

Legislative Days 1 - 5
Principal: Don Bolia

Session Week 1 Legislative Report



Georgia Society
of Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery

2024

PGR | PEACHTREE
GOVERNMENT
RELATIONS

Week 1, Legislative Days 1-5

The Georgia General Assembly convened for the first time in 2024 this past Monday, January 8th, for the second session of the 2023-2024 Biennial. The Assembly met Monday through Friday to complete the first five legislative days of the session. It was a great first week with a few pertinent issues coming back into play quickly such as sports betting, Alzheimer's state plans, and mental health solutions. Annual events such as the Eggs and Issues Breakfast along with Governor Kemp's State of the State address were held on Wednesday and Thursday of this week. Next week, the Georgia Assembly will go into Budget Week where the amended FY 2024 budget will be finalized and released. An adjournment resolution holding this session's schedule has also been released with a Crossover date of February 29th and Sine Die date of March 28th. Please keep reading for a breakdown of the week!



The State of the State

On Thursday, January 11th, Governor Kemp gave his sixth State of the State address. Immediately acknowledging the upcoming election season, Kemp spoke on how the state of Georgia continues to advance economically despite the 'runaway spending, bloated budgets, job-killing regulations, gridlock, and partisanship' of Washington. The five million dollars of direct tax relief to Georgia citizens in 2023 was highlighted as he announced continued plans for tax cuts for 2024.

Education was also announced as a continued priority for 2024, advancing the Governor's support of teacher pay raises and education budget increases as we've seen over the past five years. Kemp spoke of an 'all of the above' approach to education meaning that all schools such as public, private, charter, etc should be supported through the 2024 session. This expressed a renewed support for the school voucher bill that has been highly contested throughout the past year and encourages increased school choice. School safety was also recognized as an important topic for 2024.

Public safety was highlighted as a major topic of Kemp's Thursday morning address with the recognition of Trooper First Class Jerry Parrish who was shot and severely wounded in the line of duty in a dispute involving the future training center being built in DeKalb County. Kemp spoke strongly of his unwavering support for Georgia law enforcement officers, firefighters, and first responders, and spoke of his support for the construction of the Atlanta Public Safety Training Center that has been hotly contested in the City of Atlanta for over a year.

Other topics that were more briefly mentioned included support of limited healthcare expansion and mental health support. The Governor committed to continuing to support the late Speaker Ralston's mental health parity efforts by continuing to pass legislation in relation to the original Mental Health Parity Act of 2022. The efforts of First Lady Marty Kemp to end human trafficking in Georgia were also highlighted as the Grace Commission continues to grow and progress in the fight against trafficking. Please see the link below to watch the Governor's State of the State address.

[State of the State Video](#)

Budget Week Predictions

With budget week coming up next week, there are several key line items and money allocations that we are expecting to see. Georgia is starting off the year with \$11 billion in surplus from revenue estimates being set at so low in past years. The amended FY 2024 budget will include surplus allocations as well as any changes made from last year, and the FY 2025 budget will be decided.

Governor Kemp has specifically announced that the budget will include \$1.4 billion in additional funds for K-12 education putting it at a grand total of \$12.8 billion. He has also requested a \$104 million allocation for school safety enhancements and has proposed to make school safety funding permanent. The previously announced \$1,000 pay raise for state employees, K-12 teachers, K-12 employees, and Pre-K teachers will also be coupled with continued funding for the Quality Basic Education formula for Georgia's public schools.

Continuing with his priority of law enforcement support, Kemp also plans to include a \$6,000 pay raise for state law enforcement officers alongside an additional \$3,000 for State Patrol Officers. Additional funding to the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disorders is also expected to support the mental parity legislation that will hopefully be passed this session. An estimated \$1.6 billion dollars will be spent on mental health in the coming year which is a historic amount for the state of Georgia. Please see the link below to read the Governor's Recommended Budget Report.

[Budget Report](#)



Eggs and Issues

On the morning of January 10th, Governor Kemp gave a speech at the annual Eggs and Issues breakfast where he spoke about plans for the state of Georgia in the next year. In his speech, the Governor revealed plans for a roughly \$2 billion increase in spending. Through the next year, Georgia will be investing in several important and costly projects to improve the state. A majority of the planned funding will include a stimulus of

\$1.5 billion to the Georgia Department of Transportation's budget. The money will be used to finish projects already in the agency's plans. Additionally, the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority is receiving \$250 million to further finance water and sewage projects that are ongoing in the state. The Governor also laid out plans to support two new schools in the state. There are now blueprints for a new dental school at Georgia Southern University costing the state roughly \$178 million, and the University of Georgia is receiving \$50 million to build a new medical school. Kemp also introduced plans for a comprehensive overhaul of Georgia's litigation process, and he announced a plan to begin stabilizing the insurance market in the state. Please see the link below for a video of the Eggs and Issues speakers.

