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# This Week in the Senate

## March 25-29, 2019



### Next Tuesday - *Sine Die*

Today we completed our last full week of the 2019 Legislative Session with just one day left – *Sine Die* on April 2, 2019. This week the Senate debated 88 pieces of legislation addressing updates to our foster system, changes to Georgia's tax credits, improvements to the child abuse registry and several other issues that will have an impact on all Georgians.

We started the day on Friday by addressing a very important issue to all 56 members – updating Senate Rules. I was proud to sponsor Senate Resolution 465 with my friends Sen. Mike Dugan (R – Carrollton), Sen. Steve Henson (D – Stone Mountain), Sen. Gloria Butler (D – Stone Mountain) and Sen. Steve Gooch (R – Dahlonega) which makes updates to the Senate Rules regarding ethics complaints. After careful deliberation and bi-partisan support, updates were made regarding the time allowed to report an instance of sexual harassment from two to four years after the alleged offense occurred. After hearing from constituents and both sides of the aisle, the Senate majority and minority parties came to an agreement to extend the deadline to four years. While it is important to create this deadline to avoid false claims, we also don't want to silence victims in any way. I'm glad the Senate was able to work together on this issue, as we always get the best results when we put our differences aside and the citizens of Georgia first.

Another piece of legislation we heard on Friday was House Bill 324. This bill creates the Georgia Access to Medical Cannabis Commission to oversee the sale of low-THC cannabis oil to Georgians suffering from certain diseases. The bill has strict restrictions on growing and obtaining of the oil, which was a critical concern for many people. The tight language in the bill ensures that the patients in Georgia who truly need this oil for medical purposes will no longer be criminalized, while also ensuring that we aren't creating a gateway into recreational marijuana use.

In addition to the bills heard on the Senate floor this week, I was honored to host my brother-in-law and sister in the Senate Chamber as we celebrated the 100th birthday of my sister's father-in-law, Mr. Henry Elich. Henry is a survivor of Plaszów and Theresienstadt concentration camps but continues to be an inspiration and light in this world, sharing kindness and compassion with every person he encounters.

We've almost crossed the finish line of the 2019 Legislative Session with only one day to go. As always, I want to thank members for their hard work throughout the session. Many pieces of legislation that will come out of this year's session are a result of bi-partisan work on and off the floor that I believe will benefit the lives of every Georgian. Please do not hesitate to reach out if our office can be of assistance with anything – our door is always open!

**Senator Butch Miller**  
*President Pro Tempore, Georgia Senate*

## MONDAY, MARCH 25

### Urging Congress to Amend the Federal Highway Trust Fund

Senate Resolution 24, sponsored by Sen. Brandon Beach (R – Alpharetta), would urge the United States Congress to amend the federal Highway Trust Fund allocation process to allow states to retain 10 cents of the 18.4 cents per gallon gasoline tax for state infrastructure projects. SR 24 passed with a vote of 47 to 2. – **SR 24**

### Permitting Service Members to Terminate Contracts Early

Sen. Bruce Thompson (R – White) carried House Bill 25 which would allow certain contracts including television, video and audio programming, internet access and gym memberships to be immediately terminated by military service members. Service members may do so upon receiving military orders to relocate for a period of at least 90 days. HB 25 passed with a vote of 49 to 0. – **HB 25**

### Passing the Fiscal Year 2020 General Budget

House Bill 31, carried by Sen. Jack Hill (R – Reidsville), is the proposed Fiscal Year 2020 General Budget. The budget includes a state revenue estimate of \$27.5 billion, which would be allocated to a variety of areas including education and teacher pay, public and school safety, behavioral health and transportation. HB 31 passed with a vote of 55 to 0. – **HB 31**



### Defining Step Therapy Protocols and Exceptions

Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick (R – Marietta) carried House Bill 63 which would define “step therapy protocol” as an evidence based program that establishes a set sequence to determine if prescriptions for a certain condition are considered medically appropriate. HB 63 would also outline certain exceptions from step therapy protocol. HB 63 passed with a vote of 49 to 0. – **HB 63**

