in Quality Basic Education funding, over \$7,000 in raises for Georgia's teachers, dedicated funding and effort to school safety, and targeted investments in transportation, school counselors, and school nutrition.

Furthering investments in Georgia's faculty and staff, the fiscal year amended budget for 2024 also includes a \$1,000 one-time salary supplement for all eligible staff in the state, with a total of roughly \$190 million. Looking to fiscal year 2025, the Governor's proposal pushes additional raises for teachers, a \$205 million stimulus to school transportation budgets, and further improvements to school safety funding. Additionally, the proposed budget aims to increase literacy support throughout the state. Dyslexia screening received a \$1.5 million boost, universal reading screeners received a \$5 million boost, and tiered literacy coaching was granted just over \$6 million. Each of these stimuluses serve to promote more curated education for Georgia's students.

There are still certain improvements needed in our school systems, as pupil transportation funding has not kept up with the growth in numbers. Drivers are needed to continue helping students arrive at schools, and fiscal year 25 funding will add a much needed increase to state transportation funding.

Looking toward the University Systems of Georgia, former Governor Sonny Perdue presented on how Georgia continues to be a strong example of prioritizing students' needs. On average, students who change their majors in college are doing so earlier than average. Students are receiving help with this process, and changing earlier is saving both time and money for the students as they finish their new degree. Georgia strives to maintain its low tuition rates and fees while still offering some of the top schools in the country. Going forward, USG is looking to improve the quantity of medical students graduating and living in Georgia. Currently, Georgia ranks last in the nation for medical students per 100,000, and this is seen in the overall lack of practitioners in certain counties around Georgia. Time and effort are being put into improving opportunities and funding for those programs so more Georgians can have access to the medical attention they need.

Commissioner Greg Dozier offered a presentation on behalf of the Technical College System of Georgia this week, showing first how much reach the system has. The system has 22 colleges spanning 8 campuses, and in 2023, over 500,000 were served through the colleges. Enrollment, credit hours, dual enrollment, and high demand program enrollment are all on the rise as of 2023, and there are several initiatives that are intended to bring more job opportunities to Georgia. In the amended fiscal year 2024 proposed plan, \$10 million in funding for the Rivian plant training, \$20 million to renovate existing labs for e-mobility, and roughly \$6 million for a facility in McDuffie County for a transport and aviation pad are just a few examples of TCSG attempting to open more doors for the citizens of Georgia. Fiscal year 2025 includes increased funding for updates to

Southern Crescent Technical college, new buildings for Wiregrass Technical college, and Lanier Tech to improve manufacturing capabilities.

On behalf of DECAL, Commissioner Amy Jacobs presented both how much the organization has done and what they plan to do these coming years. DECAL continues to develop their programs. The Pre-Kindergarten program continues to be a main focus of the organization state-wide. In the amended 2024 budget, updating computers, increasing health benefits, expanding summer programs, and providing a \$1,000 one-time salary boost for employees all lead DECAL to request roughly \$16 million increase in their budget. Looking forward to the fiscal year 2025 budget, DECAL is requesting roughly \$5 million to boost their Child Care services, and the organization is also looking to further investments in the Pre-Kindergarten program, with an estimated budget of \$46 million being put into the program next fiscal year.

## **Transportation Budget Overview**

Georgia is continuing to invest in transportation and the infrastructure around the state. Commissioner Russell McMurphy presented on behalf of the Georgia Department of Transportation. In the proposed fiscal year 2024 budget, the Local Maintenance Improvement Grant program is receiving a major stimulus to its budget. The program is receiving a one-time state general fund that will add support for local transportation infrastructure projects, totalling \$200 million. This effectively doubles the funding for LMIG this fiscal year, providing a much needed boost to the organization's on-going operations.

There will be new additions to the budget for capital infrastructure projects looking to enhance economic development while also boosting freight and logistics safety and efficiency. Capital projects are also receiving a large stimulus in the fiscal year 2024 amended proposal. The state will afford roughly \$600 million for capital projects to continue working throughout the state.

Moving forward, the proposed budget for fiscal year 2025 offers new additions to the budget. LMIG will revert back to the original roughly \$200 million that fiscal year 2024 started with, but it will receive a \$7 million boost. Roughly \$35 million will be added to the budget for capital maintenance, and roughly that same amount will be added to the budget for routine maintenance.

