

**Legislative Days 29 - 32**  
Principal: Don Bolia

# Session Week 8 Legislative Report



# 2024

# Week 8, Legislative Days 29-32

The Georgia General Assembly met this week from Monday to Friday, with the exception of Wednesday, which were session days 29 through 32. Throughout the week there were several committee meetings, several dealing with appropriations for different topics as the Senate is working to finish the budget. After Crossover day, many bills are no longer able to pass and become law. But even though the pool of bills is smaller, the bills that are still alive are rushing to become law at the end of the 40 day session. Keep reading below for a breakdown of the week!



# Qualifying Week Overview

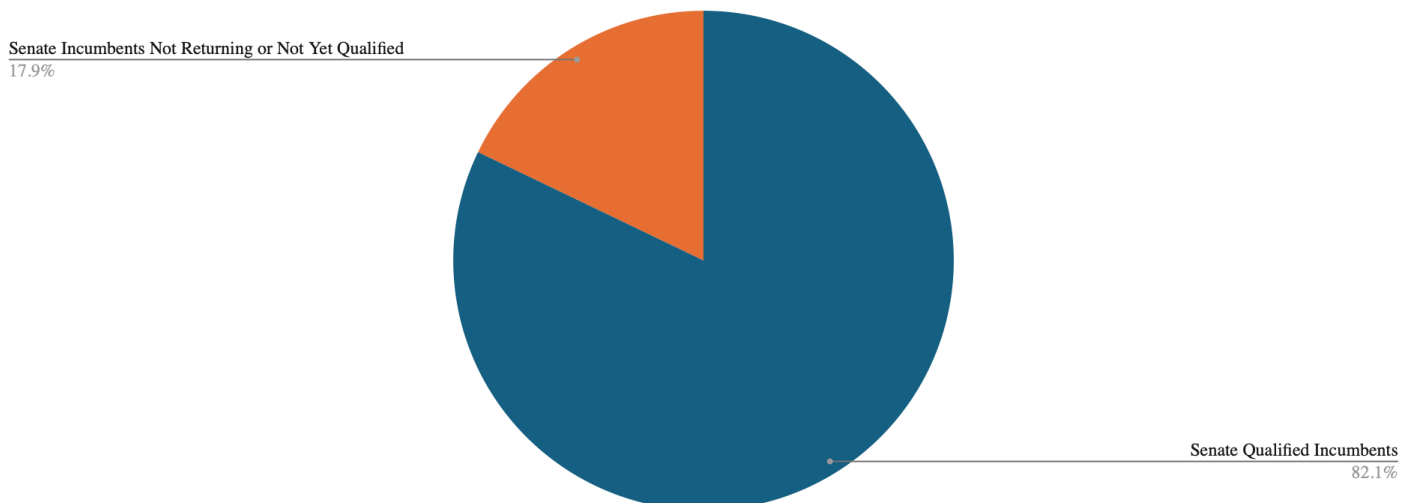
Georgia's 2024 electoral race surged ahead this week with the commencement of qualifying procedures for state and federal positions. A multitude of candidates representing both the Republican and Democratic parties flocked to the state Capitol to complete paperwork and submit qualifying fees. Concurrently, contenders vying for nonpartisan roles and running as independents queued up across the street to complete their qualifying process at the secretary of state's office. The deadline for candidates to officially enter the race is set for noon on Friday.