### “Protecting Military Children Act”

House Bill 64, carried by Sen. Elena Parent (D – Atlanta), would require a child welfare agency to make efforts to determine whether a parent or guardian of an abused or allegedly abused child is on active duty in the United States Armed Forces. If so, the bill requires relevant military law enforcement to be notified. HB 64 passed with a vote of 51 to 0. – **HB 64**

### Allowing the Georgia Foundation for Public Education to Establish a Nonprofit

Sen. Ellis Black (R – Valdosta) carried House Bill 130 which would allow the Georgia Foundation for Public Education to incorporate a nonprofit program subject to federal 501(c)(3) status. An annual financial report regarding donors and expenditures must be submitted to the Senate Education and Youth Committee and the House Education Committee. HB 130 passed with a vote of 52 to 0. – **HB 130**

### Revising Provisions for Certificates of Need

House Bill 186, carried by Sen. Chuck Hufstetler (R – Rome), would alter certain provisions regarding the Certificates of Need (CON) program. This includes raising the capital expenditure requirement threshold from \$2.5 million to \$10 million and allowing ‘destination cancer hospitals’ to apply to be a ‘general cancer hospital,’ which would change the requirements for in-state and out-of-state patient numbers. Additionally, HB 186 would update provisions in the Rural Hospital Organization Tax Credit regarding annual reporting and ranking hospitals in order of financial need. Lastly, HB 186 would establish the Office of Health Strategy and Coordination which would allow for state officials and experts to share information and develop innovative approaches to accessible care. HB 186 passed with a vote of 51 to 4. – **HB 186**

### **Expanding Protections for Syringe Services Programs**

Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick (R – Marietta) carried House Bill 217 which would exempt syringe services programs from civil and criminal liability for possession, distribution and exchange of hypodermic syringes and needles, regardless of knowledge of its drug-related use. HB 217 passed with a vote of 45 to 4. – **HB 217**

### **Increasing Georgia World Congress Center Indebtedness Limit**

House Bill 221, carried by Sen. Blake Tillery (R – Vidalia), would increase the Georgia World Congress Center's limit of indebtedness from \$400 million to \$500 million. HB 221 passed with a vote of 44 to 4. – **HB 221**

### **Preventing Insurers from Discrimination Against Sexual Assault Victims**

Sen. Matt Brass (R – Newnan) carried House Bill 227 which would change the phrase “confidential family violence” to “confidential abuse information” to clarify that sexual assault is included in the definition of family violence. HB 227 passed with a vote of 38 to 13. – **HB 227**



### **Creating the Preceptor Tax Incentive Program**

House Bill 287, carried by Sen. Chuck Hufstetler (R – Rome), would eliminate the income tax deduction for physicians serving as community-based faculty physicians and would create the Preceptor Tax Incentive Program for physicians, physicians assistants and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses. HB 287 passed with a vote of 41 to 9. – **HB 287**

### **Revising Provisions Regarding the Waiver of Sovereign Immunity**

Sen. John F. Kennedy (R – Macon) carried House Bill 311 which would allow for a limited waiver of sovereign immunity in cases where an individual seeks injunctive or declaratory relief against the state, counties or other government entities due to claims of unconstitutional actions. HB 311 passed with a vote of 49 to 0. – **HB 311**



### **Reclassifying Controlled Substances**

House Bill 483, carried by Sen. Dean Burke (R – Bainbridge), would make annual updates to the Controlled Substances Schedule by adding several substances and creating certain exceptions. HB 483 passed with a vote of 48 to 1. – **HB 483**

### **Creating the Agricultural Commodity Commission for Propane**

Sen. Larry Walker (R – Perry) carried House Bill 512 which would create the Agricultural Commodity Commission for Propane. This commission would be authorized to issue marketing orders and referendum as well as conduct assessments up to four-tenths of one cent, with certain restrictions. HB 512 passed with a vote of 54 to 0. – **HB 512**

### **Dedicating Revenue Derived From Hazardous And Solid Waste Fees or Taxes**

House Resolution 164, carried by Sen. William Ligon (R – White Oak), would propose a Constitutional Amendment to provide that revenues from hazardous waste and solid waste disposal fees and taxes to the public are used for their intended purpose. HR 164 passed with a vote of 52 to 0. – **HR 164**