[Eggs and Issues Video](#)

Sports Betting

This session, the topic of sports betting in Georgia has resurfaced, and this topic will continue to be important during this year's session. Last year's session's Senate Bill 172 has been brought back. This provision would allow two formats of sports betting in the state of Georgia: online applications and remote terminal formats. It would also establish the Georgia Gaming Corporation in order to both regulate the industry and issue licenses for the betting. The corporation would also establish a system for taxation, ranging from 20%-25% based on the betting. The GGC would also be responsible for provisions on minimum betting in reserves and monitoring the advertisement of these betting services. Sports betting services would be prohibited from advertising to minors, and the GGC may limit betting amounts for individuals if they have a history of betting problems. A looming issue with SB 172 is that it would require the simultaneous passing of a constitutional amendment since the Georgia constitution explicitly disallows gambling rendering the bill currently inapplicable to the state. The bill was heard in the Senate Regulated Industries Committee on Tuesday of this week and passed with a vote of 8-5. The committee also discussed the need for a Constitutional amendment with mentions of plans for one to be brought before the Assembly in the coming weeks. The bill was heard on the Senate floor on Friday, but the bill was tabled and will be addressed when the Senate reconvenes next.

The Week Under the Gold Dome

<i>Bill</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Status</i>
HB 30 (Rep. John Carson)	State government; definition of antisemitism; provide	House passed; Senate read and referred
HB 191 (Rep. Ron Stephens)	Revenue and taxation; pack of cigarettes; increase rate of tax	House read and referred
HB 192 (Rep. Ron Stephens)	Revenue and taxation; consumable vapor products; increase rate of tax	House read and referred
HB 380 (Rep. Marcus Wiedower)	Georgia Lottery Game of Sports Betting Act; enact	House Committee Favorably Reported By Substitute, House withdrawn and recommitted
HB 489 (Rep. Mitchell Horner)	Georgia Entertainment Industry Investment Act; aggregate annual limit; provide	House read and referred
HB 530 (Rep. James Burchett)	Civil practice; protective orders for certain high-ranking officers; provide	House passed; Senate Tabled, Senate recommitted
HB 565 (Rep. Tyler Smith)	Social services; temporary assistance for needy families; increase access to benefits	House Committee Favorably Reported by Substitute, House withdrawn and recommitted
HB 581 (Rep. Shaw Blackmon)	Audits and Accounts, Department of; revise deadlines, selection criteria, and required contents for certain annual economic analyses	House passed; Senate read and referred
HB 841 (Rep. James Beverly)	Public Service Commission; members elected from election districts instead of state wide; provide	House read and referred
HB 915 (Rep. Jon Burns)	Supplemental appropriations; State Fiscal Year July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024	House read and referred
HR 210 (Rep. James Beverly)	General Assembly; law for sports betting, pari-mutuel betting, and casino gambling; authorize - CA	House read and referred
HR 768 (Rep. Matt Hatchett)	Piper, Barbie; recipient of the LPN of the Year award; commend	House read and adopted
SB 113 (Sen. Randy Robertson)	Municipal Corporations; the transition of services and facilities from an existing municipality to a newly incorporated municipality; provide	Senate recommitted
SB 172 (Sen. Bill Cowsert)	State Government; regulation and taxation of sports betting in this state; authorize and provide	Senate committee favorably reported by substitute
SB 186 (Sen. Greg Dolezal)	"Georgia Landowners Protection Act"; enact	Senate recommitted

SB 191 (Sen. Shawn Still)	Motor Vehicles and Traffic; authorizing joinder of motor carriers and their insurance carriers in tort and contract causes of action; provisions; repeal	Senate recommitted
SB 192 (Sen. Lee Anderson)	Torts; employers and insurance providers of commercial motor vehicle operators based upon history of driving incidents; limit liability	Senate read and referred
SB 194 (Sen. Shawn Still)	Alcoholic Beverages and Motor Vehicles and Traffic; delivery of alcoholic beverages for personal use; provisions	Senate read and referred
SB 200 (Sen. Bill Cowsert)	"Civil Practice Act"; high ranking government or corporate officer of whom a deposition is sought to seek a protective order; provide	Senate recommitted
SB 255 (Sen. Chuck Payne)	Gambling; provisions relative to dogfighting; revise	Senate read and referred
SB 260 (Sen. Bo Hatchett)	"Georgia Electric Vehicle Future Act"; enact	Senate recommitted
SB 265 (Sen. Blake Tillery)	Notaries Public; electronic notarization of certain notarial acts using real time audio-video communication technology; provide	Senate read and referred
SB 271 (Sen. John Albers)	Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority; in-person electronic execution of notarial certificates; authorize	Senate read and referred
SB 349 (Sen. Chuck Hufstetler)	Ad Valorem Taxation of Property; setting of millage rates; revise provisions	Senate read and referred
SB 351 (Sen. Jason Anavitarte)	"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>
HB 70 (Rep. Mandisha Thomas)	Surprise Billing Consumer Protection Act	House read and referred
HB 82 (Rep. Mack Jackson)	Income tax; limit eligibility for rural physician tax credit to physicians who qualify on or before December 31, 2023	House passed; Senate recommitted
HB 150 (Rep. Meisha Mainor)	Professions and businesses; definition of physical therapy to include ordering diagnostic imaging and using ultrasound; revise	House read and referred
HB 196 (Rep. Alan Powell)	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
HB 214 (Rep. Alan Powell)	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
HB 266 (Rep. Charlice Byrd)	Medical Freedom Act; enact	House read and referred to the Committee on Public Health; Withdrawn, Recommitted
HB 284 (Rep. Beth Camp)	Insurance; health care sharing ministry; change definition; provisions	House Withdrawn, Recommitted
HB 286 (Rep. Michelle Au)	Surprise Billing Consumer Protection Act; certain consumer protections against surprise billing for ambulance service; provide	House read and referred to the Committee on Insurance
HB 343 (Rep. Mark Newton)	Lowering Prescription Drug Costs for Patients Act; enact	House Passed; Senate read and referred
HB 362 (Rep. Karen Mathiak)	Insurance; benefit provider to disclose certain payments to a treating healthcare provider; provide	House passed; Senate recommitted
HB 363 (Rep. John LaHood)	Health; eligibility to receive tax credits; revise a definition; provisions	House read and referred
HB 417 (Rep. David Knight)	Insurance; prohibit insurers from discriminating against certain healthcare facilities and providers in connection with provider administered drugs	House Withdrawn, Recommitted