# The Week Under the Gold Dome

<i>Bill</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Status</i>
<b>HB 30 (Rep. John Carson)</b>	State government; definition of antisemitism; provide	House passed; Senate read and referred
<b>HB 191 (Rep. Ron Stephens)</b>	Revenue and taxation; pack of cigarettes; increase rate of tax	House read and referred
<b>HB 192 (Rep. Ron Stephens)</b>	Revenue and taxation; consumable vapor products; increase rate of tax	House read and referred
<b>HB 380 (Rep. Marcus Wiedower)</b>	Georgia Lottery Game of Sports Betting Act; enact	House Committee Favorably Reported By Substitute, House withdrawn and recommitted
<b>HB 489 (Rep. Mitchell Horner)</b>	Georgia Entertainment Industry Investment Act; aggregate annual limit; provide	House read and referred
<b>HB 530 (Rep. James Burchett)</b>	Civil practice; protective orders for certain high-ranking officers; provide	House passed; Senate Tabled, Senate recommitted
<b>HB 565 (Rep. Tyler Smith)</b>	Social services; temporary assistance for needy families; increase access to benefits	House Committee Favorably Reported by Substitute, House withdrawn and recommitted
<b>HB 581 (Rep. Shaw Blackmon)</b>	Audits and Accounts, Department of; revise deadlines, selection criteria, and required contents for certain annual economic analyses	House passed; Senate read and referred
<b>HB 841 (Rep. James Beverly)</b>	Public Service Commission; members elected from election districts instead of state wide; provide	House read and referred
<b>HB 915 (Rep. Jon Burns)</b>	Supplemental appropriations; State Fiscal Year July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024	House read and referred
<b>HB 929 (Rep. Jordan Ridley)</b>	Income tax; exclude net capital gains	House Hopper
<b>HR 210 (Rep. James Beverly)</b>	General Assembly; law for sports betting, pari-mutuel betting, and casino gambling; authorize - CA	House read and referred
<b>HR 768 (Rep. Matt Hatchett)</b>	Piper, Barbie; recipient of the LPN of the Year award; commend	House read and adopted
<b>SB 113 (Sen. Randy Robertson)</b>	Municipal Corporations; the transition of services and facilities from an existing municipality to a newly incorporated municipality; provide	Senate recommitted

<b>SB 172 (Sen. Bill Cowsert)</b>	State Government; regulation and taxation of sports betting in this state; authorize and provide	Senate committee favorably reported by substitute
<b>SB 186 (Sen. Greg Dolezal)</b>	"Georgia Landowners Protection Act"; enact	Senate recommitted
<b>SB 191 (Sen. Shawn Still)</b>	Motor Vehicles and Traffic; authorizing joinder of motor carriers and their insurance carriers in tort and contract causes of action; provisions; repeal	Senate recommitted
<b>SB 192 (Sen. Lee Anderson)</b>	Torts; employers and insurance providers of commercial motor vehicle operators based upon history of driving incidents; limit liability	Senate read and referred
<b>SB 194 (Sen. Shawn Still)</b>	Alcoholic Beverages and Motor Vehicles and Traffic; delivery of alcoholic beverages for personal use; provisions	Senate read and referred
<b>SB 200 (Sen. Bill Cowsert)</b>	"Civil Practice Act"; high ranking government or corporate officer of whom a deposition is sought to seek a protective order; provide	Senate recommitted
<b>SB 255 (Sen. Chuck Payne)</b>	Gambling; provisions relative to dogfighting; revise	Senate read and referred
<b>SB 260 (Sen. Bo Hatchett)</b>	"Georgia Electric Vehicle Future Act"; enact	Senate recommitted
<b>SB 265 (Sen. Blake Tillery)</b>	Notaries Public; electronic notarization of certain notarial acts using real time audio-video communication technology; provide	Senate read and referred
<b>SB 271 (Sen. John Albers)</b>	Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority; in-person electronic execution of notarial certificates; authorize	Senate read and referred
<b>SB 349 (Sen. Chuck Hufstetler)</b>	Ad Valorem Taxation of Property; setting of millage rates; revise provisions	Senate read and referred
<b>SB 351 (Sen. Jason Anavitarte)</b>	"Protecting Georgia's Children on Social Media Act of 2024"; enact	Senate read and referred

# Healthcare Legislation

<i>Bill</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Status</i>
<b>HB 70 (Rep. Mandisha Thomas)</b>	Surprise Billing Consumer Protection Act	House read and referred
<b>HB 82 (Rep. Mack Jackson)</b>	Income tax; limit eligibility for rural physician tax credit to physicians who qualify on or before December 31, 2023	House passed; Senate recommitted
<b>HB 150 (Rep. Meisha Mainor)</b>	Professions and businesses; definition of physical therapy to include ordering diagnostic imaging and using ultrasound; revise	House read and referred
<b>HB 196 (Rep. Alan Powell)</b>	Georgia Access to Medical Cannabis Commission; subject to Administrative Procedure Act and laws governing open meetings and records; provide	House passed; Senate passed by substitute; House agreed Senate sub; Senate disagreed House amend
<b>HB 214 (Rep. Alan Powell)</b>	Professions and businesses; authorize registered nurses and physician assistants to certify an individual is disabled for purposes of obtaining special vehicle decals	House read and referred
<b>HB 266 (Rep. Charlice Byrd)</b>	Medical Freedom Act; enact	House read and referred to the Committee on Public Health; Withdrawn, Recommitted
<b>HB 284 (Rep. Beth Camp)</b>	Insurance; health care sharing ministry; change definition; provisions	House Withdrawn, Recommitted
<b>HB 286 (Rep. Michelle Au)</b>	Surprise Billing Consumer Protection Act; certain consumer protections against surprise billing for ambulance service; provide	House read and referred to the Committee on Insurance
<b>HB 343 (Rep. Mark Newton)</b>	Lowering Prescription Drug Costs for Patients Act; enact	House Passed; Senate read and referred
<b>HB 362 (Rep. Karen Mathiak)</b>	Insurance; benefit provider to disclose certain payments to a treating healthcare provider; provide	House passed; Senate recommitted
<b>HB 363 (Rep. John LaHood)</b>	Health; eligibility to receive tax credits; revise a definition; provisions	House read and referred
<b>HB 417 (Rep. David Knight)</b>	Insurance; prohibit insurers from discriminating against certain healthcare facilities and providers in connection with provider administered drugs	House Withdrawn, Recommitted
<b>HB 455 (Rep. John LaHood)</b>	Professions and businesses; professional programs to address career fatigue and wellness in healthcare professionals; provisions	House passed; Senate recommitted