### **Honoring the 2018 Atlanta Braves Players and Manager**

Sen. Steve Gooch (R – Dahlonega) sponsored Senate Resolution 1 which commended the Atlanta Braves team and manager Brian Snitker on their 18th division title and other accolades during the 2018 Major League Baseball season. – **SR 1**

### **Honoring Highway Safety Executive Director Allen Poole**

Senate Resolution 368, sponsored by Sen. Bill Heath (R – Bremen), commended Allen Poole on his appointment as the Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Highway Safety. Sen. Heath honored Mr. Poole for his lifetime of service to Haralson County, where he has held various governmental positions and served as a State Trooper for 19 years. – **SR 368**

### **Calhoun County Boys and Girls Basketball Teams Celebrated**

Sen. Freddie Powell Sims (D – Dawson) sponsored Senate Resolutions 405 and 406 which congratulated the Calhoun County High School boys and girls basketball teams for their first and second place wins in the 2019 GHSA A State Basketball Championship, respectively. The Senate commended the students for both their academic and athletic achievements. – **SR 405 & 406**

### **Honoring North Paulding County High School Basketball Teams**

Senate Resolutions 414 and 415, sponsored by Sen. Bill Heath (R – Bremen), commended the North Paulding County boys basketball team for winning the 2019 All County State Championship and recognized Coach Scott Green of the North Paulding County girls basketball team for being named Coach of the Year. – **SR 414 & 415**



### **Commending Thomas Carlton Lewis upon Retirement**

Sen. Brandon Beach (R – Alpharetta) sponsored Senate Resolution 439 which celebrated Thomas Carlton Lewis on his retirement from Georgia State University (GSU). Mr. Lewis thanked Senate members for granting him this “moment in time” and lauded the Senate for its hand in GSU's growth. – **SR 439**

### **Recognizing the Johnson High School Girls Basketball Team**

Senate Resolution 447, sponsored by Sen. Lester Jackson (D – Savannah), commended Savannah-Chatham County's Johnson High School girls basketball team for their GHSA AAA championship win. The team has made it to the Final Four the last three years in a row. – **SR 447**



## TUESDAY, MARCH 26

### **Entering Georgia into the Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact**

Sen. Bruce Thompson (R – White) carried House Bill 26 which would allow Georgia to enter into the Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact. The compact would allow applicants with a satisfactory background check to practice telepsychology in the state. HB 26 passed with a vote of 48 to 1. – **HB 26**

### **Revising Public School Eligibility for Students of Military Parents**

House Bill 59, carried by Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick (R – Marietta), would allow children of military parents to enroll in a public school, before establishing physical residency, based on official military relocation orders. HB 59 passed with a vote of 52 to 0. – **HB 59**

### **Requiring Recess for Students**

Sen. Jeff Mullis (R – Chickamauga) carried House Bill 83 which would require recess to be scheduled for students in grades Kindergarten through fifth, with certain exceptions for weather and other scheduled activities. HB 83 passed with a vote of 48 to 4. – **HB 83**

### **Allowing the Use of Electronic Device Mounts in Motor Vehicles**

House Bill 171, carried by Sen. Randy Robertson (R – Cataula), would allow the use of mounts on windshields of motor vehicles for the support of electronic devices such as cell phones. HB 171 would also permit an “adverse party’s citation and any judicial determination” to be admissible in a civil lawsuit. HB 171 failed with a vote of 27 to 28. – **HB 171**



### **“Georgia Hemp Farming Act”**

Sen. Tyler Harper (R – Ocilla) carried House Bill 213 which would authorize the growing and processing of hemp in Georgia, remove ‘hemp’ from the definition of a controlled substance in Georgia Code and provide an outline for licensing requirements and testing of crops. HB 213 passed with a vote of 45 to 6. – **HB 213**

### **Updating Provisions Related to Occupational Therapy**

House Bill 253, carried by Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick (R – Marietta), would update Georgia Code regarding the Georgia Occupational Therapy Act to include provisions for telehealth and make other necessary revisions. HB 253 passed with a vote of 51 to 1. – **HB 253**