HB 455 (Rep. John LaHood)	Professions and businesses; professional programs to address career fatigue and wellness in healthcare professionals; provisions	House passed; Senate recommitted
HB 458 (Rep. Clay Pirkle)	Agriculture; hemp farming; provide for intent	House passed; Senate read and referred
HB 470 (Rep. Sharon Cooper)	Georgia Candor Act; enact	House passed; Senate recommitted
HB 487 (Rep. Mark Newton)	Crimes and offenses; assault and battery offenses upon all healthcare workers; expand enhanced punishment	House Withdrawn, Recommitted
HB 606 (Rep. Sharon Cooper)	State health planning and development; certificate of need; revise definitions	House read and referred
HB 745 (Rep. Trey Kelley)	Health; provide requirements for nurse staffing in hospitals; provisions	House read and referred
HB 887 (Rep. Mandisha Thomas)	Insurance; use of artificial intelligence in making certain decisions regarding coverage; prohibit	House read and referred
SB 16 (Sen. John Albers)	Georgia EMS Reform Act	Senate read and referred
SB 99 (Sen. Greg Dolezal)	Certificate of Need Requirements; exemption for acute care hospitals established in rural counties that meet certain criteria; provide	Senate passed; House read and referred
SB 102 (Sen. Larry Walker)	Nurses; provision relating to the administration of anesthesia by certified registered nurse anesthetists; revise	Senate read and referred
SB 111 (Sen. Chuck Hufstetler)	"Anesthesiologist Assistant Act"; an anesthesiologist assistant to be appointed in an advisory capacity to the Georgia Composite Medical Board; provide	Senate recommitted
SB 162 (Sen. Ben Watson)	Health; certificate of need requirements for all healthcare facilities except certain long-term care facilities and services; eliminate	Senate Recommitted
SB 238 (Sen. Mike Hodges)	Georgia Health Care Professionals Data System; provide for the establishment	Senate read and referred
SB 270 (Sen. Carden Summers)	Medical Cannabis; the location of retail outlets for the dispensing of low THC oil; authorize	Senate Read and Referred
SB 286 (Sen. Ben Watson)	"Lowering Prescription Drug Costs for Patients Act"; enact	Senate read and referred
SB 293 (Sen. Ben Watson)	County Boards of Health; operational policies and procedures of the Department of Public Health Apply to local personnel; provide	Senate read and referred

SB 296 (Sen. Sonya Halpern)	Department of Public Health; appointment of a state surgeon general; provide	Senate read and referred
SB 307 (Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick)	Private Review Agents; health insurers to implement and maintain a program that allows for the selective application of reductions; provide	Senate read and referred
SB 325 (Sen. Sheikh Rahman)	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
SR 372 (Sen. Ben Watson)	Atherosclerotic Cardiovascular Disease; improvement of care; support	Senate read and referred

GSDDS Legislation

<i>Bill</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Status</i>
HB 502 (Rep. Deborah Silcox)	Georgia Cosmetic Laser Services Act; revise a definition; revise a provision	House committee favorably reported
HB 844 (Rep. Ginny Ehrhart)	Practice of Nutrition and Dietetics Act; enact	House second readers
HB 872 (Rep Lee Hawkins)	Medical professionals; rural assistance; expand service cancelable loan program for health care providers to include dental students	House second readers
HB 887 (Rep. Mandisha Thomas)	Insurance; use of artificial intelligence in making certain decisions regarding coverage; prohibit	House second readers
HB 897 (Rep. Jordan Riley)	Medical Freedom Act; enact	House first reader