<b>HB 458 (Rep. Clay Pirkle)</b>	Agriculture; hemp farming; provide for intent	House passed; Senate read and referred
<b>HB 470 (Rep. Sharon Cooper)</b>	Georgia Candor Act; enact	House passed; Senate recommitted
<b>HB 487 (Rep. Mark Newton)</b>	Crimes and offenses; assault and battery offenses upon all healthcare workers; expand enhanced punishment	House Withdrawn, Recommitted
<b>HB 606 (Rep. Sharon Cooper)</b>	State health planning and development; certificate of need; revise definitions	House read and referred
<b>HB 745 (Rep. Trey Kelley)</b>	Health; provide requirements for nurse staffing in hospitals; provisions	House read and referred
<b>HB 887 (Rep. Mandisha Thomas)</b>	Insurance; use of artificial intelligence in making certain decisions regarding coverage; prohibit	House read and referred
<b>SB 16 (Sen. John Albers)</b>	Georgia EMS Reform Act	Senate read and referred
<b>SB 99 (Sen. Greg Dolezal)</b>	Certificate of Need Requirements; exemption for acute care hospitals established in rural counties that meet certain criteria; provide	Senate passed; House read and referred
<b>SB 102 (Sen. Larry Walker)</b>	Nurses; provision relating to the administration of anesthesia by certified registered nurse anesthetists; revise	Senate read and referred
<b>SB 111 (Sen. Chuck Hufstetler)</b>	"Anesthesiologist Assistant Act"; an anesthesiologist assistant to be appointed in an advisory capacity to the Georgia Composite Medical Board; provide	Senate recommitted
<b>SB 162 (Sen. Ben Watson)</b>	Health; certificate of need requirements for all health care facilities except certain long-term care facilities and services; eliminate	Senate Recommitted
<b>SB 238 (Sen. Mike Hodges)</b>	Georgia Health Care Professionals Data System; provide for the establishment	Senate read and referred
<b>SB 270 (Sen. Carden Summers)</b>	Medical Cannabis; the location of retail outlets for the dispensing of low THC oil; authorize	Senate Read and Referred
<b>SB 286 (Sen. Ben Watson)</b>	"Lowering Prescription Drug Costs for Patients Act"; enact	Senate read and referred
<b>SB 293 (Sen. Ben Watson)</b>	County Boards of Health; operational policies and procedures of the Department of Public Health Apply to local personnel; provide	Senate read and referred
<b>SB 296 (Sen. Sonya Halpern)</b>	Department of Public Health; appointment of a state surgeon general; provide	Senate read and referred
<b>SB 307 (Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick)</b>	Private Review Agents; health insurers to implement and maintain a program that allows for the selective application of reductions; provide	Senate read and referred



<b>SB 325 (Sen. Sheikh Rahman)</b>	Dispensing Opticians; employee of a licensed physician or optometrist who is under the direct or real-time supervision of a licensed optician; exempt from licensure	Senate read and referred
<b>SR 372 (Sen. Ben Watson)</b>	Atherosclerotic Cardiovascular Disease; improvement of care; support	Senate read and referred

## GSDDS Legislation

<i>Bill</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Status</i>
<b>HB 502 (Rep. Deborah Silcox)</b>	Georgia Cosmetic Laser Services Act; revise a definition; revise a provision	House committee favorably reported

<b>HB 844 (Rep. Ginny Ehrhart)</b>	Practice of Nutrition and Dietetics Act; enact	House second readers
<b>HB 872 (Rep Lee Hawkins)</b>	Medical professionals; rural assistance; expand service cancelable loan program for health care providers to include dental students	House second readers
<b>HB 887 (Rep. Mandisha Thomas)</b>	Insurance; use of artificial intelligence in making certain decisions regarding coverage; prohibit	House second readers
<b>HB 897 (Rep. Jordan Riley)</b>	Medical Freedom Act; enact	House first reader
<b>HB 945 (Rep. Lee Hawkins)</b>	State employees' health insurance plan; protection for covered persons when an in-network hospital becomes out-of-network prior to the end of year plan; provide	House Hopper