

## **2022 Georgia General Assembly Legislative Days 1-4**



### **Back in Session**

The Georgia General Assembly kicked off the week gaveling in and out, as the state cheered for the Georgia Bulldogs as they made history in becoming national champions for the first time in more than forty years! Legislators returned to business on Wednesday for Legislative Day 2, where they were off to a quick start with a multitude of new bills being introduced. On Thursday, Legislative Day 3 convened with Governor Brian Kemp delivering the annual State of the State address where he addressed healthcare, education and a call for safer Georgia.

While Legislative Days 1-4 was off to a hot start, momentum will shift next week in lieu of Budget Week. During Budget Week, leaders from both the Governor's Office, the House of Representatives and the Senate will come together to appropriate state funding for the upcoming fiscal year. The calendar reads as follows:

- January 17-21 - Recess Days, Committee Work Days
- January 18-20 - Joint Appropriations Hearings
- January 24 - Legislative Day 5
- January 25 - Legislative Day 6
- January 26 - Legislative Day 7



### **Eggs & Issues**

On Wednesday, January 12th, the Georgia Chamber of Commerce held its annual “Eggs & Issues” event. The event offers leaders across the state an opportunity to reveal their priorities ahead of the beginning of session. The lineup included Governor Brian Kemp, Lt. Governor Geoff Duncan, House Speaker David Ralston, US Senator Raphael Warnock, Atlanta Mayor Andre Dickens, and Chamber President and CEO Chris Clark.

Amongst the speakers, Mayor Andre Dickens emphasized the importance of both public safety and rebuilding a relationship between the City of Atlanta and state leaders. Mayor Dickens used the event as an opportunity to unveil plans for a new police precinct in Buckhead eliciting applause from the audience. In rebuilding the relationship between Atlanta City Hall and state leaders, Mayor Dickens said: “To Georgia lawmakers in this room this morning, there are about 400 steps between Atlanta City Hall and the Gold Dome...I don’t mind crossing the street to come see you to engage with you in person. And I hope you don’t mind to come over to City Hall and do the same with me.”

Governor Brian Kemp addressed the audience about Georgia’s economic success during COVID-19, and also unveiled plans ahead of his State of the State address. His plans included a \$1.6 billion tax refund to be distributed amongst all Georgia taxpayers, legislation to exempt retirement income for veterans residing in Georgia, and ensuring at least 90% of tuition for HOPE Scholarship recipients at all public post-secondary education institutions is covered by the scholarship program.



## **2022 State of the State**

On Thursday January 13, 2022, Governor Brian Kemp delivered his 2022 State of the State address where he focused heavily on his budget proposals for the upcoming fiscal year and additional priorities he will be supporting this legislative session. Georgia plans to spend big in fiscal year 2023 due to conservative budgeting, the influx of federal funds and a high amount of dollars in the State's rainy day fund.

Below are some notable new budget items highlighted by the Governor:

- Final \$2,000 pay raise for teachers, assistant teachers, and pre-k teachers
- One-time pay supplement of \$2,000 for full time, state funded instructional staff, school support staff, and school administration
- One-time \$1,000 pay supplement for school bus drivers, nurses, nutrition workers, and part-time employees
- \$425 million to fully fund our schools and completely restore all austerity cuts to education funding that were made due to the pandemic
  - The goal of this is to provide an additional \$1.4 billion in direct funding for our K-12 schools and invest more per student
- \$1 million in initial funding to the University System of Georgia to expand nursing programs for up to 500 students annually over 5 years and funding for our technical colleges partnered with Allied Health for up to 700 additional students yearly.
- \$2.5 million for 136 residency slots and allocate \$1 million to Mercer University to address rural physician shortages.
  - The goal would be to add 1,300 additional healthcare practitioners to our state
- Almost \$28 million to allow for a 10% provider rate increase for all foster parents, relative caregivers, child caring institutions, and child placing agencies
- \$1,000 bonus to law enforcement and first responders across the state
- \$5,000 pay raise for state law enforcement and other state employees
- New funding for anti-gang unit in the Attorney General's office

- \$7 million to update GBI Crime Lab equipment and add 32 additional employees in the crime lab and medical examiner's office to increase volume
- \$3 million to support additional trooper classes for 75 new cadets this year

Governor Kemp mentioned some very important legislative initiatives and other important issues he plans to push this year. These include:

- Legislation to remove the teaching of critical race theory in schools
- Parental bill of rights for education, fairness in school sports, and address obscene materials online and in our school libraries
- Supporting Constitutional Carry
- Technical College System Georgia to add law enforcement and criminal justice degrees to our high-demand initiatives.
  - This would provide free tuition for over 1,000 students looking to obtain these degrees
- Legislation to add human trafficking to the list of serious violent and sexual offenses that require a superior court judge to grant bail

You can read the Governor's entire State of the State Address [here](#). You can watch the address [here](#).