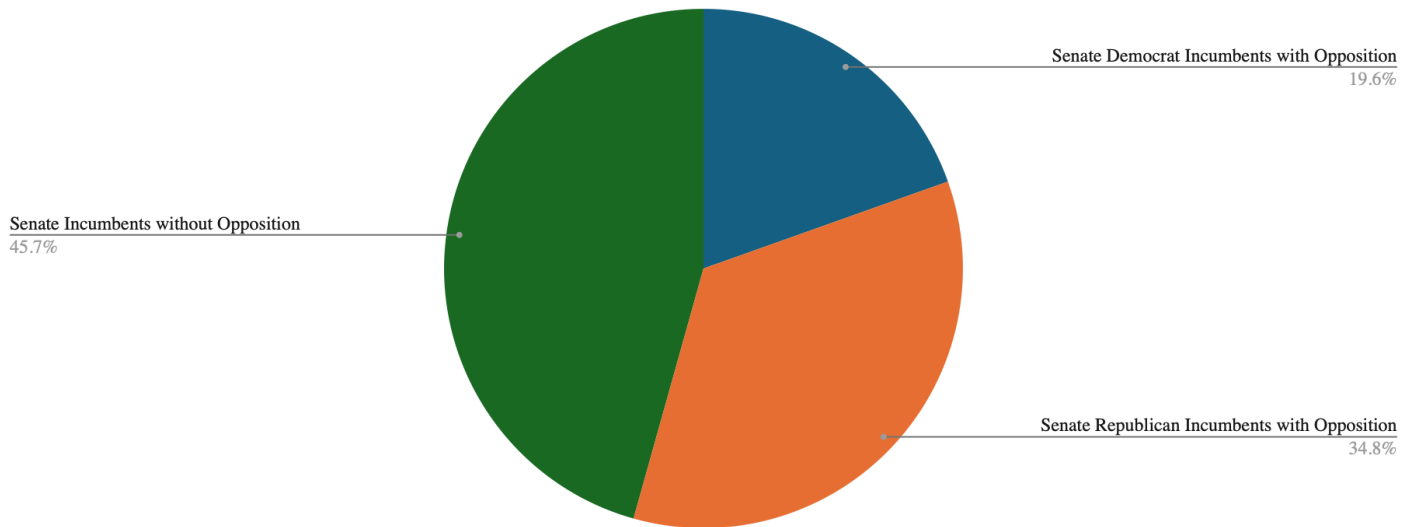
Although the presidential race will dominate Georgia's November ballots, attention is also focused on all 14 of the state's congressional seats, along with its 56 state Senate seats and 180 state House seats, which are up for contention. Primary elections are slated for May 21, the same day Georgia will cast votes for judges and various nonpartisan positions. Subsequently, runoff elections are scheduled for June 18 to resolve any contests where a candidate fails to secure a majority of votes on May 21.

At the end of the fourth qualifying day, March 7th, 92 candidates qualified to run for a State Senate seat, and 306 candidates qualified to run for a State House seat. Keep reading for a breakdown of the qualified candidates and election district information. Please note that this information is based off of candidates qualifying Thursday and before. Updated qualifying information will be sent shortly upon the availability of additional data.

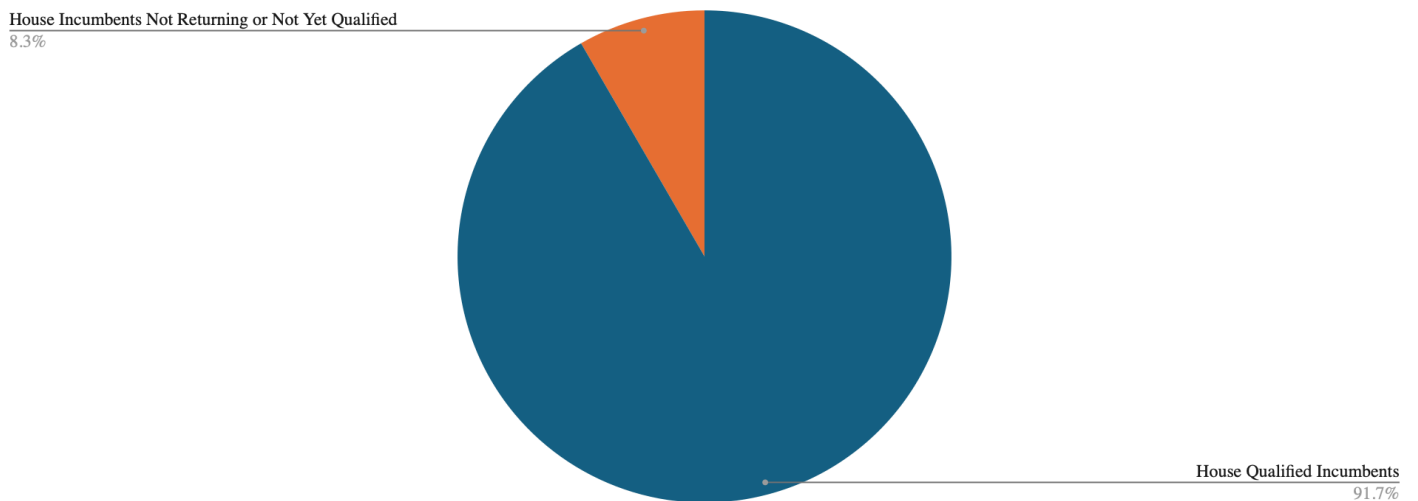
Click here for a link to the [Candidate Report Spreadsheet!](#)