### **Including the EMSC Program in Lobbyist Disclosure Laws**

Sen. Jeff Mullis (R – Chickamauga) carried House Bill 264 which would require that any individual promoting or opposing the Emergency Medical Systems Communications Program be subject to lobbyist disclosure and transparency laws. HB 264 passed with a vote of 51 to 0. – **HB 264**

### **Requiring Agreements from Consultants that Contract with Municipalities**

House Bill 315, carried by Sen. Lee Anderson (R – Grovetown), would require the submission of certain documents from consultants who enter into contracts with counties, municipalities and other local entities. HB 315 would outline requirements for bids and requests for proposals and procurement orders. HB 315 passed with a vote of 52 to 0. – **HB 315**

### **Revising Provisions Related to Pharmacy Benefits Managers**

Sen. Jeff Mullis (R – Chickamauga) carried House Bill 323 which would prohibit pharmacy benefits managers (PBMs) from restricting dispensers from sharing drug cost information. HB 323 would also require PBMs to notify their clients of rebates they receive that they do not pass on to the client. HB 323 passed with a vote of 49 to 0. – **HB 323**

### **Tax Exemptions for Certain Charitable Properties**

House Bill 344, carried by Sen. Bruce Thompson (R – White), would provide for a constitutional referendum for voters to decide if the state should create a property tax exemption on charity-owned property for the purpose of building or repairing single-family homes. HB 344 passed with a vote of 54 to 0. – **HB 344**

### **Clarifying Department of Labor Provisions**

Sen. Larry Walker (R – Perry) carried House Bill 373 which would clarify language within Georgia Code regarding the Department of Labor, including raising the maximum weekly benefit for employment security and revising language related to wage payment. HB 373 passed with a vote of 53 to 1. – **HB 373**

### **Reimbursing Travel Costs for the Board of Public Safety**

House Bill 392, carried Sen. Tyler Harper (R – Ocilla), would allow for the payment of reimbursed travel costs for Board of Public Safety members in the same manner as other state agencies. Additionally, HB 392 would require the Secretary of State to enact security protocols relating to voter registration information that is maintained under their office. HB 392 passed with a vote of 55 to 0. – **HB 392**

### **Updating Provisions Regarding School Bus Drivers and Traffic**

Sen. John Albers (R – Roswell) carried House Bill 459 which would require each local board of education to maintain a database with the full name and driver's license number of all school bus drivers and provide this information to the Department of Public Safety. HB 459 would also clarify the process by which local law enforcement can designate certain volunteers or law enforcement officers to assist in school traffic control. HB 459 passed with a vote of 55 to 0. – **HB 459**

### **“Private Permitting Review and Inspection Act”**

Majority Leader Mike Dugan (R – Carrollton) carried House Bill 493 which would implement requirements that allow Georgia's agencies to communicate with businesses in their jurisdictions. It also mandates that agencies that do not meet their own license issuing schedules will have to reduce fees paid by the consumer. HB 493 would shorten the timeframe that a governing authority has to review a plan from six weeks to four weeks and would require the state agency to conduct an inspection within two days. If the state agency cannot meet these deadlines, the owner may contract a private provider, but they must pay 50 percent of the regulatory fee. HB 493 passed with a vote of 54 to 0. – **HB 493**





### Recognizing Progressive Multiple Sclerosis Day

Sen. Ben Watson (R – Savannah) sponsored Senate Resolution 109 which recognized Thursday, March 28, as Progressive Multiple Sclerosis Day at the Capitol. Sen. Watson was joined by Tiffany Valado who was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis at age 19. Ms. Valado thanked the Senate for assisting in “ending silent suffering” of Georgians with multiple sclerosis. – **SR 109**

### Honoring Ann-Marie Campbell

Senate Resolution 244, sponsored by Sen. Lester Jackson (D – Savannah), commended Ann-Marie Campbell, the Executive Vice President of U.S. Stores for The Home Depot, for her successful career that “represents the American dream.” Ms. Campbell started her career with The Home Depot as a cashier. – **SR 244**



