

SENATE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS



2019 LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

With a new Governor and Lt. Governor, along with increased numbers of Democrats, Georgia's 2019 Legislative Session began on a ominous note when the Republican majority introduced new Senate Rules changes that would have curtailed reporting of sexual harassment complaints against sitting senators and senate candidates, along with harsh suppression of free speech.

Equity

The swift and furious protest of the Democrats led to a promise from the Lt. Governor that the rules would be revisited. Not until day 39 of the session were the rules actually revised. The tone that was set by the ill-advised, legally questionable, and the tone-deaf Senate rules controversy turned out to be a general theme of the session: Republicans injecting unpopular legislation, ignoring the advice of experts, and excluding the voices of those most affected.

Also, early in the session, Democrats decried the imbalanced and discriminatory ways in which committee assignments are handled by Republican leadership. We highlighted the problem that though Democrats make up 38% of the body, they are vastly underrepresented on committees that handle the most legislation. Committees in which Democrats are stacked handled only 1.5% of the total legislation passed in the senate in previous years. Additionally, women and minority senators are severely underrepresented on committees that handle most of the significant legislation.

Shortly after the backlash over Senate rules, Democrats in the Senate were joined by some Republicans in a push to make Georgia the 38th state to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment. While gaining momentum and wide public support, resistance from the overwhelmingly male Senate Republican Caucus prevented ERA ratification from moving forward.

Our right to vote and access the ballot box is sacred and enshrined in our Constitution. Disregarding a huge public outcry for new voting equipment that includes the security of

hand marked paper balloting, the Republican majority rammed through a measure to purchase new voting machines that have highly questionable security assurances to ensure all votes are properly cast and counted.

Education

Some gains were made in the area of education. The Quality Basic Education (QBE) formula, that governs how school systems are funded, will be fully funded for a second year in a row. Though the formula is badly outdated, fully funding it begins to provide a minimum level of resources to schools. Teachers and other full time educators will receive \$3000 raises-- once again, not enough, but moving in the right direction.

Senate Bill 48 creates testing and training to identify and treat students with dyslexia in grades K-3. And HB 218 extends the time students can apply for the HOPE Scholarship from 7 to 10 years.

Many good education bills introduced by Democratic Senators were blocked by Republicans including a Community Schools bill to provide on-site wraparound services in school districts.

Republicans in the Senate tried repeatedly to pass legislation that would expand access to private school vouchers, which strip much needed funding from public schools. Senate Bill 173 failed in a floor vote after a vigorous fight from Democratic Senators. Voucher language was then attached to other bills in an effort to force the legislation through, but after failing to garner support, it was ultimately held up in the Senate.

Healthcare

It was a huge year for healthcare legislation at the Capitol. Unfortunately, most of the laws that passed will move Georgia in the wrong direction. Despite overwhelming public support for Medicaid expansion, Republicans refused to even hold a hearing on the Democratic bill to expand Medicaid. Instead, they passed legislation that will allow the Governor to apply for waivers from the Federal Government that may offer Medicaid to some Georgia citizens, though not the majority of the working poor. The waivers will also allow the Governor to alter the healthcare market in Georgia with experimental healthcare offerings that could have negative consequences for all Georgia citizens, especially those with pre-existing conditions.

The highly controversial and cruel HB481, which bans most abortion in Georgia by making it illegal after a "heartbeat" can be detected (about six weeks of pregnancy), passed in the last week of session. Despite overwhelming resistance from the medical community and the women of Georgia, Republicans passed the bill in both chambers, keeping in language that allows fetuses to count as dependents on tax returns and includes fetuses in state population counts.

Economy

Georgia's economy is a major focus for our caucus. Some of the bills that passed in 2019 are likely to be a boon for our state economy. SB 2 allows telephone cooperatives in rural areas to provide much-needed broadband services. Unfortunately, a refusal by the majority party to analyze the fiscal impact of many bills made it difficult to know their influence on the state's economy. Several of the bills supported and passed by Republicans are likely to have a negative impact on Georgia's financial health. A bill that allows the state to establish a committee to oversee Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport takes a dangerous approach to management of one of the driving economic engines of our state. And the refusal to pass Medicaid expansion will continue to burden our hospitals and state economy by leaving hundreds of thousands of Georgians uninsured, without a hospital and thousands of jobs.

Finally, HB 316, the bill to overhaul Georgia's voting system passed despite widespread opposition. Mandating a \$150 million expenditure on insecure voting machines that are difficult to audit, HB 316 is fiscally and logistically irresponsible. All Democratic Senators and the majority of Georgia voters prefer a hand-marked paper ballot system that is cheaper and more secure.

Despite a Republican controlled Senate and House, Senate Democrats were successful in passing legislation to improve the lives of Georgians, including:

- SB 1 (Parent, 42nd) will increase an enhanced penalty for hit and run accidents that result in serious bodily harm.
- SB 9 (Jones, 22nd) will criminalize sexual extortion and coercion for those who engage in sexually explicit conduct or the distribution of photographs and videos depicting nudity
- SB 31 (Rhett, 33rd) will provide civil immunity for law enforcement officers for the rescue of people or pets trapped in motor vehicles.
- SB 103 (Davenport, 44th) will require publicly owned airports to provide at least two priority parking spots for disabled veterans.
- SB 137 (Lucas, 26th) will create a new Tuskegee University license plate with funds from sales disbursed to the Atlanta Tuskegee Alumni Club.

The following full report breaks down legislation that passed and failed during the 2019 Legislative Session.

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Notable Legislation Passed

The Good

Bills that Passed Both Chambers

SB 1 (Parent, 42nd) – C. J.’s Law

This legislation would create an enhanced penalty on one to ten years imprisonment hit and run accidents that result in serious bodily harm.

SB 9 (Jones, 22nd) – Prohibit Sexual Extortion

This legislation would criminalize sexual extortion, which would be the coercion of a person to engage in sexually explicit conduct or the distribution of any photograph, video, or other image depicting that person in a state of nudity or engaging in sexually explicit conduct. Any person who coerces another to engage in sexually explicit conduct would be punished by imprisonment for one to ten years. Coercing another into distributing sexually explicit photographs, videos, or other images would be punished as a misdemeanor for the first offense and a felony for the second offense punishable by one to ten years imprisonment. Persons convicted of sexual extortion would also be required to register on the state sex offender registry.

It would create the crime of improper sexual conduct which would consist of sexual conduct between school employees and students, law enforcement employees and persons on probation, parole or pretrial diversion and, law enforcement officers and a person being detained, hospital employees and patients, correctional and juvenile facility employees and inmates, and mental health employees and patients. First degree improper sexual conduct would be punishable by 1-25 years imprisonment and a \$100,000 fine. If committed against a person 16 years or younger, the penalty would be 25-50 years imprisonment and a \$100,000 fine. Second degree improper sexual would be punished by 5-25 years with a \$25,000 fine. It would be a misdemeanor when the victim is between 14-21 and the offender’s age is within 4 months of the victim. A person convicted of improper sexual conduct would be required to register as a sex offender.

SB 31 (Rhett, 33rd) – Immunity for Law Enforcement Officers Rescuing People or Pets Trapped in Motor Vehicles

This legislation would provide civil immunity for law enforcement officers for the rescue of people or pets trapped in motor vehicles when there is a clear and imminent danger or threat to the person’s or pet’s life or health.

SB 48 (Martin, 9th) – Dyslexia and Related Learning Disabilities

This legislation would require schools to refer kindergarten, 1st grade, 2nd grade, and 3rd grade students for dyslexia testing. It would direct DOE to create a handbook containing best practices for teaching dyslexic students by September 1, 2019. Local school systems would include dyslexia training in professional development training. It would require school systems to cover other learning disabilities, including aphasia (difficulty communicating by written or verbal communications), dyscalculia (difficulty with numbers and arithmetic), and dysgraphia (difficulty with motor skills related to writing) by January 1, 2020. Schools would report annually on how they address dyslexia.

Colleges in Georgia would be required to teach early childhood education students about teaching students with dyslexia and similar learning disabilities.

It would also create a program where DOE would implement early dyslexia intervention programs in one urban, one suburban, and one rural elementary school.

It would also require the Professional Standards Commission to create a dyslexia endorsement for teachers with dyslexia training.

SB 103 (Davenport, 44th) – Free Parking for Veterans at Georgia Airports

This legislation would require publicly owned airports to provide at least 2 priority parking spots for disabled veterans.

SB 137 (Lucas, 26th) – Tuskegee University License Plates

This bill would create a new Tuskegee University license plate. The funds of the sale from the license plates would be disbursed to the Atlanta Tuskegee Alumni Club.

SB 158 (Strickland, 17th) – Human Trafficking Victims

This legislation would allow law enforcement and DFCS to take child human trafficking victims into emergency custody for up to 7 days without a court order. Law enforcement and DFCS would be required to refer child human trafficking victims to a victims service organization.

It would provide that receiving any financial benefit due to human trafficking counts as human trafficking. It would eliminate the reduced penalty for trafficking 16 and 17 year olds and make any human trafficking of a minor a felony of 10-20 years and add a fine of up to \$100,000.

It would no longer apply the crime of prostitution to people under 17. It would provide that notice from a DA to a property owner that three or more instances of prostitution, etc. occurred at the property within one year would be sufficient to start a nuisance action against the property. It would eliminate the crime of pandering by compulsion.

SR 465 (Miller, 49th) – Fix Senate Rules

This resolution would fix the wildly insufficient sexual harassment policy passed at the beginning of session. Victims would have four years to file a claim instead of two, and other barriers to reporting, including a prohibition on filing claims at all between qualifying and an election were removed. The burden to successfully bring a claim was reduced to probable cause.

HB 83 (Douglass, 78th) – Mandatory Recess for Elementary School Students

This legislation would require elementary schools to include 30 minutes of recess time each day that students do not have physical education or other scheduled physical activity time unless scheduled activities or weather prevent it. Students could not lose recess time for disciplinary or academic reasons.

HB 227 (Frye, 118th) – Prohibit Insurers from Discriminating Against Sexual Assault Victims

This legislation would prevent insurers from discriminating in coverage, premiums, offer of policies, or any other manner to sexual assault victims in the same manner as currently applies to family violence victims.

HB 228 (Welch, 110th) – Child Marriage

This legislation would raise the marriage age from 16 to 17 and require 17 year olds seeking to get married to be emancipated. If a marriage is to involve a 17 year old, the premarital counseling option that is available instead of paying a marriage license fee would be mandatory. DPH would develop a fact sheet to be distributed during the premarital counseling that outlines domestic violence risks. A minor seeking emancipation would have to provide information about their potential partner and why they want to get married.

HB 281 (Anulewicz, 42nd) – Increased Penalties for Pimping and Pandering

This legislation would increase the penalties for pimping and pandering from 24 hours imprisonment for any offense to 72 hours imprisonment for a first offense, and a second offense would be a felony punishable by 1-10 years imprisonment. It would require both prison and a fine for pimping and pandering of minors under 16.

HB 282 (Holcomb, 81st) – Require Law Enforcement to Keep Sexual Assault Evidence

This legislation would require law enforcement to keep rape kits for 30 years from the date of the arrest, 7 years from the completion of the sentence, or for 50 years if no arrest occurs.

HB 324 (Gravley, 67th) – Georgia’s Hope Act

This legislation would allow for the cultivation of marijuana to produce low THC oil. There would be two class of production licenses, with 2 Class 1 licenses issued and 4 Class 2 licenses issued. The University System of Georgia could apply to contract for receipt of cannabis; obtain cannabis, cannabinoids, or other derivatives; and other designated universities could request to obtain cannabis from USG schools.

Class 1 licensees would be able to grow up to 100,000 square feet of marijuana in enclosed spaces to produce low THC oil. Class 2 licensees would be able to grow up to 50,000 square feet of marijuana in enclosed spaces and produce low THC oil from that crop. Pharmacies and other retail vendors may also apply to sell low THC oil. Class 1 and Class 2 licensees would be required to demonstrate significant involvement by a minority co-owner or significant supplier of goods and services for the business.

Nonrefundable application fees would be \$25,000 for a Class 1 license and \$5,000 for a Class 2. Upon receiving a license, a Class 1 licensee would pay an initial license fee of \$200,000 and an annual renewal of \$100,000, and Class 2 licensees would pay an initial license fee of \$250,000 and an annual renewal of \$50,000.

Owners could sell their licenses. First sale of a class 1 license is \$100k and 2nd sale is \$150k; first sale of class 2 is \$12k & \$62,5000. Production licenses could be sold. It would be \$200,00 for a class 1 license & \$112,500 for a class 2 production license.

No individual convicted for a nondrug related felony shall be eligible to work as an employee of a licensee conducted pursuant unless the conviction has been expunged or the individual has been pardoned or had their rights restored. They could also work if the date of conviction is greater than 10 years old and the individual has been released from incarceration for at least 5 years or agrees to weekly drug screenings.

It would require a disparity study every four years starting in 2022. Should it find a disparity in business ownership by gender or race, the commission could issue another class one or class two license, or reissuing revoked licenses to racial or gender minority.

It would be overseen by the Georgia Access to Medical Cannabis Commission comprised of three appointees by the Governor, two by the Lt. Governor, and two by the Speaker.

All licensees would use an electronic tracking system to track marijuana and THC oil through the entire cultivation and distribution process. No manufacturing of marijuana could occur within 3,000 feet of a school or place of worship. No retailer could be located

within 1,000 feet of a school or church. Licensees could not use the term marijuana in their marketing or promote nonmedical use. It would be illegal to consume low THC oil with a vape pen. Nobody with a drug related felony or any felony within ten years or less than five years out of prison could be involved in the industry. Licensees would be limited in eligibility for tax expenditures, such as job creation tax credits.

HB 339 (McClain, 100th) – Alabama A&M License Plate

This legislation would create an Alabama A&M University license plate with funds directed to the alumni association. It would create an Autism Awareness license plate with funds going to the Autism Alliance of Georgia.

HB 507 (Wilensky, 79th) – Make Using Income for Valuations Optional

This bill legislation would make the income a property generates only a consideration and not a requirement for determining the fair market value for property under the income method of valuation.

Democratic Bills that Passed Senate but not House

SB 20 (Rhett, 33rd) – Banking Improvement Zones

This bill would allow local governments to petition the DCA to designate a banking improvement zone where residents have insufficient access to banks. The local government could then deposit its funds in a bank in the zone.

SB 58 (Karinshak, 48th) – Private Civil Action Against Fraudulent Tax Claims

This legislation would allow private citizens to bring a civil action, without the Attorney General's consent, for any false taxpayer claims the Attorney General elects not to pursue. The person bringing the action would receive all pleadings and depositions the Attorney General collected before deciding against proceeding.

SB 68 (Sims, 12th) – School Board Accountability for System Finances

This legislation would assign responsibility for financial management of school systems to the school board based on a template created by DOE showing, at a minimum, a statement of revenues, expenditures, and encumbrances.

If a school system receives an audit showing irregularities or a budget deficit for the past year or more, the board would be required to submit a response to DOE within 120 days. Schools seeking to renew a strategic waivers or charter system contract with irregularities

or deficits in the three or more proceeding years would have to include a written corrective action plan in their application. GOSA would also provide support and training to schools with or at risk of consistent irregularities or deficits.

Newly elected school board members would receive training in financial management and the fiscal state of their system. All board member would have to receive training if the system had irregularities or deficits in three or more consecutive years. Members would have to complete this training to be eligible for reelection.

SB 219 (Jordan, 6th) – High School Citizenship Test

This legislation would require students to score 60% or better on the United States Citizenship Civics Test to graduate high school or get a GED.

Bad Legislation Successfully Stopped

SB 173 (Dolezal, 27th) – School Vouchers

This legislation would provide a private school voucher equal to the system-wide average per student amount in the student’s resident school system or the amount determined by an IEP for students with an IEP. Students would qualify if their family has an income below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level and is currently enrolled in a public school, if the student has been adopted from foster care, if the student has an active duty military service member parent stationed in Georgia within the previous year, if the student has a disability and an IEP, if the student has a documented case of having been bullied, or if the student spent the prior school year attending Georgia public schools. The initial number of participating students would be 0.5% of state-wide total public enrollment for the 2017-2018 year. The total number of students would increase by 0.5% up to a maximum of 5%.

