

## **2022 Georgia General Assembly Legislative Days 21-24**



### **Week Overview**

This week, the Georgia General Assembly worked through Legislative Days 21-24. Legislators gavelled in on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday and used Wednesday as a Committee Work Day. The Legislature continued debating controversial issues this week including abortion, gun legislation, unmasking Georgia students, and other nationalized issues ahead of the 2022 election cycle. The Legislature also worked through the budgetary process with the Senate amending the House budget and transferring it back for agreement. The Legislature will gavel back in on Tuesday, March 8th for Legislative Days 25-27, using Wednesday as a committee work day.



## **Budget Process**

The Budget process of 2022 is coming to a close as the Georgia Senate voted on Thursday to pass a nearly \$30 billion mid-year budget that includes raises for over 300,000 state employees. The Senate passed their version of the budget 52-0 and included the \$1.6 billion in state income tax refunds that Governor Kemp proposed. The Senate's version of the budget increases it by \$2.6 billion this fiscal year. With Georgia concluding its 2021 fiscal year with a \$3.7 billion surplus, Governor Kemp is using the opportunity to fund state employee and educator raises, restoring K-12 cuts, increases for Medicaid, and funding for economic development projects. Full time K-12 employees would receive a \$2,000 bonus, and part time educators would receive a \$1,000 bonus, meeting Governor Kemp's 2018 promise of a \$5,000 pay raise for educators. Among the economic development projects includes \$112.6 million to buy and develop land for Rivian's electric-vehicle plant in Walton and Morgan counties.

## **Bills on the Move**

### **Abortion Pills**

On Tuesday, March 1st, the Georgia Senate passed along party lines Senate Bill 456, a bill that would ban women from receiving an abortion pill through the mail. This bill would also require pregnant women to see a doctor in person before being able to obtain mifepristone, the abortion pill. Pills could not be sent through the mail or given on state property or at any k-12 school or college that receives state funds. A doctor would also have to perform an ultrasound before the drugs could be prescribed and schedule a follow-up visit. This bill was transferred to the House and assigned to the Health and Human Services Committee.

### **Constitutional Carry**

On Monday, February 28th, the Georgia Senate passed “Constitutional Carry” among party lines. Senate Bill 319 would allow Georgians who are already legally able to carry a handgun to conceal their legally purchased firearm in public without going through the process of obtaining a concealed-carry license from the state. This bill was transferred to the House and assigned to the Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee.

### **Unmask the Students Act**

On Tuesday, March 1st, the Georgia Senate passed the “Unmask the Students Act” among party lines. Senate Bill 514 would block schools from completely requiring face masks without letting parents choose if they want to opt their children out of it until June 30th, 2027. This bill was transferred to the House Education Committee.

### **Georgia Behavioral Health and Peace Officer Co-Responder Act**

On Thursday, March 3rd, the Georgia Senate passed the “Georgia Behavioral Health and Peace Officer Co-Responder Act” 52-0. Senate Bill 403 would provide officers the opportunity to either work with a virtual or in-person behavioral health specialist during a mental health crisis. This bill was transferred to the House and is awaiting committee assignment.

## **Parents' Bill of Rights**

Today, Friday, March 4th, the House took up House Bill 1178 and passed the bill with a vote of 98-68. This bill establishes a Parents' Bill of Rights and seeks to provide transparency and input for parents in the education of their minor children.

### **Bills of interest for AIA**

HB 99 (Rep. Ron Stephens) facilities in This bill would provide for access to employee toilet 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 302 (Rep. Martin Momtaham) - This bill would restrict local governments by removing the ability to determine a regulatory fee amount based on the number of square feet of a new construction project or the cost of all other construction projects. Under current law, the amount of the regulatory fee charged must approximate the cost of the regulatory activity performed by the local government. This bill would require that the proceeds of the

regulatory fee be used to fund the regulatory activity but would not require the local government to establish a separate account for the funds. Additionally, current law provides a nonexclusive list of industries that may be subject to local government regulatory fees. This bill would remove from that list taxicab and limousine operators and boxing promoters. This bill passed the Georgia House of Representatives

91-65. The Senate read and referred to the Finance Committee. This bill was heard for debate only on Wednesday, January 26, 2022. The debate was centered around how regulatory fees are calculated.

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. This bill is currently at the Senate Rules committee.

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 1093 (Rep. Dale Washburn) - This bill would prohibit certain use restrictions on residential dwellings and provide a limited waiver of sovereign immunity. It would also provide for interest prior to judgment and provide for the withholding of certain state funding. This bill has been referred to the House Judiciary 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.

SB 494 (Sen. Steve Gooch) - This bill would prohibit certain use restrictions on residential dwellings and provide a limited waiver of sovereign immunity. It would also provide for revocation of qualified local government status for a violation as well as provide for reinstatement of qualified local government status under certain conditions. This bill has been assigned to the Senate State and Local Government Operations Committee.

SB 561 (Sen. Bruce Thompson) – This bill would amend Titles 8, 10, 36, 43, and 46 of the O.C.G.A., relating to buildings and housing, commerce and trade, local government, professions and businesses, and public utilities and public transportation, respectively, to

provide for conforming cross-references and terminology. This bill has not yet been assigned to a committee.