### Senate Recognizes Baseball Player Todd Greene

Sen. Lee Anderson (R – Grovetown) sponsored Senate Resolution 284 which commends Alpharetta resident Todd Greene, a former Major League Baseball player, for his lifetime of athletic accomplishments. Mr. Greene started his baseball career playing for Georgia Southern University and subsequently played for the 1992 United States Olympic Baseball Team. – **SR 284**

### Commending Charles “Bo” Bowen

Senate Resolution 293, sponsored by Sen. Lester Jackson (D – Savannah), recognized Charles “Bo” Bowen for his contributions to Georgia’s entertainment industry. Mr. Bowen founded the Savannah Film Alliance which fosters communication and collaboration within the film industry along Georgia’s coast. Mr. Bowen thanked the Senate for its continued efforts to make Georgia “one of the greatest places in the world to film.” – **SR 293**

### Honoring Casper the Therapy Dog

Sen. Jeff Mullis (R – Chickamauga) sponsored Senate Resolution 457 which commended Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta’s therapy dog program “Canines for Kids” and celebrated the retirement of Casper, their first therapy dog. Casper and his handler Lisa Kinsel started participating in the program in 2007, which provides specially trained dogs to accompany hospital patients during procedures and assist with the recovery process. – **SR 457**



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## WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27

### Committee Work Day

Senate Standing Committees met to vet and debate House Bills that made it to the Senate after the Crossover Day deadline on March 7th.

## THURSDAY, MARCH 28

### Physical Therapy Licensure Compact Act

Sen. Bruce Thompson (R – White) carried House Bill 39 which would enter Georgia into the Physical Therapy Licensure Compact to facilitate the licensure of physical therapists who are members of one of the 21 compact member states. Additionally, HB 39 would allow the State Board of Physical Therapy to conduct a background check on those applying for a license. HB 39 passed with a vote of 51 to 0. – **HB 39**

### Protections for the Blind to Act as Caregivers

House Bill 79, carried by Sen. Michael Rhett (D – Marietta), would prohibit any child placing agency or court from denying child placement, child custody, visitation, guardianship, foster care or adoption based solely on the prospective caregiver's blindness. House Bill 79 passed with a vote of 49 to 2. – **HB 79**

### Retaining Fingerprints

Sen. John F. Kennedy (R – Macon) carried House Bill 91 which would change the time frame for retaining fingerprints through the Georgia Long Term Care Background Check Program and would allow the Federal Bureau of Investigation to retain fingerprints collected through the Program under certain circumstances. HB 91 passed with a vote of 52 to 0. – **HB 91**



### Raising the Minimum Marriage Age

House Bill 228, carried by Sen. John F. Kennedy (R – Macon), would raise the minimum age for marriage in Georgia from 16 years of age to 17, as long as the minor has been emancipated and has completed a premarital education program. The bill would also require the Department of Public Health to develop educational materials that include information on the legal rights of married individuals and resources for victims of abuse. House Bill 228 passed with a vote of 51 to 0. – **HB 228**

### The Pharmacy Anti-Steering and Transparency Act

Sen. Dean Burke (R – Bainbridge) carried House Bill 233 which would restrict a pharmacy from certain activities, including mailing patients prescriptions to patients unless they consent and transferring patient prescription information with patient identifiable data. HB 233 would also require pharmacies to disclose their affiliates to the State Board of Pharmacy. HB 233 passed with a vote of 53 to 0. – **HB 233**

### Increasing Authority for the Council of Magistrate Court Judges

House Bill 257, carried by Sen. Chuck Hufstetler (R – Rome), would increase the authority of the Council of Magistrate Court Judges and would increase the bond amount required for each magistrate from \$25,000 to \$100,000. HB 257 passed with a vote of 52 to 0. – **HB 257**

### Increasing the Deduction on the Georgia Higher Education Savings Plan Income Tax Credit

Sen. Greg Dolezal (R – Cumming) carried and Sen. John Albers (R – Roswell) presented House Bill 266 which would double the income tax deductions allowed when making contributions to the Georgia Higher Education Savings Plan. HB 266 passed with a vote of 44 to 7. – **HB 266**