Participating schools must demonstrate fiscal soundness by having operated for 1 school year or submitting a financial information report confirming the school has sufficient capital or credit to operate the school for the upcoming school year, comply with antidiscrimination provisions, comply with all health and safety laws and other laws applying to private schools, and employ or contract with teachers who hold at least a bachelor’s degree and have 3 years experience in education.

HB 264 Conference Committee Report (Werkheiser, 157th) – Leadership PACs

This legislation would create leadership committees which are political committees chaired by the Governor, Lt. Gov, Speaker of the House, President Pro Tempore of the Senate, Senate/House majority & minority leaders and caucus chairpersons, or political party nominees for Governor or Lt. Gov. Leadership committees could accept contribu-

tions from members or supporters. The leadership committee could accept contributions and make expenditures for affecting election outcomes and for ordinary campaign costs. Disclosure reports would be required. Any leadership committee that spends or accepts more than \$500 would be required to register with the election commission with 10 days of accepting the contributions or making the expenditures. Contribution limits would not apply to donations to a leadership committee or to expenditures for candidates or a candidate slate made by leadership committees. The leadership committee would be separate from the candidate's campaign committee and not be classified as a PAC.

This legislation would require people lobbying local boards that oversee EMS services to register as lobbyists. Each local board would be required to adopt bylaws and conflict of interest policies, including a prohibition on ambulance company owners, employees, operators, or contractors from serving on boards or voting on matters. Ambulance providers would petition for a hearing and to appeal a result.

It is also SB 214 that would include piercings as body art and regulate them in the same way as tattoo studios. It would require body art studios to conspicuously display an 11x14 printed sign with one inch lettering warning that body art on the face, neck, forearm, hand, or lower leg may automatically disqualify a person from military service. It would also remove the good moral character requirement for beauty professionals.

It would also allow persons to use external defibrillators to save the life of another person so long as they call 911 after using the defibrillator. It also eliminates base station facilities, or facilities responsible for providing direct physician control of emergency medical services.

HB 444 (Reeves, 34th) – Limit Dual Enrollment

This legislation would cap dual enrolment credit at 32 total hours of college courses or 63 hours of technical school classes. Students would have to pay for any credits beyond that. Students would have to have a 3.0 to take classes at universities, a 2.6 to take classes at technical schools, and a 2.0 to take classes at high demand career initiatives in a postsecondary institution.

It would no longer allow ninth graders to participate in non-online dual enrollment courses and would limit tenth graders to only taking courses at technical schools. It would shift oversight from the DOE to the Georgia Student Finance Commission. Dual credit courses would have to be provided onsite at the college or high school by a college faculty member. It would create a grant program for transportation to dual enrollment courses.

The Bad

Bills that Passed Both Chambers

SR 1 (Miller, 49th) – Adoption of Senate Rules

Sexual harassment complainants who go public would be subject to sanctions, including dismissal of the complaint and being held in contempt. Allegations two years old or older would not be investigated. The burden of proof for moving from a preliminary investigation to a full investigation would be raised from probable cause to substantial cause. Protesting and signs would be prohibited in the Senate, the gallery, and most of the Senate environs. It also allows the Rules Committee to amend or substitute bills on the general calendar.

SB 77 (Mullis, 53rd) – Confederate Monument Protection

This legislation would consider flags as monuments in the confederate monument protection law. It would eliminate local governments' ability to provide contextual interpretations of confederate monuments. It would make any person who damages, destroys, loses, or removes essentially any publicly owned monument including confederate monuments located on state property liable for three times the amount of repair or replacement, punitive damages, and court costs. The public entity responsible for the monument would be required to timely repair the monument after receiving damages. This legislation would also create a private cause of action for enforcement. The legislation would also require monuments that need to be relocated due to construction to be relocated to a place of similar prominence. It would expressly prohibit the relocation of monuments to museums, cemeteries, or mausoleums unless originally placed at those locations.

SB 106 (Tillery, 19th) – State Medicaid Waivers

This legislation would allow the Governor to seek and implement a Section 1115 waiver to expand coverage by June 20, 2020 that could only cover people up to 100% of the poverty level. He would also have authority to seek a Section 1332 waiver to modify ACA regulations by December 31, 2021 with powers only limited by federal law, including redefining essential health benefits.

HB 481 (Setzler, 35th) – Six Week Abortion Ban

This legislation would prohibit abortions after the earlier of six weeks or when a physician finds a heartbeat. The limit would remain at 20 weeks for cases of rape or incest where a police report has been filed. It would provide a cause of action for a woman against a provider that performed an abortion too late. It would count fetuses for state population estimates and would apply the child tax credit to fetuses. It would require fa-

thers to start paying child support for medical expenses at six weeks. It would also allow anyone to intervene in a case challenging the constitutionality of the law.

Bad Bills Stopped in House

SB 131 (Jones, 25th) – State Airport Takeover

This legislation would create a state authority to take over the Atlanta airport. The authority board would be the Governor or his designee, the Lt. Governor or his designee, the Speaker or his designee, the DOT commissioner, the Public Safety commissioner, and two business appointees each by the Lt. Governor and Speaker.

The Ugly

Bills that Passed Both Chambers

HB 316 (Fleming, 121st) – Ballot Marking Devices

This legislation would switch Georgia voting machines from the current direct recording electronic machines to ballot markers that print a ballot. It would require a risk limiting audit beginning in 2024. It would direct Georgia to use multistate ERIC system to maintain voter rolls. It would also fix Georgia's exact match law and merely require a voter to provide identification at the poll.

Legislation Passed by House and Senate

Agriculture

HB 213 (Corbett, 174th) – Georgia Hemp Farming Act

This legislation would allow hemp farming in Georgia. Hemp growers would be required to obtain a license and processors would be required to obtain a permit for processing hemp. Colleges and universities could conduct research on hemp usage. All other persons would be outlawed from possessing hemp. Hemp grower licenses would cost \$50/acre up to a \$5,000 maximum. Applicants for the grower's license would be required to provide GPS coordinates of the property, a written description of the property, written consent allowing law enforcement to enter the property for inspection, and the person must pass a criminal background check.

Hemp processing permittees would be required to submit an affidavit along with an affidavit from a hemp grower's licensee that they are in a business relationship between the potential permittee and the licensee. The permittee would also be required to submit a \$100,000 surety bond. The initial processors' permit fee would be \$25,000. Processors could be re-licensed for \$10,000/year. Persons could only be issued one processor's permit. Processors and licensees would be required to provide the contract governing their

business relationship to the department. Processors would be required to reimburse licensees for half the cost of crop destruction until December 31, 2022.

The department could inspect hemp fields and greenhouses randomly. A test sample exceeding permissible THC levels of .330% would require destruction of the entire crop. THC testing that finds levels greater than .3% but less than .330% would be retested. If the concentration again exceeds .3%, the entire hemp crop would be destroyed.

Licensees would be required to submit a corrective action plan if they negligently fail to produce required documents or if hemp tests above the permissible THC level. The corrective action plan would be required to include a reasonable date that the correction would take effect and a requirement for the licensee to update the commissioner periodically on the status of the corrective action plan. 3 negligent violations in a 5 year period would result in license revocation & inability to reapply for a license for 5 years. Negligent would not be criminally punishable. Violations of the law with a higher state of mental culpability would be criminally punishable.

HB 332 (Meeks, 178th) – Allow Agricultural Commissioner to Delegate Agricultural Commission Seats

This legislation would allow a designee of the Commissioner of Agriculture to represent the Commissioner on commissions except for the Agricultural Commodity Commission for Peanuts.

Appropriations

SB 80 (Lucas, 26th) – Promoting the State Hall of Fame

This legislation would allow state funding for the Sports Hall of Fame to be spent on increasing its exposure and protecting and displaying artifacts and items of historical significance

HB 30 (Ralston, 7th) – FY 2020 Supplemental Budget

HB 31 (Ralston, 7th) – FY 2020 General Budget

HR 164 (Powell, 171st) — Allow Environmental Fees to be Earmarked

This resolution would propose an amendment to the constitution to allow hazardous waste and solid waste fees, including the tire disposal fee, to be earmarked for the Hazardous Waste and Solid Waste Trust Funds, so long as the fees don't exceed 1% of state

revenues. Should state revenues decline for three consecutive months, the Governor would be authorized to suspend the earmarks until revenues increase for three consecutive months.

Civil Law

SB 29 (Jones, 22nd) – Apply Car Accident Liability Cap to Sheriffs

This legislation would apply the same default \$500,000 liability cap for motor vehicle accidents that currently exists for local governments to sheriffs.

SB 31 (Rhett, 33rd) – Immunity for Law Enforcement Officers Rescuing People or Pets Trapped in Motor Vehicles

This legislation would provide civil immunity for law enforcement officers for the rescue of people or pets trapped in motor vehicles when there is a clear and imminent danger or threat to the person's or pet's life or health.

SB 37 (Ligon, 3rd) – Require Written Modifications to Contracts Subject to Statute of Frauds

This legislation would require any modification to a contract required to be in writing under the statute of frauds to be in writing unless the defendant admits that the modification was made.

SB 52 (Ligon, 3rd) – Code Revision Commission

This is the annual Code Revision Commission bill to update state law to correct errors and update cross references.

SB 77 (Mullis, 53rd) – Confederate Monument Protection

This legislation would consider flags as monuments in the confederate monument protection law. It would eliminate local governments' ability to provide contextual interpretations of confederate monuments. It would make any person who damages, destroys, loses, or removes essentially any publicly owned monument including confederate monuments located on state property liable for three times the amount of repair or replacement, punitive damages, and court costs. The public entity responsible for the monument would be required to timely repair the monument after receiving damages. This legislation would also create a private a cause of action for enforcement. The legislation would also

require monuments that need to be relocated due to construction to be relocated to a place of similar prominence. It would expressly prohibit the relocation of monuments to museums, cemeteries, or mausoleums unless originally placed at those locations.

SB 122 (Kennedy, 18th) – Car Dealers and Franchisors

This legislation would allow dealers and franchisors to enter into alternative warranty reimbursement contracts, other than the usual payment for specific work performed. The contracts would have to be written and given with 30 days prior notice.

It would require franchisors to use performance criteria reflects local situations when determining criteria that can lead to a nonrenewal.

Franchisors would not be able to require dealers to make significant capital changes, including new signage, more than once every ten years. If the franchisor offers new programs that require capital expenditure, the dealer would not be required to participate but would also not receive any new benefits from the program.

It would only allow franchisors to audit dealers going back one year or up to four years if there is reason to believe false claims were filed.

Franchisors would not be able to provide consumer data obtained from the dealer to any person.

It would allow car dealers to request information from their franchisor, manufacturer, distributor, or a third party acting on their behalf information about confidential consumer data used for financing about how they and will protect that data, who has access to that data. It would provide that dealers would not have to give their franchisor, manufacturer, distributor, or a third party access to their internal systems and may provide customer information in a readily accessible file format. It would indemnify dealers for customer information disclosure by the franchisor, manufacturer, distributor, or a third party.

HB 128 (Silcox, 52nd) – High/Low Med-mal Settlements to not Require Reporting

This legislation would no longer require physicians to report high/low agreements where the physician agrees to pay the plaintiff a minimum recovery in return for the plaintiff's agreement to accept a maximum amount regardless of the outcome of the trial as a malpractice settlement to the Composite Board.

HB 323 (Caldwell, 131st) – Code Revision Commission Update

This legislation would update cross references and language and remove obsolete code sections.

HB 492 (Rich, 97th) – Execution of Writs of Possession

This legislation would require sheriffs to apply to execute writs of possession to recover land or other property within 30 days of the writ being issued or show cause for the delay. It would not require them to actually execute the writ within that 30 day period.

Consumer Protection

SB 97 (Stone, 23rd) – Late Fees for Storage Facilities

This bill would limit late fees for storage facilities to the greater of 20 dollars a month or 20% of monthly rent, as outlined in a rental agreement. It would only affect storage facility rental agreements entered into on or after July 1, 2019.

SB 154 (Gooch, 51st) – Outside Complaints Against Coroners

This legislation would require the Georgia Coroner's Training Council to review complaints from outside party about coroners and make recommendations about retentions, suspensions, or removal of coroners.

HB 346 (Cooper, 43rd) – Landlord Retaliation

This legislation would provide that retaliation exists where a landlord takes negative action against a tenant after the tenant attempted to exercise a right or remedy against the landlord, complained to a government entity responsible for enforcing building or zoning codes or a public utility about a code violation or utility problem, or participated in a tenant's rights organization, which would give the tenant an open and shut prima facie case, absent extenuating circumstances. Landlords would not be liable for retaliation where rent was increased as part of a normal pattern of rent increases or under an escalation clause or the tenant violates the lease.

Damages for retaliation would be 1 month's rent, \$500.00, actual damages, court costs, and attorney's fees where the retaliation is willful or malicious. If the rent is subsidized by the government, damages would be actual fair market value of the rental property plus \$500.00.

HB 551 (Hill, 3rd) – Kratom Labeling Requirements

This legislation would prohibit selling kratom to a minor and prohibit a minor from possessing kratom. Any person who distributes kratom to a minor would be guilty of a misdemeanor. Kratom labeling would be required to include the ingredients, that sale or transfer to minors is prohibited, alkaloid amount contained in product and packaging, usual name of ingredients used in manufacture, name and principal address of manufac-

turer, clear directions for safe and effective consumption, and precautionary statements about safety and effectiveness of kratom.

It would also allow the state to rescind fines against prescribers that failed to properly use the prescription drug monitoring program database but are now in compliance.

Corrections

HB 345 (Cooper, 43rd) – Protections for Pregnant Inmates

This legislation would prohibit prison guards from requiring pregnant inmates in the second or third semester to squat or cough during strip searches. Pregnant women could not be placed in restraints during the second or trimester, while in labor, or for six weeks after delivery. Women in up to six weeks after delivery could only be handcuffed with their hands in front of their body only if the person presents a risk to herself or others or cannot be reasonably restrained by other means, and the use of handcuffs in that time would have to be reported. It would require jails temporarily holding pregnant women to transfer them back to prison as soon as possible. This bill also would require DPH and DOC to provide information on pregnant inmates.

Criminal Law

SB 1 (Parent, 42nd) – C. J.'s Law

This legislation would create an enhanced penalty on one to ten years imprisonment hit and run accidents that result in serious bodily harm.

SB 6 (Kirkpatrick, 32nd) – Prohibit Drones Around Prisons

This legislation would criminalize the intentional use of drone aircraft to photograph or record jails and prisons without permission or to deliver contraband. Photographing or recording would be a felony of 1-5 years, and delivering contraband would be a felony of 1-10 years.

SB 9 (Jones, 22nd) – Prohibit Sexual Extortion

This legislation would criminalize sexual extortion, which would be the coercion of a person to engage in sexually explicit conduct or the distribution of any photograph, video, or other image depicting that person in a state of nudity or engaging in sexually explicit conduct. Any person who coerces another to engage in sexually explicit conduct would be punished by imprisonment for one to ten years. Coercing another into distributing sexually explicit photographs, videos, or other images would be punished as a mis-

demeanor for the first offense and a felony for the second offense punishable by one to ten years imprisonment. Persons convicted of sexual extortion would also be required to register on the state sex offender registry.

It would create the crime of improper sexual conduct which would consist of sexual conduct between school employees and students, law enforcement employees and persons on probation, parole or pretrial diversion and, law enforcement officers and a person being detained, hospital employees and patients, correctional and juvenile facility employees and inmates, and mental health employees and patients. First degree improper sexual conduct would be punishable by 1-25 years imprisonment and a \$100,000 fine. If committed against a person 16 years or younger, the penalty would be 25-50 years imprisonment and a \$100,000 fine. Second degree improper sexual would be punished by 5-25 years with a \$25,000 fine. It would be a misdemeanor when the victim is between 14-21 and the offender's age is within 4 months of the victim. A person convicted of improper sexual conduct would be required to register as a sex offender.

