

[History Chart](#)

With Crossover day behind us and the tail end of the 2026 Session underway, this past legislative week was a bit slower but still productive. Many of the bill Friday were heard for the first time in the opposite chamber and we began to see how things will unfold in the lead-up to Sine Die.

Senate Appropriations Committee hearings for the big FY 2027 budget are in motion and we will monitor any new changes as we await the upper-chamber's 974.

Major Bills to Note

HB 1116's new substitute edited this bill creating a non-binding state referendum in HB 1116. This would alleviate the need for HR 1114. The new substitute property tax increases to 3% or the rate of inflation, whichever is higher. It also caps local sales taxes at the current maximum of 5% and allows local government penny of sales tax to offset property taxes

- Referred to Senate Finance; was not heard in Committee this week

HB 1344 - Rep. Matt Reeves: The bill strengthens the Insurance Commissioner's enforcement powers and increases penalties for violations, enhances insurance reporting and prosecution, including funding and authority to hire prosecuting attorneys, prohibits the sale or solicitation of auto accident information for program to recruit and retain insurers in Georgia; sets clearer timelines for claims processing after declared catastrophic events; requires reporting on how programs are used; expands the information the Commissioner may review when evaluating insurance rates; requires at least a two-year window to file certain proper establishes a storm damage mitigation grant program for homeowners; and updates rules related to excluded drivers and uninsured vehicles, including increased restoration fees.

- Passed out of the House on Thursday, 2/26/26 with a 166-3 vote
- Senate referred to Insurance and Labor Committee

Healthcare Specific Legislation

HB 54 - Rep. David Clark: This bill allows advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) and physician assistants (PAs) to order home health services, create and determine medical necessity for equipment and supplies, roles previously limited to physicians. It updates state law to include APRNs and PAs across home oversight, adds training requirements, restricts referral conflicts of interest, and aims to expand access to home-based care in Georgia.

- The Senate agreed to the House amendments from last year that were added on Sine Die 2025 and is ready to go to the Governor

HB 947 - Rep. Martin Momtahan: This bill tightens Georgia's administration of SNAP eligibility, verification, and oversight requirements. Passed out of the Crossover and is referred to the Senate Agriculture and Consumer Affairs Committee; was not heard in the committee meeting this week.

- Limits expanded income and asset standards unless required by federal law.
- Requires full eligibility verification within 30 days and blocks second-month benefits until documentation is complete.
- Shortens certification periods for certain higher-risk or unstable households.
- Expands data matching with state and federal agencies to detect changes in income, residency, incarceration, or lottery winnings
- Adds EBT card labeling requirements and restricts SNAP purchases of certain prepared foods and beverages.
- Maintains federal (USDA) authority over retailer enforcement.

HB 961 - Rep. Alan Powell: In Senate Health and Human Services Committee; committee did not meet this week. This bill amends Georgia's Surprise Bill Protection Act to address out-of-network ground ambulance services.

It requires health plans to treat emergency ground ambulance transportation as a covered service when requested by a first responder or treating healthcare provider. In-network ambulance providers, insurers must reimburse at the locally established rate (set by contract, ordinance, or regulation), or if no local rate exists, the Medicare rate or the provider's billed charges. The substitute that passed out changed the rate from 400% to 300%. To note the Senate version of the bill 325%.

The payment must be considered payment in full, except for standard in-network cost-sharing. Patients cannot be charged more than the in-network copay, co-insurance, or deductible.

deductible amount, and ambulance providers are prohibited from balance billing beyond that amount.

Insurers must pay ambulance providers directly within 30 days of receiving a complete claim.

[HB 1262](#) - Rep. Eddie Lumsden: This bill increases the monetary penalties the Georgia Commissioner of Insurance may impose for certain violations of the Insurance Code. Specifically, it raises the maximum fines for violations related to mental health parity, surprise billing, prepaid legal services plans, and other matters from \$1,000 per violation (up to \$10,000 in aggregate) to \$5,000 per violation (up to \$50,000 in aggregate), unless a different amount is otherwise specified.

- Assigned to Senate Insurance & Labor Committee; was not heard this week

[HB 1295](#) - Rep. Sharon Cooper: Relating to physician assistants, so as to enter into an interstate compact known as the "PA Licensure Compact"

- Passed out of the Senate Regulated Industries & Utilities Committee on Tuesday, March 10th

[SB 220](#) - Sen. Matt Brass: The "Putting Georgia's Patients First Act" updates Georgia's medical cannabis laws by renaming "low THC oil" to "medical cannabis," adjusting related criminal penalties and exemptions, and clarifying the role of the Georgia Access to Medical Cannabis Commission. It also updates qualifying medical conditions, adjusts card renewal rules, and ensures lawful possession of medical cannabis is excluded from the Georgia Controlled Substances Act.

- Passed the House 138-21 on Thursday, March 12th

[SB 254](#) - Sen. Bill Cowser: Was heard earlier this session in House Regulated Industries; was not heard again this week. This bill was introduced last year.

- Authorizes licensed retail liquor stores to obtain a consumable hemp license and sell consumable hemp products.
- Requires child-resistant, non-child-appealing packaging and prohibits advertising that mimics popular brands or suggests the product is medical marijuana.
- Prohibits hemp products from being sold as part of traditional food products or alcoholic beverages, while allowing certain forms like gummies and edibles.

[SB 411](#) - Sen. Shawn Still: Passed out of the House Health Committee on Tuesday, March 10th and is in House Rules. This bill regulates dry needling in Georgia and allows the practice to licensed acupuncturists, physical therapists, and occupational therapists who meet specific training requirements. It also sets advertising rules, consultation and education standards, and allows licensing boards to discipline violations.

[SB 427](#) - Sen. Ben Watson: Passed out of the House Health Committee on Tuesday, March 10th and is in House Rules. This bill creates a limited provision for internationally trained physicians, allowing them to practice medicine under supervision in rural counties, licensed hospitals, or accredited medical schools.

To qualify, applicants must meet specified education, training, examination, English proficiency, background, and work authorization requirements, and secure employment under a supervising physician. Licensees may practice only in approved settings and are subject to the same oversight, discipline, and professional standards as fully licensed physicians.

After four years of supervised practice, eligible physicians may apply for a full Georgia medical license, with a requirement to practice an additional two years in an underserved area. The Medical Board must hire staff and medical directors to oversee the program, adopt implementing rules, and submit annual reports to the General Assembly. The program is contingent on state funding and will automatically repeal if funding is not maintained.

[SB 462](#) - Sen. Shawn Still: This bill, the "Surprise Billing Consumer Protection Act," protects patients from unexpected out-of-network ambulance bills by requiring ambulance providers to cover emergency ambulance services and limiting what patients can be charged. It sets minimum reimbursement rates for out-of-network ambulance services and ensures patients pay no more than their normal in-network cost-sharing amounts. Was not heard in House Health Committee this week.