### **Increasing Penalties for Pimping and Pandering**

House Bill 281, carried by Sen. Randy Robertson (R – Cataula), would increase certain criminal penalties related to pimping and pandering. Specifically, this bill would require that those convicted on pimping or pandering charges on a first offense be charged with a misdemeanor of a high and aggravated nature with a mandatory 72 hours of imprisonment. On a second offense, the individual would be charged with a felony and a prison sentence of one to 10 years. Finally, if any individual is convicted of pimping, pandering or keeping a place of prostitution, and any charge involves a minor, the punishment would be increased to 10 to 30 years of imprisonment and a fine of \$100,000. HB 281 passed with a vote of 49 to 0. – **HB 281**

### **Changing Reporting Deadline for Department of Insurance**

Sen. Burt Jones (R – Jackson) carried House Bill 310 which would change the annual reporting requirement relating to insurance coverage for autism by the Georgia Department of Insurance from January 15 to June 15. This change would be effective for June 15, 2019, of this year and every year after. HB 310 passed with a vote of 53 to 0. – **HB 310**

### **Titling Boats in Georgia**

House Bill 314, carried by Sen. John Albers (R – Roswell), would require boats and watercraft that are numbered must also be titled. Additionally, boats with damage to the hull must specify that on their title. HB 314 passed with a vote of 46 to 2. – **HB 314**

### **Hospital Disclosure Requirements and the Qualified Rural Hospital Organization Tax Credit**

Sen. Brian Strickland (R – McDonough) carried and Sen. Blake Tillery (R – Vidalia) presented House Bill 321 which would require hospitals to disclose certain information on its website including federal and state disclosures. Hospitals that do not comply with this would be barred from receiving state funds or funds from the Qualified Rural Hospital Organization Expense Tax Credit. Additionally, the bill makes changes related to the definition of ‘rural hospital organizations’ under the Qualified Rural Hospital Organization Expense Tax Credit and updates the fund allocation process. Lastly, it would extend the sunset on the Medicaid financing program. HB 321 passed with a vote of 41 to 11. – **HB 321**

### **Advertising Requirements for Bids and Proposal Opportunities**

House Bill 322, carried by Sen. Greg Kirk (R – Americus) and presented by Sen. Matt Brass (R – Newnan), would require certain bids or proposal opportunities by a county, municipal corporation or local board of education valued at \$100,000 or more to be advertised by the local governmental entity in the Georgia Procurement Registry. The bill would also add “transmission” to the list of acceptable uses of electric or gas revenue bonds and would allow governmental bodies with electric utilities worth \$300 million or more to be exempt from the current voting requirements regarding its authority to issue a bond certificate. HB 322 passed with a vote of 39 to 13. – **HB 322**

### **Clarifying Who Serves on the Agriculture Commodity Commissions**

Sen. Tyler Harper (R – Ocilla) carried House Bill 332 which would add that the Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Agriculture’s designee could serve on the Agricultural Commodity Commissions. HB 332 passed with a vote of 54 to 0. – **HB 332**

### **Specialty License Plates**

House Bill 339, carried by Sen. Tonya Anderson (D – Lithonia), would create specialty license plates for Alabama A&M University, the Georgia Aquarium and Autism Awareness. Additionally, it would reallocate the funds from the Alpha Kappa Alpha license plate to the Ivy Community Foundation, Inc. HB 339 passed with a vote of 49 to 1. – **HB 339**

### **Creating the Crime of Staging a Vehicle Crash**

Sen. Bill Heath (R – Bremen) carried House Bill 353 which would clarify that any individual who intentionally causes a motor vehicle crash that results in serious bodily injury would be guilty of the new crime of “aggravated staging of a collision,” punishable by two to 10 years imprisonment. The bill would also criminalize the act of filing for insurance benefits or monetary damages that resulted from a staged collision, punishable by one to five years imprisonment. HB 353 passed with a vote of 41 to 10. – **HB 353**

### **Corporate Governance Annual Disclosure Act**

House Bill 367, carried by Sen. Marty Harbin (R – Tyrone), would require insurers to provide the Georgia Department of Insurance with a corporate governance annual disclosure report including information regarding their structure, policies and practices. Under HB 367, this information would be kept confidential and if an insurer fails to make the report available to the department, they would pay a \$100 per day fee with a maximum \$10,000 payment. HB 367 passed with a vote of 47 to 2. – **HB 367**