SB 121 (Walker III, 20th) – Increase PDMP Storage Time

This legislation would increase from 2 to 5 years the length of time prescription information is stored in the prescription drug monitoring program database. It would also allow the Georgia Attorney General's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit to access the database

SB 158 (Strickland, 17th) – Human Trafficking Victims

This legislation would allow law enforcement and DFCS to take child human trafficking victims into emergency custody for up to 7 days without a court order. Law enforcement and DFCS would be required to refer child human trafficking victims to a victims service organization.

It would provide that receiving any financial benefit due to human trafficking counts as human trafficking. It would eliminate the reduced penalty for trafficking 16 and 17 year olds and make any human trafficking of a minor a felony of 10-20 years and add a fine of up to \$100,000.

It would no longer apply the crime of prostitution to people under 18. It would provide that notice from a DA to a property owner that two or more instances of prostitution, etc. occurred at the property within one year would be sufficient to start a nuisance action against the property. It would eliminate the crime of pandering by compulsion.

HB 118 (Morris, 26th) – Swatting

This legislation would extend the prohibition on making false emergency calls to apply to situations where the caller uses technology to obstruct their location and apply to any

false claims of violence, not just claims where the caller alleges the use of a weapon. It would make any false claim that results in death or serious bodily injury a felony from the first offense.

HB 226 (LaRiccia, 169th) — Extend Joshua’s Law

This legislation would extend the sunset date on Joshua’s Law that levys a 1.5% additional fine on traffic tickets to fund driver’s education from June 30, 2019 to June 30, 2022.

HB 281 (Anulewicz, 42nd) – Increased Penalties for Pimping and Pandering

This legislation would increase the penalties for pimping and pandering from 24 hours imprisonment for any offense to 72 hours imprisonment for a first offense, and a second offense would be a felony punishable by 1-10 years imprisonment. It would require both prison and a fine for pimping and pandering of minors under 16.

HB 282 (Holcomb, 81st) – Require Law Enforcement to Keep Sexual Assault Evidence

This legislation would require law enforcement to keep rape kits for 30 years from the date of the arrest, 7 years from the completion of the sentence, or for 50 years if no arrest occurs.

HB 325 (Clark, 147th) – Keep Police Investigation Records for 30 Years

This legislation would require the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council to retain records related to investigations of officers for 30 years. The Council would be allowed to destroy the records if the officer is dead and no action was taken by the Council after the investigation.

HB 353 (Carpenter, 4th) – Crime to Stage a Vehicular Accident

This bill would make it a crime to cause or stage a vehicular accident with the intent of insurance fraud. It would be a felony of 1-5 years unless the person also caused bodily injuries, in which case it would be 5-20 years.

HB 424 (Silcox, 52nd) – Sex Crimes

This legislation would add human trafficking, keeping a place of prostitution, pimping, and pandering to the list of crimes that qualify as gang activity and subject the offender to civil forfeiture.

It would add those crimes to the list of sex crimes for which the victim's prior sexual history is not admissible. Prior sexual history would be admissible to provide evidence that the assailant was someone else, evidence offered by the prosecutor, and evidence necessary to protect the defendant's constitutional rights in addition to the current exception for evidence that would prove consent.

It would provide that the provision allowing minors in sex crimes cases under 16 to not be cross examined and instead have the adult they reported the abuse to would only apply to future cases.

It would eliminate the enhanced penalty for batter against people 65 or older and expressly include taking something from an elder person due to that person's mental or physical incapacity as elder abuse.

It would allow local law enforcement, pursuant to a MOU with DCH, to investigate unlicensed personal care homes.

It would also apply the enhanced penalty of 25-50 years for trafficking any minors, not just when the minor had been coerced.

HB 471 (Sainz, 180th) – Implied Consent Warning

This legislation would replace the language in Georgia's implied consent warnings for DUI, BUI, and hunting under the influence in an attempt to bring them into compliance after being ruled unconstitutional in early 2019.

HB 483 (Stephens, 164th) – Annual Controlled Substance Update

This legislation would update Georgia's drug schedules to reflect drugs scheduled or rescheduled at the federal level.

It would also provide that low doses of some medicines are not dangerous drugs and may be sold over the counter.

Economic Development

SB 2 (Gooch, 51st) – Allow EMCs to Provide Broadband

This legislation would permit electric membership corporations to directly or indirectly provide broadband. Cross-subsidization between the EMC's electric services, gas services, and broadband services would be prohibited. EMCs could not condition receipt of

electricity services on usage of the broadband services or affiliate. EMCs that were offering broadband before January 1, 2019 in any area could continue offering those services. Existing electrical easements could be used for providing broadband services without being a new use that would terminate the easement unless additional poles or installations are constructed.

SB 395 (Watson, 1st) – Georgia Joint Defense Commission

This legislation would create the Georgia Joint Defense Commission comprised of the House Veterans Chair, the Senate Economic Development Chair, four House members appointed by the Speaker, one Democratic and one Republican senator appointed by the Lt. Governor, one citizen appointed by the governor from Georgia's eight military installation regions, the Georgia Defense Initiative Director, the adjutant general of the Guard, and the TCSG Commissioner to coordinate with military installations in Georgia and implement a plan to ensure viability and avoid the risk of having a base or other facility closed.

It would also create a grant program through TCSG to promote military installations by ensuring that they have a skilled civilian workforce available.

Elections

SB 213 (Heath, 31st) – Eliminate Some Disclosures

This legislation would eliminate the January 31 disclosure in non-election years. It would also only require two business day reports of contributions of \$1,000 or more in the seven days prior to the election instead of all contributions of \$1,000 or more received after the final disclosure prior to the election.

Family Law and Juvenile Justice

SB 167 (Brass, 28th) – Allow Children with Absent Parents to Stay in Foster Care

This legislation would allow courts to determine that remaining within the current home is in the child's best interests where a child has been living in a stable environment with their current caregivers for 12 months and require DFCS to execute a permanency plan instead of moving the child.

It also would remove a requirement that DFCS begin their search for placement with relatives or fictive kin.

It would no longer give preference to relatives that declined to take in the child for more than six months.

SB 190 (Kennedy, 18th) – Allow Any Parents with Visitation Rights to Petition for a Modification

This legislation would allow parents that have some form of custody or visitation rights to petition for a modification, not just parents that are authorized to make major life decisions on behalf of their children.

SB 225 (Walker, 20th) – Independent Evaluations of Institutionalized Minors

This legislation would require an independent evaluation by DFCS of any child committed to an in-patient residential care home for children with emotional or behavioral disorders. It would provide that DFCS would include information on family members and mental health providers, evidence that the family and mental health providers are meeting regularly, and placement preferences of the family and providers or of why those preferences were modified in the case plan. It would also require a separate independent analysis by DFCS if a child is to be kept in an in-patient facility for more than six consecutive or nonconsecutive months. It would also extend immunity for civil and criminal liability to persons provide information or assistance, including medical evaluations, to a child abuse report investigation.

HB 12 (Williams, 145th) – Require Schools to Display DFCS Child Abuse Number

This legislation would require public schools, including state and local charter schools, to post DFCS' phone number for reporting child abuse and neglect in a conspicuous location of a public area.

HB 70 (Efstration, 104th) – Guardianships and Conservatorships

This legislation would give courts discretion whether to issue temporary guardianships. It would allow bond premiums to be paid from the child's estate. Guardians would have access to the child's digital assets.

It would allow courts to recognize another state's guardianship, conservatorships, and adjudications of incapacity of an adult.

Courts would consider the best interests of the minor, proposed ward, or ward when allocating fees or costs. This analysis would consider the minor or ward's estate if a guardianship is granted, the petitioner's conduct in the proceeding where the guardianship is not granted, a judge's finding that one party should pay the costs or fees, whether any party neglected or abused the minor, or from any assets received by the minor. For other related proceedings, the court could assign costs as it sees fit or as determined by the best interests of the minor or ward.

It would allow medical providers involved in adult guardianships to receive reasonable fees and eliminate the \$75/day maximum for attending a hearing.

HB 79 (Gilliard, 162nd) – Child Custody for Blind People

This legislation would prohibit courts, the Department of Human Services, and child-placement agencies from denying blind people parental rights, child placement, guardianship, foster care, or adoption because the person is blind. Parties alleging that a parent's blindness would have a detrimental effect on the child must demonstrate that the parent's blindness does or will endanger the child's health, safety, or welfare by clear and convincing evidence.

HB 228 (Welch, 110th) – Child Marriage

This legislation would raise the marriage age from 16 to 17 and require 17 year olds seeking to get married to be emancipated. If a marriage is to involve a 17 year old, the premarital counseling option that is available instead of paying a marriage license fee would be mandatory. DPH would develop a fact sheet to be distributed during the premarital counseling that outlines domestic violence risks. A minor seeking emancipation would have to provide information about their potential partner and why they want to get married.

HB 381 (Efstration, 104th) – Child Support

This legislation would always calculate voluntarily unemployed people's income based on their skill or educational level rather than at minimum wage when determining child support obligations and instead impute income in the same manner as for people who fail to provide evidence of income. It would also exempt Social Security child welfare or foster care payments from the calculation of a parent's gross income.

HB 472 (Reeves, 34th) – Temporary Alternatives to Foster Care

This legislation would require juvenile courts to consider temporary alternatives to foster care such as with a relative or fictive kin, a temporary protective order, or a DFCS investigation before removing a child and placing the child in foster care. It would require juvenile court intake officer to receive at least 8 hours of training and would prohibit DJJ employees from serving as intake officers.

HB 478 (Ballinger, 23rd) – Child Abuse Registry

This legislation would raise the age for someone that DFCS finds a substantiated case of child abuse to be reported to the child abuse registry accessible by law enforcement from 13 to 18. It would include the dates of the abuse and the report of abuse. It would allow DAs to petition to delay an expungement case until after trial if the hearing could impact the criminal case. It would require more details about abuse incidents and during the expungement process.

HB 530 (Hitchens, 161st) – Notify DFCS When a Child is Withdrawn from School Without a Declaration of Intent to Home School

This legislation would require schools to notify DFCS when a student has been withdrawn from school or has been absent for 45 days without the parents filing their mandatory annual declaration of intent to home school with DOE.

HB 543 (Efstration, 104th) – Equitable Caregivers

This legislation would allow courts to determine individuals who have parent-like relationships with children to petition to be recognized as equitable caregivers who would have parental rights.

Financial Regulation

SB 157 (Kennedy, 18th)–Require Depositories to be FDIC Insured

This legislation would require depositories of public funds be insured by the FDIC, only deposits funds in FDIC insured banks, and only uses third party services approved by the State Depository Board.

HB 185 (Coomer, 14th) – Allow Probate Court Judges Serve as Reserve JAG Officers

This legislation would change the definition of financial institutions to include banks and credit unions chartered outside Georgia.

HB 193 (Dunahoo, 30th) – Allow Banks & Credit Unions to Hold Raffles

This legislation would allow banks and credit unions to hold raffles for customers with a savings account so long as the raffle doesn't affect the institution's soundness and if customers are not misled.

HB 367 (Taylor, 173rd) — Corporate Governance Annual Disclosure

This legislation would require insurers to submit to the commissioner a yearly corporate governance disclosure signed by the CEO or corporate secretary providing governance sufficient material information necessary to permit the Commissioner to gain an understanding of the insurer's or group's corporate governance structure, policies, and practices.

Health Care and Human Services

SB 18 (Kirkpatrick, 32nd) – Direct Primary Care Agreements

This legislation would allow physicians to offer specified care for a specific time pursuant to a fixed fee. The physician couldn't require more than one year's payment upfront, and the agreement would be terminatable by either party with 30 days notice. Physicians would not have to provide care if the fee had not been paid or the patient committed fraud, failed to adhere to treatment, or is an emotional or physical danger.

SB 207 (Burke, 11th) – Georgia Board for Physician Workforce

This legislation would rename the Georgia Board for Physician Workforce to the Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce, effective July 1, 2019. 14 out of 15 members would be physicians or other providers in a variety of medical fields. The 15th provider would have no connection to the practice of medicine. Hospital, business, and citizen appointments would be eliminated.

HB 26 (Belton, 112th) – Enter Into Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact

This legislation would enter Georgia into the Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact to allow psychologists licensed in good standing in other member states to practice psychology in Georgia for up to 30 days a year and to always practice telepsychology in Georgia. It would also require all psychologists to undergo a background check.

HB 39 (Belton, 112th) – Enter Into Physical Therapy Licensure Compact

This legislation would enter Georgia into the Physical Therapy Licensure Compact to allow physical therapists licensed in good standing in other member states to practice physical therapy in Georgia so long as they maintain licensure in good standing in their home state.

HB 62 (Cooper, 43rd) – Margie’s Law

This legislation would require mammogram providers to notify patients with dense breast tissue that cancer is harder to detect and more common in people with dense breast tissue and they may want to consider further testing.

HB 63 (Cooper, 43rd) – Step Therapy Protocols and Exceptions

This legislation would provide an exception from step therapy protocols where insurance companies require patients to try medicines for a given condition in a certain order when a doctor demonstrates that the medicine is likely to cause harm, likely to be ineffective, has already been tried unsuccessfully, or the patient is already stable on a different covered medication. The insurance company would approve or deny the exception within 24 hours in an emergency or two business days in a non-emergency. Insurers would still be able to require people to try a generic medication deemed by the FDA to meet equivalent bioequivalence. It would not apply to biological products or medications the insurer deems medically unnecessary.

HB 91 (Welch, 110th) – Provide Long Term Care Background Checks to GBI

This legislation would allow fingerprints collected for background checks for people working in elder care to be retained indefinitely for federal ongoing background checks.

HB 186 (Stephens, 164th) – Hospital CON Compromise

This legislation is SB 114. It would increase the threshold for a project that requires a CON from \$2.5 million for construction and other capital expenditures and \$1 million for acquiring equipment to \$4 million for both. It would subject freestanding ERs not located on a hospital’s campus to CON. It would allow CTCA to convert to a less strict class of hospital: both in-state and out-of-state bed limits would be eliminated. No provider would be eligible for modification to its CON if it has outstanding fees or fines from failing to provide indigent care or failure to file its reports. Providers would be able to contest a CON application if the provider provides similar services within 35 miles or has a filed a CON application to do so. Remolding or refurbishments that don’t lead to new services or more bed, acquisitions of in-house imaging technology under \$3 million adjusted for inflation, and expenditures of up to \$10 million that don’t increase beds would also be exempt. DOR would be required to create a list of hospitals most in need of rural hospital tax credit funds and the provision would sunset in 2024.

It is also SB 151 that would establish an Office of Health Strategy and Coordination within the Governor’s office. The office would gather public and private stakeholders to develop approaches for stabilizing costs in the healthcare industry, coordinate state agencies and other stakeholders, and come up with service delivery recommendations, includ-

ing potential changes to CON. The director would be required to have held a previous position as a health care clinician and administrator and any other qualifications determined necessary by the Governor. It would be overseen by a board would consist of 9 members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. It is also SB 71 that would allow hospital authorities that have not owned or operated medical facilities for at least 7 years, paid off bond debt, and hold more than \$20 million in funds for charitable health care may invest up to 30% in mutual funds, commingled funds, or collective investment funds.

It is also SB 71 that would allow hospital authorities that have not owned or operated medical facilities for at least 7 years, paid off bond debt, and hold more than \$20 million in funds for charitable health care may invest up to 30% in mutual funds, commingled funds, or collective investment funds.

SB 195 (Hufstetler, 52nd) – Prescription Drug Benefits Freedom of Information & Consumer Protection Act

This legislation would require insurers and prescription drug plans to post a searchable database of their formulary that lists their preferred drugs on a publicly accessible portion of their website pursuant to regulations promulgated by the Department of Insurance. It would require a uniform process for requesting authorization to use drugs not on the formulary developed by a committee of health care stakeholders appointed by the Insurance Commissioner. Insurers and prescription drug plans would have to acknowledge receipt of a prior authorization within two days, whether the authorization is approved, denied or incomplete within four days, and whether it is approved or denied within two days of an amendment to an incomplete authorization or face fines of \$1,000/day.