## **Budget Week**

Next week kicks off Budget Week where the Governor's Office, the Senate and House will come together to set the budget for the 2023 Fiscal Year. The Governor's Office has sent its recommendations for the 2023 Fiscal Year that can be [read here](#). The week consists largely of legislators listening to presentations by state departments and other entities that receive state funding. The week is also filled with meetings spearheaded by state leaders as they come to an agreement over what is allocated in the budget. Senator Blake Tillery, Chairman of Senate Appropriations is the key legislator on the Senate side, and Representative Terry England, Chairman of House Appropriations, is the key legislator on the House side. After each of the government bodies come to an agreement, the budget will be approved via a vote in both chambers, and signed by the Governor.

The state has seen record tax collections this past year producing a \$3.7 billion dollar surplus. Governor Kemp's proposal calls for spending a record setting \$30.2 billion dollars that includes policy initiatives of: \$5,000 salary increases for state employees, \$2,000 pay raises for teachers, income tax refunds of \$250 to single filers and \$500 to joint filers, and the first cost of living raise for state retirees in more than a decade, amongst other initiatives. Governor Kemp's proposed calls is up 11% from the 2022 Fiscal Year Budget he signed last May.

## Legislation

HB 99 (Rep. Ron Stephens)- This bill would provide for access to employee toilet facilities in retail establishments. This bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.

HB 122 (Rep. John Corbett)- This bill will provide for the extension of deadlines for a manufacturers' sales tax exemption for concrete mixers. This bill was passed by the House Ways and Means Committee.

HB 147 (Rep. Heath Clark) - This bill would create a licensure by endorsement where a licensed professionals establishes residency in Georgia and (1) holds a current license to practice such occupation or profession issued by another state that was acquired prior to moving from another state and establishing residency in this state for which the training, experience, and testing are substantially similar in qualifications and scope to the requirements under this state to obtain a license; (2) is in good standing in such other state; and (3) passes any examination that may only be required to demonstrate knowledge of the laws and rules and regulations of this state specific to the practice of the profession, business, or trade for which such license by endorsement is being sought. The House read and referred to the Committee on Regulated Industries.

HB 435 (Rep. Victor Anderson)- This bill will provide for the exemption of certain contracts procured competitively by the state or organizations relating to contract and bidding requirements for public works. This bill failed to pass the Georgia House of Representatives 80-86, but was reconsidered with an amendment and passed. The Senate read and referred to the Governmental Oversight Committee.

HB 469 (Rep. Ron Stephens) - This bill would revise procedures, conditions, and limitations relating to tax credits for the rehabilitation of historic structures. This bill was passed by House Ways and Means. This bill passed the Georgia House of Representatives. The Senate read and referred to the Finance Committee where it was passed.

HB 476 (Rep. Dale Washburn) - This bill would create the Georgia Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors Board, an independent state agency attached to the Secretary of State for administrative purposes only. This bill passed the House Regulated Industries Committee, and was also passed by House Rules. This bill passed the Georgia House of Representatives 163-2. It also passed the Senate Committee on Regulated Industries and Committees.

HB 586 (Rep. Sam Watson) - This bill would extend the sunset date for the exemption for projects of regional significance regarding sales and use tax. This bill passed out of House Ways and Means and was passed by the House. The Senate read and referred to the Finance Committee where it was passed.

HB 910 (Rep. David Ralston) This bill is for supplement appropriations for State Fiscal Year July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2022. This bill will be heard next week by a joint session of the House and Senate Appropriations Committee

HB 911 (Rep. David Ralston) This bill is for general appropriations for State Fiscal Year July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023. This bill will be heard next week by a joint session of the House and Senate Appropriations Committee

HB 912 (Rep. David Ralston) This bill is for supplement appropriations for State Fiscal Year July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2022. This bill will be heard next week by a joint session of the House and Senate Appropriations Committee

HB 913 (Rep. David Ralston) This bill is for supplement appropriations for State Fiscal Year July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2022. This bill will be heard next week by a joint session of the House and Senate Appropriations Committee

HB 914 (Rep. David Ralston) This bill is for general appropriations for State Fiscal Year July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023. This bill will be heard next week by a joint session of the House and Senate Appropriations Committee

HB 915 (Rep. David Ralston) This bill is for general appropriations for State Fiscal Year July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023. This bill will be heard next week by a joint session of the House and Senate Appropriations Committee.

SB 45 (Sen. Bruce Thompson) - This bill would provide for individuals moving to the state to obtain a license by endorsement to practice certain professions in this state. This bill was passed by the Senate, and the House read and referred to the Committee on Regulated Industries.

SR 298 (Sen. Brandon Beach) - This bill would create the Senate Annexation Study Committee. This bill is currently in Senate Rules.