### **Updating the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Act**

Sen. Steve Gooch (R – Dahlonga) carried House Bill 382 which would make several updates to the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Act including adding “constituted recreation authorities” as a qualified funding entity, removing the deadline for the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Trust Fund Board of Trustees to receive funding applications and would allow money in the trust fund to cover up to five percent of the cost of the program. HB 382 passed with a vote of 47 to 0. – **HB 382**

### **Making Changes to Claiming Process for the Hurricane Michael Timberland Tax Credit**

House Bill 446, carried by Sen. Dean Burke (R – Bainbridge), would provide an additional avenue for claiming the income tax credit on timberland damaged by Hurricane Michael. Currently, someone who has damaged timberland can claim the credit upon replanting the trees. This bill would allow an individual to claim the credit upon ‘restoration’ or cleaning up the land damaged by the hurricane. HB 446 passed with a vote of 52 to 0. – **HB 446**

### **Prohibiting Class B Firefighting Foam**

Sen. John Albers (R – Roswell) carried House Bill 458 which would prohibit the use of class B firefighting foam, unless in the event of an emergency or when testing the foam in a facility with appropriate disposal mechanisms. HB 458 passed with a vote of 50 to 0. – **HB 458**

### **Insurance Commissioner as Group-Wide Supervisor**

House Bill 491, carried by Sen. Larry Walker (R – Perry), would define the Georgia Insurance Commissioner as a group-wide supervisor when interacting with internationally active insurance groups. Under HB 491, the role and regulations for the group-wide supervisor are defined, including what actions the Insurance Commissioner is authorized to conduct while serving in this capacity. HB 491 passed with a vote of 52 to 0. – **HB 491**

### **Professional Structural Engineers**

Sen. Tyler Harper (R – Ocilla) carried House Bill 516 which would define the qualifications and certificate requirements for those wishing to become a Professional Structural Engineer. Under HB 516, structural engineering is defined as a specialized branch of professional engineering that would be the only profession to offer structural engineering services. HB 516 would also increase the threshold for which a construction project does not require plans and specifications to be prepared by an engineer from \$100,000 to \$500,000. HB 516 would take out certain combat sports organizations from the definition of ‘amateur’ in relation to boxing, wrestling and martial arts in Georgia Code. HB 516 passed with a vote of 48 to 1. – **HB 516**



### **Savannah Convention Center and Authority**

House Bill 525, carried by Sen. Ben Watson (R – Savannah), would change the current name and structure of the Georgia International and Maritime Trade Center by establishing the Savannah Convention Center as a state authority with nine members and two ex-officio board members. The authority would be housed under the Department of Economic Development for administrative purposes and would create an annual report outlining their work, including audits of income and expenditure. HB 525 passed with a vote of 32 to 20. – **HB 525**



### **Updating the Quality Basic Education Formula**

Sen. Chuck Hufstetler (R – Rome) carried House Bill 527 which would update the weights in the formula used to determine Quality Basic Education funding. HB 527 passed with a vote of 49 to 0. – **HB 527**

### **Homeschooling and Withdrawal Reporting Requirements Updates**

House Bill 530, carried by Sen. Jack Hill (R – Reidsville), would require the Georgia Department of Education to provide a declaration of homeschooling to local school districts. Under HB 530, if a child is withdrawn from school without filing a declaration and the student stops attending school for 45 days, the school would be required to inform the Department of Family and Children Services. HB 530 passed with a vote of 50 to 0. – **HB 530**

### **The Kratom Consumer Protection Act**

Sen. Jeff Mullis (R – Chickamauga) carried House Bill 551 which would prohibit selling kratom to people under the age of 18 and provides packaging and labeling requirements for kratom products. This bill would become effective upon signature of the Governor. HB 551 passed with a vote of 50 to 0. – **HB 551**

### **Senate Celebrates National Guard Day**

Senate Resolution 221, sponsored by Sen. Bruce Thompson (R – White), recognized Thursday, March 28, as National Guard Day at the Capitol. The Georgia Department of Defense is the eighth largest in the nation and consists of 10,890 Army National Guard soldiers, 2,915 Air National Guard airmen, 500 State Defense Force volunteers and 650 state employees. – **SR 221**