HB 290 (Cooper, 43rd) – PrEP Drug Assistance Pilot Program

This legislation would establish a pilot program for drug assistance or services to HIV-negative persons in counties at risk for HIV outbreaks due to opioid use. The pilot program would provide FDA approved medications and cover medical, laboratory, and outreach costs. The pilot program would produce a report of its results by December 31, 2022.

HB 300 (Smith, 133rd) – Rename Continuing Care Retirement Communities as Life Planning Communities

This legislation would rename continuing care retirement communities as life planning communities without changing any regulations.

HB 310 (Morris, 156th) – Change Autism Coverage Report to June 15

This legislation would move the Insurance Department’s annual report on the success of the autism coverage mandate from January 15 to June 15.

HB 324 (Gravley, 67th) – Georgia’s Hope Act

This legislation would allow for the cultivation of marijuana to produce low THC oil. There would be two class of production licenses, with 2 Class 1 licenses issued and 4 Class 2 licenses issued. The University System of Georgia could apply to contract for receipt of cannabis; obtain cannabis, cannabinoids, or other derivatives; and other designated universities could request to obtain cannabis from USG schools.

Class 1 licensees would be able to grow up to 100,000 square feet of marijuana in enclosed spaces to produce low THC oil. Class 2 licensees would be able to grow up to 50,000 square feet of marijuana in enclosed spaces and produce low THC oil from that crop. Pharmacies and other retail vendors may also apply to sell low THC oil. Class 1 and Class 2 licensees would be required to demonstrate significant involvement by a minority co-owner or significant supplier of goods and services for the business.

Nonrefundable application fees would be \$25,000 for a Class 1 license and \$5,000 for a Class 2. Upon receiving a license, a Class 1 licensee would pay an initial license fee of \$200,000 and an annual renewal of \$100,000, and Class 2 licensees would pay an initial license fee of \$250,000 and an annual renewal of \$50,000.

Owners could sell their licenses. First sale of a class 1 license is \$100k and 2nd sale is \$150k; first sale of class 2 is \$12k & \$62,5000. Production licenses could be sold. It would be \$200,00 for a class 1 license & \$112,500 for a class 2 production license.

No individual convicted for a nondrug related felony shall be eligible to work as an employee of a licensee conducted pursuant unless the conviction has been expunged or the individual has been pardoned or had their rights restored. They could also work if the date of conviction is greater than 10 years old and the individual has been released from incarceration for at least 5 years or agrees to weekly drug screenings.

It would require a disparity study every four years starting in 2022. Should it find a disparity in business ownership by gender or race, the commission could issue another class one or class two license, or reissuing revoked licenses to racial or gender minority.

It would be overseen by the Georgia Access to Medical Cannabis Commission comprised of three appointees by the Governor, two by the Lt. Governor, and two by the Speaker.

All licensees would use an electronic tracking system to track marijuana and THC oil through the entire cultivation and distribution process. No manufacturing of marijuana could occur within 3,000 feet of a school or place of worship. No retailer could be located within 1,000 feet of a school or church. Licensees could not use the term marijuana in their marketing or promote nonmedical use. It would be illegal to consume low THC oil

with a vape pen. Nobody with a drug related felony or any felony within ten years or less than five years out of prison could be involved in the industry. Licensees would be limited in eligibility for tax expenditures, such as job creation tax credits.

HB 187 (Dempsey, 13th) – Obesity Coverage Pilot Program in SHBP

This legislation would establish a three year pilot program to provide coverage for obesity coverage for at least 250 obese state employees each year.

HB 217 (Gaines, 117th) — Legalize Needle Exchanges

This legislation would allow needle exchanges to possess and distribute hypodermic needles. Programs would have to provide substance abuse counseling and referral services, naloxone for opioid overdoses, STD and tuberculosis screenings, safer injection supplies, and evidence-based drug interventions.

HB 233 (Knight, 130th) – Providers with Interests in Pharmacies

This legislation would require medical providers that have an interest in a pharmacy to disclose that fact when making referrals. Pharmacies would not be able to provide patient data to affiliated pharmacies. These limitations would not apply to HMOs, hospital pharmacies, referrals by affiliates, any care management organization, or prescriptions to patients in skilled nursing facilities, intermediate care facilities, continuing care retirement communities, home health agencies, or hospices. The effective date is January 1, 2020.

Healthcare Professionals

SB 16 (Kirkpatrick, 32nd) – Interstate Medical Licensure Compact Act

This legislation would allow physicians to obtain expedited licenses to practice in any member state. To receive an expedited license under IMLCA, physicians must possess a full and unrestricted medical license issued by a member state, have never been the subject of a criminal matter, have no disciplinary history by a state medical licensing agency not involving non-payment of licensing fees, never had a controlled substance license suspended or revoked by a state or federal government, and not be under active investigation by a licensing agency or any state, local, or federal law enforcement agency. The physician would be required to pass a criminal background check. IMLCA would become binding upon passage by 7 states. Five states have passed IMLCA.

SB 18 (Kirkpatrick, 32nd) – Direct Primary Care Agreements

This legislation would allow physicians to offer specified care for a specific time pursuant to a fixed fee. The physician couldn't require more than one year's payment upfront, and the agreement would be terminatable by either party with 30 days notice. Physicians would not have to provide care if the fee had not been paid or the patient committed fraud, failed to adhere to treatment, or is an emotional or physical danger.

SB 115 (Unterman, 45th) – Out of State Telemedicine Licenses

This legislation would allow telemedicine licenses to be issued to doctors in good standing licensed in other states. Any person issued a license would be required to notify the board of any restrictions placed on their license or revocations of their license by other states. Any person issued a telemedicine license could practice only telemedicine and would be required to follow patient record and confidentiality requirements.

This legislation would further remove the restriction that a pharmacist taking part in a vaccine protocol agreements be located in the same or contiguous county as the prescribing physician.

SB 168 (Kirk, 13th) – Multistate Nurse Licensure Cleanup

This legislation would provide that nurses holding a multistate license would not be required to obtain a single-state license in order to practice as an advanced practice registered nurse and bring state law in line with the Multistate Nurse Licensure Compact.

It would expand the exemption from the four protocol limit for APRNs practicing at county hospitals that don't order drugs to also cover situations where the physician medical director maintains a less than 14 day supply of drugs other than Schedule II controlled substances and benzodiazepines. Imaging, medical devices, would still need to be referred out.

HB 253 (Hawkins, 27th) – Occupational Therapy Practice Act

This legislation would allow occupational therapists to practice telehealth. It would clarify that occupational therapy is therapeutic engagement of daily activities to improve physical, cognitive, psychosocial, sensory-perceptual, and other aspects of performance to promote health, well-being, and quality of life. It would incorporate regulations outlining unprofessional conduct into code. It would provide that occupational therapists can use orthotic devices to support or immobilize body parts. It would make other technical and administrative changes to the occupational therapy code.

HB 374 (LaHood, 175th) – Allow Medication Aides to Administer Liquid Morphine

This legislation would allow certified medication aides at assisted living communities to administer morphine when a hospice health care professional is unavailable so long as the patient had received his or her first dose from a hospice health care professional who would address any adverse reactions. The supply would be limited to 50ml/patient.

Health Insurance and Medicaid

SB 106 (Tillery, 19th) – State Medicaid Waivers

This legislation would allow the Governor to seek and implement a Section 1115 waiver to expand coverage by June 20, 2020 that could only cover people up to 100% of the poverty level. He would also have authority to seek a Section 1332 waiver to modify ACA regulations by December 31, 2021 with powers only limited by federal law, including redefining essential health benefits.

SB 118 (Unterman, 45th) – Georgia Telehealth Act

This legislation would require insurers to cover telehealth and telemedicine services. Telehealth would be the real-time delivery of clinical services via telephone, video conference, or other any other two-way remote communication conducted through secure channels. Telehealth providers would be reimbursed at the same rate as in-person physicians.

SB 142 (Walker III, 20th) — Include Whether Patient is Fully Insured on Insurance Cards

This legislation would require that insurance cards indicate whether the subscriber's health policy is fully insured with all payment guaranteed under the policy and subject to state regulation. It would also apply insurance card regulations to dental insurance cards.

SB 184 (Kirk, 13th) – SHBP to Pay at Least Medicare Rate

This legislation would require the state health benefit plan to reimburse health centers eligible to receive Medicare at least the Medicare reimbursement rate.

HB 321 (Lott, 122nd) – Extend Hospital Bed Tax Through 2025

This legislation would extend the hospital bed tax that is levied on hospitals in order to draw down more federal Medicaid dollars through June 20, 2025.

Higher Education

SB 91 (Hufstetler, 52nd) – Exempt Dental Schools from Private School Regulations

This legislation would exempt private, accredited dental schools sponsored by a hospital recognized as a national accrediting agency by CMS or a postsecondary accrediting agency recognized by the federal DOE from regulation by the Nonpublic Postsecondary Education Commission in the same manner as currently applies to medical schools. Dental schools would be required to provide annual proof of a \$450,000 surety bond or letter of credit for five years.

HB 218 (Williams, 145th) – HOPE Scholarship Requirement Update

This legislation would raise the time limit for students applying for the HOPE Scholarship from 7 years after high school graduation to 10 years for new HOPE applicants.

Insurance Other than Health Insurance

SB 156 (Martin, 9th) – Insurance Company Spinoffs

This legislation would allow insurance companies to split into multiple companies pursuant to a plan that handles how the company would be split up, including how policies and stock would be split up. The plan would be approved pursuant to the insurer's bylaws, or absent a provision in the bylaws, approved by the process that would be used to approve a merger, at which point the plan would be submitted to the Insurance Commissioner for approval. It would no longer require the Attorney General to sign off on Department of Insurance Rules.

SB 202 (Ligon, 3rd) – Allow Title Insurance Companies to Cover Personal Property Titles

This legislation would allow title insurance companies to offer insurance on titles to non-real estate personal property in addition to real property.

HB 99 (Smith, 134th) – Strip Insurance Commissioner's Rulemaking over Many Types of Insurance and Create Sponsored Captive Insurance Companies

This legislation removes the Insurance Commissioner's power to promulgate rules and regulations regarding long term care insurance, health savings account eligible high deductible plans, property and casualty insurance, life settlement providers, life settlement brokers or their agents. It would also remove the Commissioner's power to specify in-

formation that insurance companies must include on documents given to consumers. The legislation would also update language throughout the insurance code.

The legislation would also create sponsored captive insurance companies which are captive insurance companies not necessarily owned by the groups being insured. Sponsored captive insurance companies would be required to maintain at least \$250,000 in capital and surplus, could only insure or reinsure against risks of participants, funds its liabilities through protected cells that operate like separate entities, and keeps the funds of protected cells separate from a general treasury. Sponsored captive insurance companies would be taxed separately from their parent companies.

Sponsored captive insurance companies could establish one or more protected cells if approved by the Commissioner. The company's general accounting funds could not be used for the liabilities of protected cells. Protected cells would be valued by the cash reserves and insurance liabilities attributable to the protected cell. Each protected cell would be separately accounted for on the books from the other protected cells and assets of each protected cell would not be chargeable for the liabilities of another protected cell.

Protected cells would be provided with the remedy of tracing, or determining how money was converted, if commingling occurs. Two separate protected cells could join funds for the purpose of investment. The Commissioner could require that the business in a company's protected cells be operated by an insurance company licensed in Georgia, reinsured by a reinsurer authorized by the Commissioner, or secured by a trust fund. Protected cell funds would be kept separate in the event of conservation, rehabilitation, or liquidation of captive insurance companies except to the extent that funds were not segregated. The Commissioner could separate protected cells from the sponsored captive insurance company during insolvency of the sponsored captive insurance company and spin-off the protected cells into new captive insurance companies.

Sponsored captive insurance companies would be required to provide the Commissioner with a yearly financial report and they would be required to notify the Commissioner within 10 business days of a protected cell becoming insolvent. Only protected cells incorporated separately from the sponsored captive would have a legal existence separate from the sponsored captive insurance company.

It would also create dormant captive insurance companies. Dormant captives would be companies that have ceased the business of insurance and has no remaining liabilities associated with insurance business. Dormant captives could be issued a certificate of dormancy and shall possess and maintain unimpaired paid-in capital and surplus of \$25,000, submit a yearly financial report to the Commissioner on December 1, renew the certificate of dormancy every 5 years for a \$500 fee, and be subject to an examination by the Commissioner. Dormant captives could not be subject or liable for taxes or be required to submit any forms, fees, or documents other than those required to retain the dormancy certificate. The Commissioner would be able to declare captive insurance companies dormant, revoke certificates of dormancy if the dormant captive begins transacting insur-

ance business, and dormant captives could apply to have the certificate revoked if they intend to begin transacting insurance business.

HB 227 (Frye, 118th) – Prohibit Insurers from Discriminating Against Sexual Assault Victims

This legislation would prevent insurers from discriminating in coverage, premiums, offer of policies, or any other manner to sexual assault victims in the same manner as currently applies to family violence victims.

HB 277 (Carson, 46th) – Allow Insurers to Count Good Will as Assets and Require Notice of Dividend

This legislation would allow insurance companies to count good will as an asset up to 10% of its total assets when determining fiscal health. Good will is money paid to acquire a company in excess of its total tangible assets to reflect perceived intangible assets such as branding, employees, or potential future IP value.

It would also provide Extraordinary dividends would be dividends or cash distributions exceeding the greater of 10%, rather than the lesser of 10%, the insurer's surplus as of the previous December 31, the net gain from operations for life insurers, or net income for non-life insurers for the previous 12 month period ending on December 31.

HB 491 (Taylor, 173rd) – International Insurance Groups

This legislation would empower allow the Insurance Commissioner to either regulate internationally active insurance companies that have minimal operations in Georgia or allow another jurisdiction to serve as regulator.

Judicial Process

SB 73 (Harper, 7th) – Clerks to Remit Peace Officers' Annuity and Benefit Fund Pretrial Fees

This legislation would transfer the responsibility to remit the \$5 pretrial diversion fee collected from criminal or quasi-criminal offenders to the Peace Officers' Annuity and Benefit Fund from the local government the court clerk.

HB 21 (Efstration, 104th) – Add a Judge to Gwinnett Superior Court

This legislation would add an eleventh judge to the Gwinnett County Superior Court.

HB 28 (Mathiak, 73rd) – Add a Judge to the Griffin Circuit

This legislation would add a fifth superior court judge to the Griffin Judicial Circuit that covers Fayette, Pike, Spalding, and Upson counties.

HB 92 (Rutledge, 109th) – Roll Over Municipal Judge Continuing Education

This legislation would allow municipal court judges to roll up to 6 hours of excess continuing education hours to the following year.

HB 134 (Rich, 97th) – Allow Fulton Law Library to Receive Funds Directly

This legislation would eliminate the provision requiring Fulton County Law Library funds to go through county appropriations. It would receive funds directly like all other counties.

HB 239 (Efstration, 104th) – Business Courts

This legislation is the enabling legislation for the statewide business court constitutional amendment that was approved in 2018. The business court would have one judge with at least 15 years of experience in commercial litigation. The judge and clerk would be appointed by the governor and confirmed by the House and Senate Judiciary committees for a five-year term with no term limits. Cases would be appealable to the Court of Appeals and Supreme Court in the same manner as from state and superior courts.

It would have concurrent jurisdiction over arbitration, international arbitration, trade secrets, UCC, corporation, partnership, limited partnership, LLC, trademark, business receivership, noncompetition agreements, antitrust cases, professional malpractice claims that don't involve personal injury, tort and contract claims, fraud cases between businesses or arising from business deals, and other IP cases when the amount in controversy exceeds \$500,000. It would have jurisdiction over commercial property cases when the amount in controversy exceeds \$1 million.

