

Legislative Days 11 - 14

Principal: Don Bolia

Session Week 3 Legislative Report



Georgia Society
of Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery

2024

PGR | PEACHTREE
GOVERNMENT
RELATIONS

Week 3, Legislative Days 11-14

This week, the Georgia General Assembly met Monday through Thursday for Legislative Days eleven through fourteen of the 2024 Session. This week there were dozens of meetings, each covering a wide range of topics. A prominent vote on the Senate floor took on sports betting. The bill passed the Senate with an amendment requiring a Constitutional amendment, and the bill is not being sent to the House to be dealt with. Taking a step back from bills, one event has trumped all that comes from the legislation. Our dear House Rules Chairman, Richard Smith, sadly passed away on Tuesday, January 30th at 78 years old. The Chairman will be missed by all, and his contributions to Georgia will not be forgotten. In honor of the late Chairman, the Legislative bodies have both passed a new calendar, adjusting the legislative days so those who want to can attend his proceedings and pay their respect on Monday. To replace this Monday's session day, the Legislature will meet on Friday, February 16th instead.



New General Bills of Interest

<i>Bill</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Status</i>
HB 1075 (Rep. Scott Hilton)	Notaries public; state agencies shall accept certain notarial acts performed in another state; provide	House read and referred
SR 538 (Sen. Carden Summers)	Sports Betting; Georgia General Assembly provide by law for sports betting and casino gambling in this state by July 2, 2025; authorize and require	Senate Hopper

Healthcare Legislation

House Health Committee

During the House Health Committee meeting on Monday, January 29th, the committee discussed HB 874, presented by Rep. Lee Hawkins. The bill, which aims to establish Automated External Defibrillator (AED) teams for all grades K-12, garnered unanimous support and passed out of the committee with amendments. The discussion highlighted the alarming statistic that up to 20,000 children experience a cardiac event at school annually nationwide, equating to around 30 cases per day. The proposed legislation mandates the presence of at least one AED on school premises and requires schools to conduct emergency practice plans once a semester. During public testimony, a mother of a survivor and the Georgia Association of School Nurses voiced their support for the bill. The committee then moved to pass the bill, adopting amendments that included incorporating American Heart Association (AHA) language and adjusting the timeline of the bill. Ultimately, the committee passed HB 874 unanimously as amended, demonstrating a commitment to enhancing cardiac emergency preparedness in schools.

House Insurance Subcommittee on Life and Health

The House Insurance Committee met on Monday, January 29th, of this week to hear two bills. HB 945, presented by Rep. Hawkins, focuses on the State health benefit plan, ensuring that if a network undergoes changes during the year, such as dropping a provider, the insurer will still honor the plan. The Georgia State Retirees Association expressed support for the bill. It's noted that this hearing is for discussion only, with no voting scheduled.

HB 924, presented by Chairman Balenger, addresses healthcare and the "white bagging" practice, prohibiting insurance companies from requiring patients to obtain medication from a specific location for infusion. Discussion delved into patient choice, regional practices, and potential impacts on insurance rates and patient safety. Testimony from Kaiser Permanente highlighted concerns with the bill's language and its potential effects on their integrated network. Questions probed the current situation regarding white bagging practices, while the GA Hospital Association voices support for the legislation, clarifying its scope.

Senate Insurance Committee

In the Senate Insurance Committee on January 31st of this week, Senator Albers presented SB 334. This bill revises qualifications for insurance coverage for firefighters diagnosed with cancer. Specifically, it mandates legally organized fire departments to provide and maintain insurance coverage for firefighters diagnosed with cancer, subject to certain conditions and lump sum benefits. This bill was looked on very favorably by the committee, and it passed the committee unanimously.

House Regulated Industries Subcommittee

During the House Regulated Industries Licensing Subcommittee meeting on Monday, January 29th, the hearing centered on several bills without taking a vote, with an emphasis on public testimony. Representative Al Williams presented HB 650, proposing the allowance of specified licensed barbers to operate mobile barber shops, subject to conditions mirroring the inspection process for food trucks. Advocates, highlighted potential industry growth and improved accessibility to hair care. However, concerns were raised regarding cleanliness and apprehensions about monitoring due to insufficient funding and safety issues. Representative Matt Barton presented HB 793, which seeks to authorize applicants enrolled in a master's degree program to take the master's social work licensing exam. The Georgia Society of Clinical Social Workers expressed support during

public testimony. Lastly, Representative Sandra Scott introduced HB 154, advocating for Georgia's entry into the Cosmetology Licensure Compact. Researchers for the Council of State Government, encouraged increased state partnership with the industry, emphasizing that the compact requires seven states for implementation with three currently in the compact, potentially making Georgia the fourth. The Cosmetology Licensure Compact, if implemented, would allow cosmetology licenses to be valid across state lines allowing cosmetologists moving into the state to immediately start working without having to wait several weeks for state approval. Public testimony featured the Cosmetology Board, the Future of the Beauty Industry Coalition, Sports Clips, and Great Clips, all endorsing the proposed compact.

House Floor

On Monday, January 29th, HB 455, sponsored by Rep. John LaHood, successfully passed out of the Senate chamber. The bill specifically addresses career fatigue and wellness in healthcare professionals. It stipulates that professional programs established for these purposes are not obligated to report to licensing boards, except in specific circumstances, and includes provisions for immunity and confidentiality of certain documents and information related to these programs. The bill will now go to the Governor's Office to be signed into law.

New Healthcare Bill of Interest

<i>Bill</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Status</i>
HB 1072 (Rep. Sharon Cooper)	Health; drug repository program; revise definitions; provide for pharmacist to pharmacy technician ratios	House read and referred
SB 419 (Sen. Larry Walker III)	Nurses; provision relating to the administration of anesthesia by certified registered nurse anesthetists; revise	Senate read and referred
SB 426 (Sen. Blake Tillery)	Motor Vehicles and Traffic; requirements for joining of a motor carrier and motor carrier's insurer to a cause of action; revise	Senate read and referred
SB 428 (Sen. Blake Tillery)	Torts; a cap on damages recoverable against foster parents in personal injury actions involving the use of a motor vehicle by a child; provide	Senate read and referred
SB 431 (Sen. Blake Tillery)	Civil Practice Act; certain factors from consideration in discovery determinations; remove	Senate read and referred
SB 441 (Sen. Nikki Merritt)	Controlled Substances; notification requirements for prescribers prescribing opioids; revise	Senate hopper

GSDDS Legislation

<i>Bill to highlight that are not new</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Status</i>
HB 502 (Rep. Deborah Silcox)	Georgia Cosmetic Laser Services Act; revise a definition; revise a provision	House passed