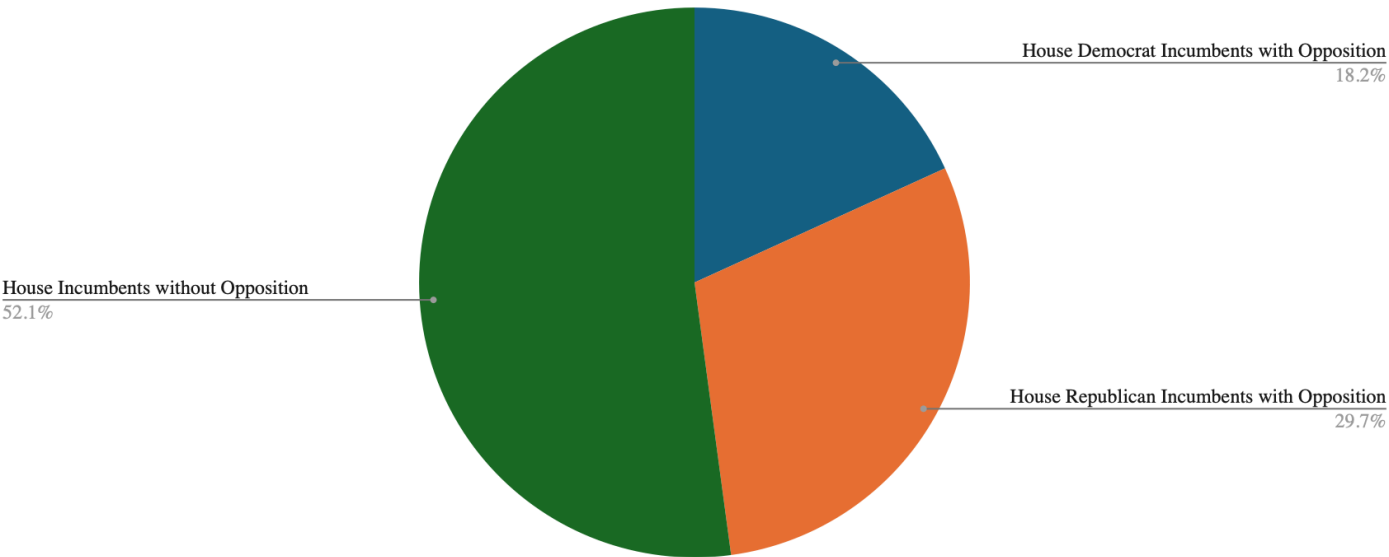
Among the State Senate qualifying candidates, 46 are returning incumbents meaning 10 current Senators are not running for election again or have not qualified yet. Out of the 46, 29 are Republican and 17 are Democrat. Out of the 10 not returning or yet qualified, four are Republican and six are Democrat. 54% of all returning incumbents have opposition with 19% having primary opposition so far, and 46% have no qualified opposition at this point. Breaking it down further, 36% of incumbents with opposition are Democrats with 64% being Republican. Five Democratic incumbents have opposition from their own party and four Republican incumbents have opposition from their own party.





Among the State House qualifying candidates, 165 are returning incumbents to their district meaning 15 current Representatives are not running for election again in their district or have not qualified yet. Out of the 165, 95 are Republican and 70 are Democrat. Out of the 15 not returning or yet qualified, 10 are Republican and 5 are Democrat. 47% of all returning incumbents have opposition with 14% having primary opposition so far, and 53% have no qualified opposition at this point. Breaking it down further, 38% of incumbents with opposition are Democrats with 62% being Republican. 11 Democratic incumbents have opposition from their own party and 12 Republican incumbents have opposition from their own party. At noon on Friday, March 8th, qualifying will officially end, and the election ballots will be set for primary elections on May 21st.





# Education Legislation

## *Senate Education Committee*

During the Senate Education Committee meeting on March 5th, HB 874, proposed by Representative Lee Hawkins, focused on the AED Bill, and it aimed to install AEDs in elementary and middle schools and establish response teams for cardiac events. This bill passed committee, receiving unanimous approval for passage with questions regarding team size addressed. Similarly, HB 1183 by Representative Katie Dempsey sought to enhance awareness of diabetes types 1 and 2 through educational resources for grades 6-12, also passed unanimously. Lastly, HB 1122, presented by Representative Scott Hilton, proposed allocating resources for hiring principals and resolving conflicts of interest on governing boards, and it includes additional language from HB 1186 for school rating publication. This bill passed committee narrowly, receiving a 4-3 vote in favor of passage.

## *Senate Education Appropriations Subcommittee*

During the Senate Education Appropriations committee meeting, the Department of Education presented various budget allocations, including funding for an adaptive sports program, nonprofit organizations serving at-risk students, and initiatives for teacher retention and CPR training. The Board of Regents and University System of Georgia discussed budget items such as cost of living increases and healthcare support for employees. The Department of Early Care and Learning outlined increases for childcare provider reimbursement rates, teacher salaries, and pre-K program enhancements. Additionally, the Technical Colleges and Schools of Georgia proposed funding for workforce development programs, campus police officers, and technical education initiatives.