Someone sued in the business court could petition to transfer the case back to superior or state court within 60 days. All parties could also jointly petition to transfer to business court within 60 days. The filing fee to sue or transfer to business court would be \$1,000. The business court could hold pretrial hearings in the county of origin or by teleconference. If the business court judge must recuse, the Supreme Court would appoint a senior state or superior court judge to preside.

This legislation would also restrict the ability of attorneys to rescind their consent to be served electronically in cases with electronic filings.

It is SB 38 that would exempt pleadings made by the Attorney General, a prosecutor, or a defense attorney from electronic filing fees. It would also exempt documents related to child support and alimony cases and leave of absence and conflict notices. It would change the fee structure for documents filed in person from \$5 after 10 filings to only be processing fees. It would also provide that postjudgment actions posted more than 30 days after the judgment or dismissal would receive a new case number.

HB 257 (Scoggins, 14th) – Magistrate Judges

This legislation would eliminate the statutory officers of the Council of Magistrate Judges and leave that up to the council. It would require any new magistrates to be a resident of the county, be a US citizen, and be a registered voter in addition to being 25 and having at least a high school education.

HB 279 (Ballinger 23rd) – Name Changes Under Seal

This legislation would allow superior courts to hear a petition for a name change under seal if the petitioner is a victim of family violence. It would waive the requirement that the petitioner post notice of the name change in the county's legal organ in such case.

HB 288 (Powell, 32nd) – Court Fees

This legislation would also provide a fee schedule for all fees due to the Superior Court Clerk. Costs for filing instruments related to real estate would increase from \$9.50 to \$25, instruments pertaining to real estate or personal property would increase from \$4.50 to \$25, tax liens by a state or local government agency would be \$5 but each page after the first page would cost \$2 and each document referencing a previously filed tax lien would be \$2, financing statements, amendments to financing statements, continuations of financing statements, termination statements, release of collateral or other statements would increase from \$10 to \$25, and filing of maps or plats would increase from \$7.50 to \$10.00. It would also repeal differing fee schedules for counties with populations of 550,000 or above, 640,000 or above, and counties with populations of 350,000 or more in unincorporated areas.

HB 311 (Welch, 110th) – Standing to Challenge Unconstitutional Laws

This legislation would give anyone in the state standing to challenge a state or local law or action on the ground that it violates the state or federal constitution. It would also allow anyone to challenge a local ordinance on the ground that it violates state law. Courts would be able to issue declaratory and injunctive relief, but monetary damages would not be available.

HB 470 (Sainz, 180th) – Disposal of Acquitted People’s DNA

This legislation would require the GBI’s Forensics Division to automatically dispose of DNA samples within 30 days of receiving a certified copy of a court order reversing a felony conviction, judgment of acquittal, sentencing order showing all felony charges were reduced to a misdemeanor, or court order showing successful completion of sentence instead of requiring that person to petition for expungement.

HB 492 (Rich, 97th) – Execution of Writs of Possession

This legislation would require sheriffs to apply to execute writs of possession to recover land or other property within 30 days of the writ being issued or show cause for the delay. It would not require them to actually execute the writ within that 30 day period.

HB 502 (Welch, 110th) – Legislative Continuances

This legislation would limit general assembly members from using legislative continuances except during session, the weeks before and after session, and on any day a member has a committee meeting. A member seeking a continuance would have to certify that he or she has legislative duties, and opposing counsel would have ten days to challenge it.

This legislation would require Board of Regents members asking for a continuance to be actively occupied with official duties and would provide that the AG has absolute continuance ability during the legislative session.

K-12 Education and Pre-K

SB 15 (Albers, 56th) – School Threat Assessments

This legislation would require public to conduct threat assessments of buildings, facilities, and campuses performed by persons or agencies approved by GEMA every two years beginning August 1, 2019. The legislation would also require private schools to follow the same requirements as public schools in developing a school safety plan.

SB 48 (Martin, 9th) – Dyslexia and Related Learning Disabilities

This legislation would require pre-Ks to test students for dyslexia. It would direct DOE to create a handbook containing best practices for teaching dyslexic students by September 1, 2019. Local school systems would include dyslexia training in professional development training. It would require school systems to cover other learning disabilities, including aphasia (difficulty communicating by written or verbal communications),

dyscalculia (difficulty with numbers and arithmetic), and dysgraphia (difficulty with motor skills related to writing) by January 1, 2020. Schools would report annually on how they address dyslexia.

Colleges in Georgia would be required to teach early childhood education students about teaching students with dyslexia and similar learning disabilities.

It would also create a program where DOE would implement early dyslexia intervention programs in one urban, one suburban, and one rural elementary school.

It would also require the Professional Standards Commission to create a dyslexia endorsement for teachers with dyslexia training.

SB 60 (Martin, 9th) – Student Athlete Cardiac Arrest

This legislation would create a mandatory program to educate student athletes grades 6-12 and coaches about the warning signs of sudden cardiac arrest and the risk of continuing to play after experiencing symptoms. It would also allow schools to remove students who pass out or exhibit symptoms of cardiac arrest from participation until medically cleared.

SB 83 (Mullis, 53rd) – Teach Bible in School/REACH Scholarship

This legislation would allow public high schools to offer new Biblical elective courses on the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament.

It also would create the REACH scholarship program to provide a \$10,000/year scholarship to help academically promising students from economically vulnerable backgrounds graduate high school and attend college. School systems would opt in to the program. In the program's first year, REACH would provide the full \$10,000 in state funds. After the first year, REACH participating schools in Tier 1 and Tier 2 counties with populations equal or less than 20,000 would provide \$1,000/REACH scholar, REACH participating schools in Tier 2 counties with population greater than 20,000 and Tier 3 counties with populations equal to or less than 20,000 would provide of \$2,000/REACH scholar, REACH participating schools in Tier 3 counties with populations greater than 20,000 would provide \$3,000/REACH scholar, and REACH participating schools in Tier 4 counties would provide \$4,000/REACH scholar. Counties with 3 or more participating school systems would be allowed a one-tier reduction for each school unless it is a Tier 1 County.

School systems would nominate students in the spring of seventh grade or the fall of eighth grade with eligibility beginning in eighth grade. School systems with five or more high schools could nominate 12 REACH scholars, and school systems with fewer than five high schools could nominate 7 REACH scholars. The students must be enrolled in a REACH participating school, qualify for free or reduced lunch, not have been in in-

school suspension two or more times during the two semesters or four quarters before the spring term of the student's 7th grade year, have no criminal drug convictions, not have had more than 5 unexcused absences during any year of middle school, have their parents or guardians complete a release of information form allowing the school to release information to the school, and demonstrate academic promise as defined by the authority.

Middle and high school students would maintain eligibility by maintaining a cumulative 2.5 GPA or higher, and follow the attendance, discipline, and drug avoidance guidelines required for initial eligibility. The students would be required to meet with a REACH mentor at least 8 times each semester, their REACH academic coach at least 4 times, attend REACH program activities, graduate from high school, and enroll in a USG, TCS, or eligible private college. Students would be required to enroll full time, maintain a 2.0 GPA, complete a FAFSA, and not default on federal or state loans to maintain eligibility for college. It would direct all curriculum, testing, graduation, etc. standards to use standards from relevant industries and, when appropriate, industry credentialing programs where students are able to receive a nationally recognized certification or state license. DOE would produce an annual report of the effectiveness of industry credentialing programs.

It would create state grant programs to assist in the purchase or upgrade of equipment needed to promote career education in areas with a workforce need, skilled trades, and emerging technology fields. Multiple school systems could apply for grants for shared facilities. It would also establish grants for high schools to partner with technical schools and college and career academies to promote industry credentialing programs.

SB 108 (Martin, 9th) – Middle and High School Computer Science

This legislation would require middle and high schools to offer computer science classes. All middle schools and state chartered high schools would have to offer computer science beginning in the 2022-23 school year. School districts would be required to have 50% of high schools in 2022-23, and all high schools in 2023-24. It would also provide for state grants, subject to appropriation, for teacher development for computer science instruction.

HB 68 (Carson, 56th) – No Accreditors as SSOs

This legislation would prohibit any organization that provides accreditation services from also being a Student Scholarship Organization.

HB 83 (Douglass, 78th) – Mandatory Recess for Elementary School Students

This legislation would require elementary schools to include 30 minutes of recess time each day that students do not have physical education or other scheduled physical activity

time unless scheduled activities or weather prevent it. Students could not lose recess time for disciplinary or academic reasons.

HB 130 (Nix, 69th) – Georgia Foundation for Public Education Nonprofit

This legislation would allow the Georgia Foundation for Public Education to establish a nonprofit corporation to assist with fundraising for programs to support education, including at the Georgia Academy for the Blind, Georgia School for the Deaf, and Atlanta Area School for the Deaf.

HB 527 (Dickey, 140th) – QBE Program Weight Modifications

This legislation would increase the program weights used for determining QBE funding mostly by a few percent for all programs involving kindergarten to middle school and all special education programs, including those for gifted students and ESOL. The program weight for career, technical, and agricultural high school students would be reduced by a few percent.

Labor

SB 135 (Walker III, 20th) – Increase Workers Compensation Benefits

This legislation would exempt the cost of prosthetics, spinal cord stimulator or intrathecal pump devices, durable medical equipment such as mobility devices or oxygen tanks, orthotics, corrective eyeglasses, and hearing aids from the 400 week cap for furnishing medical costs for non-catastrophic workplace injuries. It would increase the cap on wage payments from \$575 to \$675/week for total temporary disability and from \$383 to \$450/week for partial temporary disability. It would increase the cap on payments to a surviving spouse with no other benefits from \$230,000 to \$270,000. It would also provide that only the current Workers Comp director and administrative law judge could be appointed to emeritus positions but that the current holders of the emeritus positions could continue in office for as long as they want.

Licensed Professionals

SB 75 (Black, 8th) – Rehab Program for Veterinarians

This legislation would allow the State Board of Veterinary Medicine to operate a rehabilitation program for veterinarians with substance abuse issues or other mental or physical conditions. This legislation would further add a registered veterinary technician to the Georgia State Board of Medicine.

SB 154 (Gooch, 51st) – Outside Complaints Against Coroners

This legislation would require the Georgia Coroner’s Training Council to review complaints from outside party about coroners and make recommendations about retentions, suspensions, or removal of coroners.

SB 168 (Kirk, 13th) – Multistate Nurse Licensure Cleanup

This legislation would provide that nurses holding a multistate license would not be required to obtain a single-state license in order to practice as an advanced practice registered nurse and bring state law in line with the Multistate Nurse Licensure Compact.

It would expand the exemption from the four protocol limit for APRNs practicing at county hospitals that don’t order drugs to also cover situations where the physician medical director maintains a less than 14 day supply of drugs other than Schedule II controlled substances and benzodiazepines. Imaging, medical devices, would still need to be referred out.

SB 212 (Martin, 9th) – Driving Schools

This legislation would allow driving schools licensed for 2 years to offer the on-the-road driving skills required for issuing a driver’s license if the applicant has completed classroom or online driver training courses with a minimum of 30 class hours and six in-car hours licensed by the department of driver services provided by a licensed employee of the school administering the on-the-road driving skills test. Applicants 18 or older must have completed only the 6 hours of in-car instruction.

SB 214 (Martin, 9th) – Body Art Studios and Electrical Contractor Training

This legislation would include piercings as body art and regulate them in the same way as tattoo studios. It would require body art studios to conspicuously display an 11x14 printed sign with one inch lettering warning that body art on the face, neck, forearm, hand, or lower leg may automatically disqualify a person from military service. It would also remove the good moral character requirement for beauty professionals.

It would also allow any organization to conduct electrical continuing educations o long as the fees are nondiscriminatory and the programs will be financially self-sustaining. It would also prevent non-electrical contractors from advertising that their business or profession is electrical contracting unless an electrical contractor does the work.

It would require apprentice beauty professionals to take their theory exam within the first year of the apprenticeship.

It is also SB 92 that This legislation would prohibit all state boards issuing professional licenses from refusing to issue, suspending, or revoking a license of a person who has defaulted on their student loans. The legislation would also end the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation's duty to provide licensing entities with a certified list of borrowers in default.

HB 166 (Silcox, 52nd) — Licensing of Genetic Counselors

This legislation would license and regulate genetic counselors that test genetic samples for possible medical conditions and advise patients based on the results. Councilors would be required to either have a masters or doctorate in genetic counseling from an American Board of Genetic Counseling or American Board of Medical Genetics and Genomics accredited program or have a doctorate and complete ABMG accredited medical genetics training program as well as pass an approved exam developed by the ABGC or AMBG. Genetic councilors would be required to obtain at least 30 hours of continuing education biennially.

HB 242 (Hawkins, 27th) – Georgia Board of Massage Therapy

The legislation would allow technical schools to teach massage therapy and provide that out of state educations can be recognized in Georgia. It allow the Georgia Board of Massage Therapy to request on-site inspections of massage therapy businesses and educational programs and require continuing education. It would also require therapists to carry property, bodily, and report for \$1 million in single occurrence liability and \$3 million for all occurrences.

This bill also updates the fines imposed on noncompliant massage therapy entities and educational programs so that first offenders will be fined between \$500-\$5,000. Second time offenders will be fined between \$5,000-\$10,000. For every subsequent violation after the second time, they shall be fined up to \$25,000 dollars and be banned from practice.

It would allow local governments to impose additional restrictions on massage therapy.

HB 253 (Hawkins, 27th) – Occupational Therapy Practice Act

This legislation would allow occupational therapists to practice telehealth. It would clarify that occupation therapy is therapeutic engagement of daily activities to improve physical, cognitive, psychosocial, sensory-perceptual, and other aspects of performance to promote health, well-being, and quality of life. It would incorporate regulations outlining unprofessional conduct into code. It would provide that occupational therapists can use orthotic devices to support or immobilize body parts. It would make other technical and administrative changes to the occupational therapy code.

HB 459 (Ehrhart, 36th) – Bus Driver License Database

This legislation would create a database of all bus drivers' driver's licenses under DPS. Schools would update the database twice a year. If a bus driver loses his or her driver's license DPS would immediately notify the school who would lose his or her bus driving privileges and would have to apply for reinstatement upon receiving a new driver's license.

It would also allow sheriffs to designate crossing guards in addition to police chiefs. It would require crossing guards to complete one hour of education from POST.

HB 516 (Vance, 133rd) – Professional Structural Engineers

This legislation would create the profession of professional structural engineering. Structural engineers would design and analyze large structure and bridge construction projects.

It is also SB 204 that strips certain kick-boxing organizations of regulatory power over amateur combat sports.

Local Governments

SB 95 (Robertson, 29th) – Extend Local Government Utility Contract Length

This legislation would extend maximum contract lengths between local governments and utility companies from 10 to 20 years.

SB 171 (Wilkinson, 50th) – Raise County Official Salaries

This legislation would raise the salaries of Superior Court clerks, probate judges, sheriffs, tax collectors, and tax commissioners, mostly by about 5-10%. The actual salary varies depending on the size of the county, and some stipends are raised by larger amounts.

SB 177 (Brass, 28th) – Require Local Maps to go through Reapportionment Office

This legislation would provide that the General Assembly consider redistricting or new municipality district creation plans for local government entities only if the plan was drawn by Legislative and Congressional Reapportionment Office staff or the plan was submitted to the office before adoption by the local government entity. The local government entity would be required to obtain a letter of sponsorship supporting the redistricting plan from a General Assembly member representing the area. If the office determines

the plan is unlawful, the local entity could either allow the office to re-draft the plan or re-draft it themselves and resubmit it to the office

HB 221 (Rogers, 10th) — Increasing Bonding Capacity for GWCC

This legislation would raise the Georgia World Congress Center authority's bond capacity from \$400 million to \$500 million

HB 315 (Newton, 123rd) – Ethical Requirements for Local Government Consultants

This legislation would require consultants for local governments to enter an ethics agreement with the local government and to disclose any possible conflicts of interest or be at risk for damages and injunctions.

HB 349 (Martin, 49th) – Allow County Redevelopment Authorities to Operate in Cities

This legislation would allow county development authorities to operate in cities pursuant to a resolution enacted by the city.

HB 379 (Moore, 95th) – SPLOST Reports

This legislation would change the date by which a local government must submit its SPLOST report from December 31 to 180 days following the close of the fiscal year.

HB 387 (Lumsden, 12th) – Lien for Private Fire Departments

This legislation would allow private, nonprofit fire departments to file liens based on FEMA approved rates.

HB 405 (Knight, 130th) – Extend Freeport Exemption

This would extend the freeport exemption that allows local governments to exempt property in inventory from ad valorem taxes also apply to taxpayer's affiliates that are 50% owned or considered affiliates under federal law and to property held for remanufacture or repair.

HB 406 (Williamson, 115th) – Joint Authorities

This legislation would require joint authorities to file financial statements with the Department of Revenue so that the department can adjust tax digests to reflect the authority activities.

HB 456 (Tankersley, 160th) – Audit Thresholds for Local Govts

This legislation would increase the expenditure threshold at which local government audits become mandatory from \$300,000 to \$550,000.

HB 493 (Tanner, 9th) – Permitting Fees

This legislation would limit local governments from imposing permitting fees that exceed the actual approximate costs of processing the applications. A local government would have five days to inform an applicant that their application is incomplete. The 30 day window to approve or deny an application would toll while an incomplete application is being completed. It would eliminate the 20 day additional period to review an application and would allow the applicant to hire a third party to review the application if the local government can't process an application within the 30 day window, in which case the permitting fees would be halved. Delays outside of the control of the local government would not count against the 30 days.

It would increase the insurance requirement for plan reviewers and inspectors from \$1 million to \$2 million for projects with a construction cost over \$5 million.

Natural Resources and Environment

SB 72 (Harper, 7th) – Hunting

This legislation would allow air guns .30 caliber or larger to be used for big game hunting during primitive weapon hunts, primitive weapon season, and firearm seasons, with a July 1, 2024 sunset. It would also allow the department to extend deer season for archery from January 16 to January 31 anywhere instead of just in metro counties. It would remove the restriction requiring hunters to only take two bucks a day along with up to ten does and allow taking of any 12 deer and would allow DNR to suspend the bag limit on DNR managed land. It would also close opossum and raccoon season March 1 to October 14 everywhere instead of just north Georgia. It would remove the restriction on placing hog bait within 50 yards of a property line and instead provide that hog bait must not cause hunting of out of season animals. It would also remove the requirement to use a plug in shotguns with magazines that can hold over three rounds.

It would allow deer baiting statewide instead of just in south Georgia.

It would designate the shoal bass as the state riverine sport fish.

HB 201 (Hogan, 179th) – Houseboat Sewage

This legislation would prohibit anchoring live-aboard vessels in estuaries outside of areas approved by DNR. It would also prohibit any discharge of sewage, treated or untreated, into estuaries.

HB 220 (Rogers, 10th) – Extend and Reduce Hazardous and Solid Waste Trust Fund Fees

This legislation would extend the tipping fee on private landfills intended to fund the solid waste trust fund through June 30, 2022 and reduce it from 75¢/ton to 51¢/ton. The tire disposal fee intended to fund the solid waste trust fund through June 30, 2022. The fee would be reduced from \$1/tire to 38¢/tire. It would extend the surcharge on disposed hazardous waste through June 30, 2022 at the same rates as today.

HB 223 (Dickey, 223th) – Animal Waste as a Hazardous Material

This bill would add animal waste as a hazardous material that must be reported to DNR when an amount of waste is released that exceeds EPA guidelines. It would not apply to regulated pesticides used consistent with labelling or air emissions from a farm.

HB 445 (Hogan, 179th) – Shore Buffers

This legislation would allow development up to 25 feet from the edge of the dunes, a seawall, or if there are no dunes or seawalls, 25 feet from the high water line or 100 feet for state owned property. It would allow DNR to approve landscaping and construction of decks and dune walks that affect less than 1/3 of a parcel without involving the Shoreline Protection Committee.

HB 501 (Petrea, 166th) – Shellfish Harvesting

This legislation would require shellfish harvesters to have a shellfish endorsement on their commercial fishing licenses. It would allow harvesters to petition the DNR board to harvest shellfish out of season. Leases of intertidal public shellfish beds would be done by competitive bidding with a minimum price of \$15/acre. Subtidal beds would be leased through a lottery at a minimum price of \$50/acre. Leases would be for ten years and could be transferred with a \$50 fee or inherited for free. Shellfish farming would require a permit with a fee of \$1/cage and a \$20,000 bond.

Public Safety

SB 25 (Heath, 31st) – No Passing Busses When Only Separated By A Turn Lane

This legislation would provide that drivers can only pass a school bus when on the opposite side of a road divided by a median or physical barrier and no longer allow passing when the only separation is a turn lane.

SB 79 (Gooch, 51st) – Apply Multiple Sign Regulations to Digital Billboards

This legislation would apply the prohibition on flashing lighting and the 5,000 foot gap requirement on mechanical multiple message billboards to also apply to electronic ones.

HB 307 (Powell, 32nd) – Abandoned Motor Vehicle Act

This bill would provide a process for businesses to remove abandoned vehicles from public right of ways and public/private property. The bill would provide processes for police officers to check and mark abandoned vehicles so they can be removed later. Abandoned vehicles would include those left behind after its operator was arrested. It also includes provisions for two companies and salvage yards to request information from the Dept of Public Safety as to who the owner of the vehicle is. If after 60 days a salvager cannot discover the identity of the vehicle's owner it must be post notice of the taking in a local county newspaper. A towing or salvage company shall send notice to the owner of the vehicle they have 30 days to recover all personal items found in the vehicle. After 15 days they also must send notice to the owner about the location of the car currently and the fees that are associated with storage of the vehicle.

This bill also includes the process for how a towing or salvage yard can claim an abandoned vehicle to receive a lien on the vehicle for unpaid storage fees, how the owner can file an answer to that claim and the processes for how it will play out in court. A court can order the abandoned vehicle to be put up for public sale to pay off the lien of the towing or salvage yard companies. All forms would have to be no longer than 1-page front and back.

HB 454 (Tanner, 9th) – Electric Bikes

This legislation would allow electric bicycles that can't travel over 20 mph to operate the same as regular bikes.

Electric bikes that travel up to 28 mph would be allowed in bike lanes on the road and paths when allowed by a local government, would have to have a speedometer. To ride one, one must be over 15 and wear a helmet.

HB 458 (Gullett, 19th) – No Testing of Class B Fire-Fighting Foam

This bill would prohibit the use of class B fire-fighting foam for testing purposes if such foam contains intentionally added PFAS chemicals, which is a class of fluorinated organic chemicals. It would not prohibit use during emergency firefighting situations or usages at a testing facility that has implemented measures to prevent the foam from seeping into the environment.

Real Estate and Property

HB 192 (Powell, 32nd) – Appraisal Management Companies

This legislation would extend Real Estate Appraisers Board to regulate all appraisal management companies that provide real estate appraisals, not just for companies that act as a third party intermediary between creditors and appraisals. It would prohibit registration of appraisal management companies by anyone whose appraisal license has been revoked and non reinstated. Any disciplinary action against an appraisal management company would be reported to federal regulators. It would allow the board to conduct background checks into anyone that owns 10% or more of an appraisal management company to determine tie ethical standing. It would eliminate the provision requiring an appraisal to be more than 20% off the tax valuation in order to start an investigation into the appraiser or management company.

HB 212 (Pirkle, 155th) – Provide that Mobile Home Sellers Aren't Mortgage Lenders

This legislation would provide that mobile home and prefabricated building sellers that simply transmit loan applications to mortgage lenders are not mortgage lenders.

HB 224 (Williamson, 115th) – Job Creation Tax Credits

This legislation would require employers taking the high paying job tax credit to create at least five jobs in one year in Tier 1 counties, at least ten jobs in one year in Tier 2 counties, or 50 jobs in two years anywhere. The \$2,500 to \$5,000 credit value that scales with how much over the average wage the job pays would be unchanged.

It would increase the threshold investment to be eligible for the manufacturing tax credit of 5% to 8% of the investment in a Tier 1 county, 3% in a Tier 2 county, or 1% in a tier 3 or 4 county from \$50,000 in investment per year to \$100,000 in investment per year. Taxpayers that create jobs in both Tier 1 and 2 counties could take up to a \$1 million credit over the 50% of total income maximum by reducing their eligibility in the other

tier by the same amount, with an aggregate cap of \$20 million. Companies carrying forward the tax credits would be required to maintain 100 employees and \$10 million investment per year to continue to carry the credit forward.

HB 314 (Stephens, 164th) – Titles for All Boats

This legislation would require all boats, including unpowered boats not required to be numbered, to be titled with a certificate of number, and any motor with 25 horsepower or greater used for driving the boat to be included on the boat's title. Before a person sells a hull damaged boat that became damaged while the owner owned the boat, the person must obtain a new certificate of number that includes the designation hull-damaged. Failure to obtain a new certificate of number or bill of sale identifying the boat as hull damaged would result in a civil penalty of \$1,000. Boats used only by manufacturers or retailers for demonstrations are not required to be titled.

HB 344 (Gambill, 15th) – Exempt No-Interest Home Repair Nonprofits from Property Taxes

This legislation would exempt real property owned by non-profits from property taxes if the property is used exclusively for building or repairing single-family homes with financing by the charity that provides interest-free loans to individuals. If any part of the property is not financed without interest by such charity to an individual purchasing a single-family home then the full amount of all ad valorem taxes shall become due and payable. It would be subject to a statewide referendum.

HB 490 (Ridley, 6th) – Intestate Deceased Account Holders

This legislation would increase from \$10,000 to \$15,000 that banks can easily dispose of when an account holder dies intestate because of not having a will. Family members would retain first priority but would have to provide a notarized affidavit. It would reduce from 90 to 45 the number of days family members have to claim the account before it could be used to pay off unpaid funeral or medical bills. It would eliminate provisions allowing partial disbursement of accounts that exceed the threshold and allowing banks to transfer accounts below the threshold. It also would create the affidavit form.

Regulated Industries

SB 2 (Gooch, 51st) – Allow EMCs to Provide Broadband

This legislation would permit electric membership corporations to directly or indirectly provide broadband. Cross-subsidization between the EMC's electric services, gas ser-

vices, and broadband services would be prohibited. EMCs could not condition receipt of electricity services on usage of the broadband services or affiliate. EMCs that were offering broadband before January 1, 2019 in any area could continue offering those services. Existing electrical easements could be used for providing broadband services without being a new use that would terminate the easement unless additional poles or installations are constructed.

SB 17 (Gooch, 51st) – Allow Rural Telephone Cooperatives to Provide Broadband

This legislation would allow rural telephone cooperatives to directly or indirectly provide broadband services either in conjunction with telephone services or separately. Cooperatives would be allowed to operate in areas other than those covered by its typical operations.

SB 66 (Gooch, 51st) – Small Cell Permitting

This legislation would allow cell providers to install utility poles in public rights to install cells with antennas smaller than 6 cubic feet and total volume of less than 28 cubic feet and to install those cells on existing publicly owned poles, except in places where utilities must be buried. Local governments could charge \$100 per cell, \$250 per pole that the provider will replace, and \$1,000 for new polls the provider will add upon installation, plus any costs incurred by the local government to prepare the site and any nondiscriminatory fees other than a building permit. They could charge \$100 per cell, \$200 per cell on an added pole each year, plus \$40 per year if the device is mounted on a publicly owned pole. These rates would increase 2.5% per year beginning in 2021. These caps would be eliminated if the courts rule that a federal law being litigated preempts state fee caps. Carriers and local governments would be able to negotiate different fee structures.

The cells could not extend more than ten feet above the maximum pole height in the area would have to comply with neutral and nondiscriminatory zoning and other ordinances, including requirements to conceal equipment in state and federal historic areas. Local governments could move the location for proposed new poles up to 100 feet in residential areas. Providers seeking to install polls would be required to certify that collocation would be impractical.

Providers would be able to submit consolidated applications to place cells in a two mile radius. Local governments would have 20 days to review applications unless a single providers submits a number of applications exceeding a threshold that depends on the size of the local government.

SB 100 (Martin, 9th) – Allows Wireless Devices for Dual Party Relay Service

This legislation would allow the distribution of wireless devices to the physically impaired who are part of the telecommunications equipment distribution program for the dual-party relay system.

SB 153 (Harper, 7th) – Regulate Trauma Scene Cleanup

This legislation would regulate companies that clean up trauma scenes where potentially infectious or biomedical waste may be present. Nobody could own a trauma scene clean up companies if he or she is on felony probation and would have to undergo a background check every three years at a cost of \$100. Companies would have to submit a \$25,000 surety bond and carry \$100,000 in insurance. Any non-registered company would be fined up to \$5,000. Licensure would not be required for medical facilities or property owners cleaning their own property.

Revenue and Taxation

Process

SB 65 (Harper, 7th) – TAVT

This legislation would exempt the transfer of a vehicle title between two entities owned by the same person from title ad valorem tax

It is also HB 365 that would lower the TAVT from 7% to 6.6% from January 1, 2020 to June 30, 2023. It would also set taxable value of used cars purchased from a new or used car dealer without a financing agreement at retail price minus reduction for trade-in value of another car. The average current fair market value and current wholesale value of a motor vehicle as determined by the state revenue commissioner's current motor vehicle ad valorem assessment manual for used cars purchased from persons who are not car dealers. It would also provide that car year models of 1963-1989 would be subject to only 1/2 the TAVT rather than 1963-1985 year models.

SB 67 (Burke, 11th) – Funding for Damaged or Destroyed Schools

This legislation would allow schools destroyed or damaged by fire or natural disaster to automatically receive state capital outlay funds or low-wealth capital outlay grants typically used to expand schools experiencing rapid enrollment growth to update, repair, or replace facilities so long as they are less than 20 years old instead of having to submit a request to DOE. It would also allow schools consolidating facilities to qualify for low-wealth capital outlay grants to cover the shortfall between SPLOST revenue and the cost of the project

SB 120 (Albers, 56th) – Review Tax Expenditures

This legislation would allow the chairpersons of the House Committee on Ways and Means and Senate Finance Committee to request up to 3 economic analyses, on or before December 1 of the year of request, to determine the costs to the state and resulting economic activity and public benefit. If a fiscal note is requested within 1 year of the economic analysis, a summary of the analysis will be attached to the fiscal note.

SB 127 (Hufstetler, 52nd)–Electronic Reports

This legislation would require motor fuel distributors to file their monthly activities report used to determine the gas tax electronically.

SB 128 (Hufstetler, 52nd) – Marketplace Facilitators

This legislation is a version of HB 276 that would require any company that contracts with sellers to enable physical or electronic retail sales of at least \$100,000 to collect and pay sales taxes. No class action right would exist for customers against facilitators for overpayment of sales tax but customers could ask for a refund.

It is also HB 182 that would lower the threshold at which out of state vendors must pay sales taxes from \$250,000 to \$100,000.

SB 132 (Harbin, 16th) – Reinstate Job Creation Premium Tax Credit and Update Insurance Code

This legislation would reinstate the \$500 tax credit for insurance companies that create full-time jobs that last for one year. It would remove some statutory reporting requirements. It would eliminate the Georgia Health Insurance Risk Pool. It would also update language throughout the insurance code.

SB 133 (Harbin, 16th) – Increase Penalties for Health Insurance Violations and Update Code

This legislation would increase the threshold amount for a felony violation for health insurance laws from \$500 to \$1,000. It would also update language throughout the health insurance code.

SB 183 (Hufstetler, 52nd) – File 1099-K with DoR and Penalize Employers Who Send W2s Late

This legislation would require persons to file 1099-K with the IRS forms for independent contractors who accepted over \$20,000 in credit card payments and processed more than 200 individual transactions through a third party payment service with DoR.

It is also SB 128 that would penalize employers who do not provide employees with a W-2 by January 31 or fail to file their withholding statement to the state by February 28. Employers would be fined \$10 per statement if 1-30 days later to a max of \$50,000, \$20 per statement if provided 31 to 210 calendar days late to a max of \$100,000, and \$50 per statement if 211 or more days late to a max of \$200,000.