## *House Education Subcommittee on Alyssa's law*

In the House Education Subcommittee, SB 32 by Senator Anavitarte was reintroduced in the committee with an important modification. The bill, known as Alyssa's Law, proposes a law change about public school safety. It suggests that schools should have a special system called a mobile panic alert. This system would quickly connect different emergency services, like police and ambulances, during a school emergency. The goal is to help first responders work together faster and better in case something bad happens at a school. The bill changes to the bill would allow for multiple vendor solicitations instead of mandating a single vendor. However, the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security expressed apprehension regarding the potential overload on 911 centers. As a result, the committee recommends conversation between the bill's author and representatives from GEMA to address and resolve these concerns before advancing the bill further.

# Healthcare Legislation

## *Senate Health Appropriations Subcommittee*

During the lengthy Senate Health Appropriations subcommittee, discussions centered around various budget adjustments and allocations. For the Department of Community Health, topics included the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023, the end of the Federal Public Health Emergency, and the launch of Pathways to Coverage. Healthcare costs and service utilization, particularly in mental/behavioral health, were highlighted. For the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, notable adjustments included funds for cost-of-living adjustments for state employees, retirement systems, agency premiums, and telecommunications infrastructure. Increases were allocated for adult developmental disabilities services, adult forensic services, adult mental health services, child and adolescent addictive diseases services, child and adolescent mental health services, and departmental administration, while reductions were made to reflect various adjustments in federal medical assistance percentages and operational savings.

## *Senate Regulated Industries Committee*

On March 7th, the Senate Regulated Industries Committee held a lengthy meeting to discuss HB 1339, which focuses on certificate of need reform. The bill's primary objective is to enhance tax credits for contributions to rural hospital organizations. This involves increasing the aggregate limit for tax credits and extending the sunset provision. Additionally, the bill proposes amendments to Article 7 of Chapter 4 of Title 49 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, which pertains to medical assistance. Specifically, it suggests the establishment of the Comprehensive Health Coverage Commission. Despite the discussion, the committee did not reach a voting decision on the bill during the meeting.

# Local Legislation

## *Public Safety Appropriations Subcommittee*

During the Senate Public Safety and Criminal Justice Appropriations meeting, various departments discussed budgetary adjustments and allocations. Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security highlighted increases for data operation centers. GPSTC proposed state-wide changes, including curriculum specialist and mechanic hires, alongside full-year CPR funding and construction of training facilities. POSTC supported the governor's budget, advocating for salary enhancements for officers, GA Post Reliance programs, curriculum monitoring, and additional staff hires for investigative and training programs. Other departments, such as the Department of Public Safety, also voiced support for increased funding, particularly for career progression, operational expenses, and capital projects. Others like the Department of Pardons and Paroles and the Department of Juvenile Justice outlined requests for software, salary adjustments, and facility maintenance, among others. Additionally, CJCC sought funds for victim services, while the GBI proposed funding increases for crime lab personnel and equipment.

# Solar Legislation

## *Senate Regulated Industries Committee*

During the Senate Regulated Industries meeting on March 5th, HB 300 was presented by Representative Kelly, and it focused on establishing a Solar Technology Trust Fund within the state treasury. However, this meeting was solely a hearing for the bill, without any voting or decision-making. The Association County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG) expressed opposition to the bill, primarily due to concerns regarding the absence of provisions to safeguard counties' interests.

# AIA Legislation

<i>Bill</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Status</i>
<b>HB 1096 (Rep. Dale Washburn)</b>	Professional licensing boards; continuing education tracking solution to monitor compliance of licensees with applicable continuing education requirements; establish	House passed, Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee
<b>HB 1116 (Rep. Debbie Buckner)</b>	Income tax credit; rehabilitation of historic structures; home portion; extend sunset date	House passed, Senate Finance Committee
<b>HB 1182 (Rep. Clint Crowe)</b>	Income tax; low-income housing tax credits; revise	House passed, Senate Finance Committee
<b>HB 1190 (Rep. J. Collins)</b>	Secretary of State; division director to issue licenses in certain instances ; authorize	House passed, Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee
<b>HB 1197 (Rep. Penny Houston)</b>	Income tax; expand revitalization zone tax credits to include rehabilitation of historic residential structures	House passed, Senate Finance Committee
<b>HB 1199 (Rep. Clay Pirkle)</b>	State government; auditor produce certain monthly and annual reports ; replace requirement	House passed, Senate Government Oversight Committee