SB 216 (Mullis, 53rd) – Prepaid Ad Valorem tax

This legislation would allow prepayment of ad valorem taxes to county and municipal governments pursuant to authorization by the local government.

It would also allow the tax commissioner or tax collector to conduct tax sales in the office of the commissioner or the collector after providing notice in a conspicuous location of the courthouse.

HB 182 (Harrell, 106th) – Lower Online Sales Tax Threshold to \$100,000

This legislation would drop the threshold at which an out of state retailer must pay Georgia income taxes from \$250,000/year to \$100,000/year.

HB 183 (Harrell, 106th) – No Loss of Appeal for Failure to File Property Tax Return

This legislation would provide that a taxpayer's failure to file a property tax return or whether the return was property was deemed submitted would not affect the taxpayer's right to appeal.

HB 221 (Rogers, 10th) — Increasing Bonding Capacity for GWCC

This legislation would raise the Georgia World Congress Center authority's bond capacity from \$400 million to \$500 million

HB 276 (Harrell, 106th) – Taxing Marketplace Facilitators

This legislation would require any company that contracts with sellers to enable physical or electronic retail sales of at least \$100,000 to collect and pay sales taxes. No class action right would exist for customers against facilitators for overpayment of sales tax but customers could ask for a refund.

Marketplace facilitators would be able to relieve themselves of liability for failure to collect sales tax if they demonstrate that the error was due to the retailer providing the facilitator with incorrect or insufficient information, if the marketplace facilitator is not the retailer nor does the facilitator maintain a relationship with the retailer, and if the error was due to an error in sourcing the sale.

It would also exempt transportation by a limousine, taxi, or ride share service from sales and use taxes.

HB 419 (Knight, 130th) – Annual IRS Update

This legislation is the annual IRS update to incorporate federal changes from 2018. It would also allow DOR to go after any partner located in Georgia of a partnership where one partner filed a fraudulent return.

HB 446 (Knight, 130th) – Make Hurricane Michael Timber Tax Credit Nontransferable

This bill would provide that the tax credit for timber losses suffered as a result of Hurricane Michael is nontransferable. It would make the tax credit available for restoration to an adequately state.

HB 507 (Wilensky, 79th) – Make Using Income for Valuations Optional

This bill legislation would make the income a property generates only a consideration and not a requirement for determining the fair market value for property under the income method of valuation.

Tax Cuts and Expenditures

SB 138 (Martin IV, 9th) – Tax Cuts for Disabled First Responders

This legislation would exempt disability income for disabled first responders or their surviving dependents from state income tax. It would also allow disabled first responders to receive free license plates and revalidation stickers. Vehicles registered to disabled first responders would also be exempt from the first \$50,000 of ad valorem tax.

It would also create a special license plate for Sickle Cell Foundation of Georgia.

HB 35 (Watson, 172nd) – Exempt Non-profit Poultry Diagnostic Sales from Sales Taxes

This legislation would exempt sales to or by non-profits with the primary purpose of providing poultry diagnostic and disease monitoring services from sales taxes.

HB 85 (Houston, 170th) – Exempts Organ Procurement Organizations from Sales Taxes

This legislation would exempt organ procurement organizations that facilitate organ transplants from sales and use taxes. Recipient organizations to submit an annual report to the Department of Community Health that includes the number of donors and transplants facilitated by such organization in the organization's previous fiscal year. It would also exempt gym and gun range membership fees.

HB 168 (Taylor, 173rd) – Extend Nonprofit Health Sales Tax Exemption

This legislation would extend the sales tax exemptions for nonprofit health centers and nonprofit volunteer health centers through June 30, 2024.

HB 266 (Wiedower, 119th) – Increase 529 Deduction

This legislation would increase state income tax deductions for contributions made to a 529 college savings plan from \$2,000 per beneficiary to \$4,000 per beneficiary or from \$4,000 to \$8,000 for contributors filing joint returns.

HB 287 (Dubnik, 29th) – Community Based Preceptors

This legislation would provide a tax credit for doctors, APRNs, and physician assistants that conduct 160 hour student training rotations. The credit would be \$500 for rotations 1-3 and \$1,000 for rotations 4-10 for physicians and \$375 for rotations 1-3 and \$750 for rotations 4-10 for APRNs and PAs. It would sunset December 31, 2023.

It would eliminate the \$1,000 tax credits for physicians that provide at least three training rotations.

HB 352 (Reeves, 34th) – Extend Project of Regional Impact Sales Tax Exemption

This legislation would extend the sales tax exemption for materials used in projects deemed by the Commissioner of Economic Development to have a significant regional impact.

Retirement and Pensions

SB 55 (Hufstetler, 52nd) – ERS Supplemental Pensions

This bill would allow ERS to offer a supplemental guaranteed lifetime annuity to retired members. Eligible members could transfer funds from their 401(k) or 457(b) to purchase the annuity at full actuarial cost. The minimum amount that could be transferred would be \$25,000. Retirees could buy two annuities between retirement and the later of when they begin receiving their pension or the year they turn 70. The retiree could not later decide to receive a lump sum disbursement.

HB 196 (Benton, 31st) – Education for Retirement System Trustees

This legislation would require new trustees of public retirement systems to complete eight hours of training and all trustees to complete at least twelve hours of training every two years.

HB 319 (Williams, 148th) – Death Benefits for Firefighters Without Beneficiaries

This legislation would pay death benefits to the estates of firefighters who die without any living named beneficiaries.

State Government

SR 1 (Miller, 49th) – Adoption of Senate Rules

Sexual harassment complainants who go public would be subject to sanctions, including dismissal of the complaint and being held in contempt. Allegations two years old or older would not be investigated. The burden of proof for moving from a preliminary investigation to a full investigation would be raised from probable cause to substantial cause. Protesting and signs would be prohibited in the Senate, the gallery, and most of the Senate environs. It also allows the Rules Committee to amend or substitute bills on the general calendar.

SB 99 (Harper, 7th) – Enroll as Organ Donor When Applying for Hunting or Fishing License

This legislation would allow people to enroll as organ donors when applying for a hunting, trapping, or fishing license.

SB 170 (Thompson, 14th) – Honor and Remember Flag

This legislation would designate the Honor and Remember flag as the state's emblem of armed services members who died in the line of duty. The flag could be displayed along with other flags at state facilities so long as the flag is made in the US. Local governments could display the flag at any local government building that also displays the American flag.

HB 197 (Dempsey, 13th) – Georgia Data Analytic Center

This legislation would create the Georgia Data Analytic Center to collect health data from state agencies and make available de-identified aggregate data to be used by researchers.

HB 322 (McCall, 33rd) – Procurement Registry

This legislation would increase the threshold at which a bid must be posted to the state procurement registry from \$10,000 to \$100,000. It would be posted on the registry for the same period of time as the bid must be posted in the legal organ or other method required by the local government.

HB 382 (Burns, 159th) – Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Trust Fund Project Proposal Funding

This legislation would require the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Trust Fund to accept applications from qualified local governments, recreation authorities registered with the Department of Community Affairs, state agencies, and nongovernmental entities for project proposals eligible for funding. The Outdoor Stewardship Trust Fund would also be required to fund those projects. Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Trust Fund money would also be available to the state for the costs of administering the program, but the money could not exceed 5% of total state revenue. The Department of Natural Resource's annual report would also be required to include program administration expenditures.

HB 512 (Watson, 172nd) – Agricultural Commodity Commission for Propane

This legislation would create the Agricultural Commodity Commission for Propane. It would be composed of three propane distributors or dealers appointed by the House Agriculture Committee, three distributors or propane dealers appointed by the Senate Agriculture Committee, and one non-legislator distributor or dealer appointed by the other six members. It would be able to issue marketing orders imposing a fee of up to 0.4¢/gallon on propane sold by distributors to dealers, subject to a referendum by propane dealers in Georgia, to market propane in the same manner as other commodity commissions such as Georgia Grown. Dealers could opt out but would not receive any marketing benefits.

HB 553 (Dempsey, 13th) – Repealing Obsolete Committees & Councils

This legislation would repeal various committees, advisory councils, panels, and compacts related to health insurance, medical care, education, economic development, the arts, child care, and senior care. The relevant powers would return back to the agencies responsible for managing those issues.

HR 1 (Ralston, 7th) – Dedicate the Nathan Deal Judicial Center

HR 37 (Tanner, 9th) – Create Georgia Commission on Freight and Logistics

HR 51 (Morris, 26th) – Joint Georgia-North Carolina and Georgia-Tennessee Boundary Line Commission

State Agencies, Authorities, Boards, and Commissions

SB 140 (Harbison, 15th) – Extending Sunset Provision for WW1 Centennial Commission

This legislation would extend the sunset provision from July 28, 2019 to December 31, 2019.

HB 392 (Weidower, 119th) – Expense and Travel Allowance for Board of Public Safety

This bill would allow expense allowance and travel cost reimbursements for members of the Board of Public Safety in the same manner as other state board members.

HB 514 (Tanner, 9th) – Georgia Behavioral Health Reform and Innovation Commission

This legislation would create the Georgia Behavioral Health Reform and Innovation Commission to conduct a comprehensive review of the behavioral health system to comply with a settlement entered into between Georgia and the DOJ. It would be overseen by a board of medical providers, law enforcement, judges, state legislators, department heads, and community service board members.

HB 525 (Stephens, 164th) – State Takeover of the Georgia International and Maritime Trade Center

This legislation would take over the Georgia International and Maritime Trade Center and rename it the Savannah Convention Center. It would be overseen by a board of six appointees by the Governor, three members appointed by the Chatham County delegation, the president of the Savannah Economic Development Authority, and the president of the Savannah Area Convention and Visitors' Bureau.

License Plates

SB 8 (Martin, 9th) – Atlanta United License Plate

This legislation would create a special license plate for the Atlanta United Foundation.

SB 137 (Lucas, 26th) – Tuskegee University License Plates

This bill would create a new Tuskegee University license plate. The funds of the sale from the license plates would be disbursed to the Atlanta Tuskegee Alumni Club.

SB 227 (Martin, 9th) – Boys & Girls Club License Plate

This legislation would create a license plate for the Georgia Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs with funds going to the organization.

This legislation is also HB 56 that would allow vehicles with an alternative fuel license plate displaying a logo or emblem of the manufacturer or distributor to use preferential travel lane on highways.

HB 339 (McClain, 100th) – Alabama A&M License Plate

This legislation would create and Alabama A&M University license place with funds directed to the alumni association. It would create an Autism Awareness license plate with funds going to the Autism Alliance of Georgia.

Transportation

SB 25 (Heath, 31st) – No Passing Busses When Only Separated By A Turn Lane

This legislation would provide that drivers can only pass a school bus when on the opposite side of a road divided by a median or physical barrier and no longer allow passing when the only separation is a turn lane.

SB 149 (Robertson, 29th) – No Impound for Expired Registrations and Digital License Plates

This legislation would no longer allow law enforcement to impound a vehicle just for an expired registration sticker so long as the owner obtains an up to date sticker by the time they go to court. Officers would still be able to impound vehicles with no plate at all. It would also double the maximum fine for failing to maintain up to date vehicle registration stickers from \$25 to \$50 and provide that owners of vehicles with expired registrations can still be fined if someone else is driving.

It would also allow counties to contract with companies to provide digital license plates that that display information electronically.

It also revises Class C licenses to include three wheeled vehicles with seatbelts and frames that enclose the operator and class M vehicles to include motorcycles equipped with seatbelts and a frame enclosing the driver. It would also allow people to use cell-phone mounts.

SR 76 (Anderson, 24th) – Road Dedications

HB 101 (Ridley, 6th) – Regulate Side-by-sides as ATVs

This legislation would regulate off-road vehicles 80 inches or fewer wide and under 2,500 lbs in the same manner as single-rider ones.

HB 225 (Rich, 97th) – Annual Motor Carrier Federal Reference Update

This legislation would update the reference date to incorporate federal regulations regarding the safe operation of motor carriers and commercial motor vehicles made in the past year.

HR 346 (Tankersley, 160th) – Road Dedications

Veterans and Military

SB 103 (Davenport, 44th) – Free Parking for Veterans at Georgia Airports

This legislation would require publicly owned airports to provide at least 2 priority parking spots for disabled veterans.

HB 25 (Houston, 112th) – Service Members Terminating Contracts Due to Relocation

This bill would allow service members the right to terminate their tv, video, audio programming and gym contracts within 30 days of receiving military orders to relocate for a period of at least 90 days to somewhere where the service member can't get the same service after relocating.

HB 33 (Lumsden, 12th) – Grace Period for Active Duty Military Whose WCP Expires

This legislation would allow active duty military members whose weapons carry licenses expire while they're deployed to carry a gun for up to six months with their expired WCP and a copy of their orders. The service member would be able to apply for a renewal license during this period.

HB 59 (Belton, 112th) – Allow Military Children to Enroll in School Immediately

This legislation would allow students with active duty parents or guardians who have received orders to transfer into Georgia to be eligible for school enrollment prior to establishing physical residency within the school system upon presentation of physical copy of military orders.

Bills Failed in the Senate

SB 173 (Dolezal, 27th) – School Vouchers

This legislation would provide a private school voucher equal to the system-wide average per student amount in the student's resident school system or the amount determined by an IEP for students with an IEP. Students would qualify if their family has an income below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level and is currently enrolled in a public school, if the student has been adopted from foster care, if the student has an active duty military service member parent stationed in Georgia within the previous year, if the student has a disability and an IEP, if the student has a documented case of having been bullied, or if the student spent the prior school year attending Georgia public schools. The initial number of participating students would be 0.5% of state-wide total public enrollment for the 2017-2018 year. The total number of students would increase by 0.5% up to a maximum of 5%.

Participating schools must demonstrate fiscal soundness by having operated for 1 school year or submitting a financial information report confirming the school has sufficient capital or credit to operate the school for the upcoming school year, comply with antidiscrimination provisions, comply with all health and safety laws and other laws applying to pri-

vate schools, and employ or contract with teachers who hold at least a bachelor's degree and have 3 years experience in education.

Bills Only Passed by the Senate

Bills Not Considered by the House

SB 32 (Kirkpatrick, 32nd) – Immunity for Rescuing Animals from Hot Cars

This legislation would provide immunity from civil damages to any person rescuing or attempting to rescue an incapacitated or physically endangered animal from a locked vehicle so long as the person contacts 9-1-1 or law enforcement. It would provide that the existing emergency care and new animal rescue immunity do not apply in the case of except for gross negligence, willful or wanton misconduct, or malfeasance and that it only applies when the person contacts law enforcement and waits for an officer to arrive.

SB 43 (Payne, 54th) – Allow Local Utilities to Issue Bonds for Electrical Transmission

This legislation would allow local governments to issue revenue bonds for transmitting electricity, in addition to generation and distribution. It would also only require a referendum for expanding public electrical systems when the utility has assets less than \$300 million instead of all expansion.

SB 56 (Hufstetler, 52nd) – Surprise Billing

This legislation would require health insurers to pay for emergency medical care when provided by out-of-network providers without need for prior authorization and charge patients the same for emergency medical care provided by out-of-network providers as for in-network providers. Patients would be eligible for mediation for surprise bills greater than \$1,000.

When an out of network provider provides emergency care the provider would be able to bill the patient's insurer the lesser of the provider's billed charges or the eightieth percentile of all charges for the particular health care service performed by a health care provider in the same or similar specialty and provided in the same geographical area. The Insurance Department would maintain a public database of those rates and adjust it annually based on CPI-Medical.

The bill would also require Physicians to provide patients and prospective patients with a list of health care providers the office utilizes for anesthesiology, laboratory, pathology, radiology, or assistant surgeon services 48 hours prior to patient use of those services.

Hospitals would be required to post the following on their websites: health benefit plans in which they participate, a statement that physician services provided in the hospital are not included in hospital charges, and that physicians providing services in the hospital may or may not participate in the same health benefit plans as the hospital.

Insurers would be required to provide enrollees with information about obtaining care from out-of-network providers where geographically necessary, notice that enrollees shall have direct access to primary and preventive obstetric and gynecological services. Insurers must also provide enrollees with a description of the methodology used for billing out-of-network care.

SB 58 (Karinshak, 48th) – Private Civil Action Against Fraudulent Tax Claims

This legislation would allow private citizens to bring a civil action, without the Attorney General's consent, for any false taxpayer claims the Attorney General elects not to pursue. The person bringing the action would receive all pleadings and depositions the Attorney General collected before deciding against proceeding.

SB 104 (Payne, 54th) – Require Parental Consent for DNR

This legislation would expressly require oral or written parental consent before a do not resuscitate order is issued for a minor. Legal guardians would not be able to consent.

SB 131 (Jones, 25th) – State Airport Takeover

This legislation would create a state authority to take over the Atlanta airport. The authority board would be the Governor or his designee, the Lt. Governor or his designee, the Speaker or his designee, the DOT commissioner, the Public Safety commissioner, and two business appointees each by the Lt. Governor and Speaker.

SB 144 (Anderson, 24th) — Special Event Tobacco Permit

This legislation would allow any licensed tobacco dealer to apply for a special event tobacco permit to allow for the temporary off-premise sale of tobacco products for special events. The permits would last 1-10 days and would cost no more than 10 dollars.

SB 146 (Ginn, 47th) – Allow Tastings at Liquor Stores

This legislation would allow liquor stores to conduct up to 52 tastings every year so long as the tasting lasts fewer than four hours, only involves one type of alcohol, and no more

than four bottles are open at a time. Servings would be limited to 8 oz of beer, 5 oz of wine, or 1.5 oz of liquor.

SB 161 (Tippins, 37th) – Add 0.5 GPA for Advanced Courses

This legislation would add 0.5 to As, Bs, Cs, and Ds for students that take AP, IB, or dual credit courses when calculating GPAs for HOPE and Zell Miller eligibility. It would also provide that a student’s HOPE GPA would also be used for the Zell Miller Scholarship.

SB 162 (Brass, 28th) – Allow Development Authorities to Finance Broadband and Disaster Repair

This legislation would allow development authorities and downtown development authorities to finance projects to install broadband infrastructure and repairs for damage done by natural disasters. Any clauses in a mortgage requiring accelerated repayment due to receiving a loan under this program would be unenforceable, though mortgage companies could increase escrow requirements to cover payments.

SB 163 (Thompson, 14th) – Tim Tebow Act

This legislation would allow home schooled students to participate in sports and other extra curriculums at the school they would be assigned to if they were participating in public school or any school they could choose through open enrollment so long as the student’s parents gives written intent to have the child try out and verification that the child is passing all of their classes. Students that drop out of school wouldn’t be eligible to participate in extra curriculums until six months after beginning a home study program.

SB 176 (Black, 8th) – Require State Employers to Pay Retirement Costs for Re-hired Retirees

This legislation would require businesses employing retired members of the Employee Retirement System to pay the required retirement system employer and employee contributions. The employee’s retirement would be suspended during this employment if they work more than 1,040 hours/year. It would also no longer allow community service boards to hire retired state employees that are continuing to receive retirement.

SB 182 (Ligon, 3rd) – Shellfish Harvesting

This legislation would require shellfish harvesters to have a shellfish endorsement on their commercial fishing licenses. It would allow harvesters to petition the DNR board to harvest shellfish out of season. Leases of intertidal public shellfish beds would be done

by competitive bidding with a minimum price of \$15/acre. Subtidal beds would be leased through a lottery at a minimum price of \$50/acre. Leases would be for ten years and could be transferred with a \$50 fee or inherited for free. Shellfish farming would require a permit with a fee of \$1/cage and a \$20,000 bond.

SB 186 (Cowsert, 46th) — Creation of Qualified Self-Settled Spendthrift Trusts

This legislation would allow people to create spendthrift trusts in which assets are protected from creditors and have the creator as a beneficiary. The trust could disburse 5% of the initial value to the creator annually. The trust would not protect assets from alimony or child support, back taxes or other government debts, tort judgements, restitution, or judgements for necessities. A creditor could seek to have the creation of the trust considered a voidable transaction made for the purpose of evading debt collection and recover from the trust, and financial institutions would be able to recover any assets in the trust listed on a credit application. The trust would be overseen by a trustee that serves at the creator's discretion.

SB 188 (Walker, 20th) – Reinsurance

This legislation would allow domestic insurance companies accounting credit for reinsurance to foreign insurers with an international reinsurance arrangement by international treaty with the United States or is otherwise determined by the Commissioner.

The foreign insurer would be required to maintain a minimum capital and surplus requirement set by the Commissioner, provide written notice to the Commissioner explaining any deviation from the capital and surplus requirements, consent to legal jurisdiction in Georgia, and maintain a security fund that would be 100% of liabilities of reinsurance ceded to pay any final judgment against either the foreign insurer or domestic insurer, and the foreign insurer must not be involved in a reorganization agreement involving credit with the domestic insurer. A court could require the assuming insurer to post 100% security for a domestic insurer upon the entry of an order of rehabilitation, liquidation, or conservation of the domestic insurer.

The Commissioner would be required to create and publish a list of reciprocal jurisdictions and assuming insurers that have satisfied the conditions created by this legislation. It would also allow the Commissioner to promulgate rules and regulations applying to various life insurance policies, veritable annuities, long-term care health policies, and other life and health insurance and annuity products for which the model legislation provides regulatory requirements. The regulations would not apply to insurers certified in this state, five other states, or that maintains at least \$250 million in capital and surplus, and is licensed in at least 26 states or licensed in at least 10 states and licensed or accredited in a total of at least 35 states.

SB 191 (Kennedy, 18th) — Renaming Law Assistants to Law Clerks and Staff Attorneys

This legislation would rename law assistants that work for Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, and Superior Court judges to be law clerks and staff attorneys. Requirements and compensation would be unchanged.

SB 211 (Harper, 7th) – Don’t Allow Lab-Grown Meat to be Advertised as Meat

This legislation would prohibit lab-grown meat from being advertised as meat. Products would have to be at least 90% composed of animal products to be advertised as meat.

SB 219 (Jordan, 6th) – High School Citizenship Test

This legislation would require students to score 60% or better on the United States Citizenship Civics Test to graduate high school or get a GED.

SB 222 (Stone, 23rd) – Recreate Criminal Justice Reform Council

This legislation would recreate the Criminal Justice Reform Council. It would be one senator, one House member, one appellate judge, one superior court judge, one juvenile court judge, one DA, one defense attorney, the Governor’s executive council or designee, the director of the Governor’s Office of Children and Families or designee, and five other members, all appointed by the Governor.

Bills Passed in Identical or Similar Form on Other Bills

SB 38 (Ligon, 3rd) – Limit Electronic Filing Fees

This legislation would exempt pleadings made by the Attorney General, a prosecutor, or a defense attorney from electronic filing fees. It would also exempt documents related to child support and alimony cases and leave of absence and conflict notices. It would change the fee structure for documents filed in person from \$5 after 10 filings to only be processing fees.

Passed on HB 239.

SB 68 (Sims, 12th) – School Board Accountability for System Finances

This legislation would assign responsibility for financial management of school systems to the school board based on a template created by DOE showing, at a minimum, a statement of revenues, expenditures, and encumbrances.

If a school system receives an audit showing irregularities or a budget deficit for the past year or more, the board would be required to submit a response to DOE within 120 days. Schools seeking to renew a strategic waivers or charter system contract with irregularities or deficits in the three or more proceeding years would have to include a written corrective action plan in their application. GOSA would also provide support and training to schools with or at risk of consistent irregularities or deficits.

Newly elected school board members would receive training in financial management and the fiscal state of their system. All board member would have to receive training if the system had irregularities or deficits in three or more consecutive years. Members would have to complete this training to be eligible for reelection.

SB 71 (Watson, 1st) – Allow Hospital Authorities That Don’t Operate Hospitals to Invest Funds

The legislation would allow hospital authorities that have not owned or operated medical facilities for at least 7 years, paid off bond debt, and hold more than \$20 million in funds for charitable health care may invest up to 30% in mutual funds, commingled funds, or collective investment funds. Members of a hospital’s board at the time of sale or lease would be deemed directors and subject to conflict of interest provisions. It would also provide that hospital authorities and local governments could fund indigent care in manners other than per patient reimbursements so long as they don’t exceed the total cost they would incur reimbursing on a per patient basis.

This bill passed on HB 186.

SB 92 (Beach, 21st) – Don’t Revoke Licenses from Student Loan Defaulters

This legislation would prohibit all state boards issuing professional licenses from refusing to issue, suspending, or revoking a license of a person who has defaulted on their student loans. The legislation would also end the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation’s duty to provide licensing entities with a certified list of borrowers in default.

This bill passed on SB 214.

SB 110 (Stone, 23rd) – Business Courts

This legislation is the enabling legislation for the statewide business court constitutional amendment that was approved in 2018. The business court would have one judge with at least 15 years of experience in commercial litigation. The judge and clerk would be appointed by the governor and confirmed by the House and Senate Judiciary committees for a five-year term with no term limits. Cases would be appealable to the Court of Appeals and Supreme Court in the same manner as from state and superior courts.

It would have concurrent jurisdiction over arbitration, international arbitration, trade secrets, UCC, securities, corporation, partnership, limited partnership, LLC, trademark, business receivership, and antitrust cases. It would have jurisdiction over tort claims with the agreement of the parties. It would have jurisdiction over tort claims with the agreement of the parties. It would have jurisdiction over professional malpractice claims that don't involve personal injury, tort claims that don't involve personal injury, battery, threats of violence, domestic relations, landlord or tenant disputes. It would also have jurisdiction over contract claims, fraud cases between businesses or arising from business deals, and other IP cases when the amount in controversy exceeds \$500,000. It would have jurisdiction over commercial property cases when the amount in controversy exceeds \$1 million.

Someone sued in the business court could petition to transfer the case back to superior or state court within 60 days. A defendant in state or superior court could petition to transfer an applicable case to the business court within 60 days, which could be transferred at the business court judge's discretion. All parties could also jointly petition to transfer to business court within 60 days. Parties could object to the petition to transfer within 30 days. The filing fee to sue or transfer to business court would be \$3,000. The business court could hold pretrial hearings in the county of origin or by teleconference. If the business court judge must recuse, the Supreme Court would appoint a senior state or superior court judge to preside. The judge would create Business Court rules including guidelines and procedures for filings and a reasonable time in which a decision would be issued.

This legislation would also restrict the ability of attorneys to rescind their consent to be served electronically.

It is also HB 246 that would require the state to cover the costs of any criminal deposition taken at the state's instance in the same manner as for any other motion hearing in that court. It would also allow depositions to be taken and filed in the same manner as any other non-jury motion hearing.

This legislation is also SB 38 that would exempt pleadings and documents filed by the Attorney General, Legislative Counsel, a prosecutor, defense attorney, and municipal or county attorneys from electronic filing fees. It would also exempt documents related to child support and alimony cases and leave of absence and conflict notices. It would change the fee structure for documents filed in person from \$5 after 10 filings to only be processing fees.

A version passed on HB 239.

SB 151 (Burke, 11th) – The Health Act

This legislation would establish an Office of Health Strategy and Coordination within the Governor's office. The office would gather public and private stakeholders to develop approaches for stabilizing costs in the healthcare industry, coordinate state agencies and

other stakeholders, and come up with service delivery recommendations, including potential changes to CON. The director would be required to have held a previous position as a health care clinician and administrator and any other qualifications determined necessary by the Governor. It would be overseen by a board would consist of 9 members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate.

This bill passed on HB 186.

SB 208 (Robertson, 29th) – Implied Consent Warning

This legislation would alter the state’s implied consent law to address the Georgia Supreme Court case that held the current language to be unconstitutional.

This passed as HB 471.

HB 246 (Silcox, 52nd) – Use Local Rules for Criminal Depositions

This legislation would require the state to cover the costs of any criminal deposition taken at the state’s instance in the same manner as for any other motion hearing in that court. It would also allow depositions to be taken and filed in the same manner as any other non-jury motion hearing.

Passed on HB 239.

Bills that Failed to Pass Both Chambers in Identical Form

SB 20 (Rhett, 33rd) – Banking Improvement Zones

This bill would allow local governments to petition the DCA to designate a banking improvement zone where residents have insufficient access to banks. The local government could then deposit its funds in a bank in the zone.

SB 117 (Black, 8th) – Require Future Retirement Bills to Cover Full Actuarial Cost

This legislation would prohibit any future law, regulation, resolution or ordinance allowing creditable retirement service if it does not require individuals to pay full actuarial costs.

SB 119 (Albers, 56th) – Georgia Measuring Success Act

This legislation would require state auditors to perform an analysis of tax bills before passage by the House or Senate that would include net change in state revenue, net

change in state expenditures, & net change in public benefit. The analysis must be attached to the bill when introduced in the House. A tax bill could only be amended or substituted if the modification was submitted to the state auditor for revised analysis. Any member could submit a bill, amendment or substitution to the state auditor to determine whether it is a tax bill. The state auditor must respond within 72 hours. Any bill certified as a tax bill that does not include an economic analysis could not become law or would stand repealed in its entirety.

SB 200 (Gooch, 51st) – Appeals for Rejected Bids

This legislation would require GDOT to create a process for appealing rejected bids.

HB 76 (Stephens, 164th) – Liquor Sales Near SCAD

This legislation would allow package alcohol sales within 200 yards of SCAD, pursuant to a Savannah resolution.

It would also allow liquor stores to conduct up to 52 tastings every year so long as the tasting lasts fewer than four hours, only involves one type of alcohol, and no more than four bottles are open at a time. Servings would be limited to 8 oz of beer, 5 oz of wine, or 1.5 oz of liquor. Tastings would have to be approved by a local referendum.

HB 264 (Werkheiser, 157th) – Local EMS Boards

This legislation would require people lobbying local boards that oversee EMS services to register as lobbyists. Each local board would be required to adopt bylaws that include a prohibition on ambulance company owners from serving on boards or voting on matters. Ambulance providers would petition for a hearing and to appeal a result.

HB 368 (Dickey, 140th) – Insurance Company Spinoffs

This legislation would allow insurance companies to split into multiple companies pursuant to a plan that handles how the company would be split up, including how policies and stock would be split up. The plan would be approved pursuant to the insurer's bylaws, or absent a provision in the bylaws, approved by the process that would be used to approve a merger, at which point the plan would be submitted to the Insurance Commissioner for approval. It would no longer require the Attorney General to sign off on Department of Insurance Rules.

HB 540 (Rhodes, 120th) – Surprise Bills and Extend Housing Tax Credit of Out-of-state Insurers

This legislation would require health insurers to pay for emergency medical care when provided by out-of-network providers without need for prior authorization and charge patients the same for emergency medical care provided by out-of-network providers as for in-network providers. Patients would be eligible for mediation for surprise bills greater than \$1,000.

When an out of network provider provides emergency care the provider would be able to bill the patient’s insurer the lesser of the provider’s billed charges or the eightieth percentile of all charges for the particular health care service performed by a health care provider in the same or similar specialty and provided in the same geographical area. The Insurance Department would maintain a public database of those rates and adjust it annually based on CPI-Medical.

The bill would also require Physicians to provide patients and prospective patients with a list of health care providers the office utilizes for anesthesiology, laboratory, pathology, radiology, or assistant surgeon services 48 hours prior to patient use of those services.

Hospitals would be required to post the following on their websites: health benefit plans in which they participate, a statement that physician services provided in the hospital are not included in hospital charges, and that physicians providing services in the hospital may or may not participate in the same health benefit plans as the hospital.

Insurers would be required to provide enrollees with information about obtaining care from out-of-network providers where geographically necessary, notice that enrollees shall have direct access to primary and preventive obstetric and gynecological services. Insurers must also provide enrollees with a description of the methodology used for billing out-of-network care.

It would extend the Georgia match for the federal low income housing tax credit that provides a dollar for dollar saleable tax credit for investing in low income housing to be creditable against taxes imposed on out of state insurance companies.

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