### **Senate Agree to the House Amendment or Substitute on:**

**SB 65** (51-0)

**SB 75** (51-0)

**SB 118** (46-1)

**SB 167** (51-0)

**SB 225** (49-0)

### **Senate Disagree to the House Substitute on:**

**SB 110**

### **Bills Tabled on Previous Legislative Day:**

#### **Landlord Tenant Retaliation**

House Bill 346, carried by Sen. Jesse Stone (R – Waynesboro), would outline actions a tenant may take against their landlord relating to the safe occupancy of a property. The bill would also establish that landlords have three months to remedy tenants' complaints and lists prohibited retaliatory actions a landlord can take against a tenant, such as an unreasonable rise in rent. Finally, the bill would specify the circumstances in which a landlord would not be liable for retaliation claims. HB 346 passed with a vote of 34 to 16. – **HB 346**

## FRIDAY, MARCH 29

### Updating Rules for the 2019-2020 General Assembly

President Pro Tempore Butch Miller (R – Gainesville) sponsored and Majority Leader Mike Dugan (R – Carrollton) presented Senate Resolution 465 which codifies the Senate rules for the 2019- 2020 Georgia General Assembly. Changes were made to the rules in order to establish traditional practices and alter certain Senate committee rules and procedures. SR 465 passed with a vote of 55 to 0. – **SR 465**



### Public Schools Posting the Number for Abuse and Neglect

House Bill 12, carried by Sen. Matt Brass (R – Newnan), would require public schools to post the telephone number that is used to report abuse and neglect to the Department of Family and Children Services in a public, visible location. HB 12 passed with a vote of 46 to 1. – **HB 12**

### Allowing Service Members to Carry Weapons with an Expired License

Sen. Greg Kirk (R – Americus) carried House Bill 33 which would allow service members to carry a weapon with an expired weapons carry license for up to six months from the date of discharge or relocation, if the license expired while the individual was serving on active duty outside of the state. The person carrying the weapon must have official military orders or written verification signed by their commanding officer in their immediate possession. HB 33 passed with a vote of 50 to 0. – **HB 33**

### Updating the Definition of All Terrain Vehicles

House Bill 101, carried by Sen. Tyler Harper (R – Ocilla), would update the definition of an “all-terrain” vehicle in Georgia Code by removing the classes of all terrain vehicles and putting all varieties under one category. HB 101 passed with a vote of 52 to 0. – **HB 101**

### Unlawful Requests for Emergency Assistance

Sen. Greg Dolezal (R – Cumming) carried and Sen. Randy Robertson (R – Cataula) presented House Bill 118 which would replace the crime of “transmitting a false public alarm” with “making an unlawful request for emergency service assistance.” Anyone who knowingly and intentionally requests emergency assistance with no reasonable grounds to believe it was necessary would be guilty of this crime which would result in a misdemeanor of a high and aggravated nature on the first offense and a felony, subject to a prison sentence of one to 10 years with a minimum fine of \$5,000, on a subsequent offense. Additional penalties would exist if bodily harm resulted from the false request. HB 118 passed with a vote of 43 to 1. – **HB 118**

### Removing Population Requirements for Law Library Funding

House Bill 134, carried by Sen. Jesse Stone (R – Waynesboro), would repeal a provision in current law that requires a certain population to be met for disposition of county law library funds. HB 134 passed with a vote of 44 to 3. – **HB 134**

### Economic Nexus Sales and Use Tax

Sen. Chuck Hufstetler (R – Rome) carried House Bill 182 which would updated the threshold requirement to collect and remit sales and use tax from out-of-state retailers. Currently, the retailer must have a gross revenue of at least \$250,000 and this bill would lower that to \$100,000. HB 182 passed with a vote of 46 to 2. – **HB 182**

### Obesity Pilot Program

House Bill 187, carried by Sen. Dean Burke (R – Bainbridge), would create an obesity pilot program that would be tasked with providing obesity treatment and management for public and state employees. The pilot program must have at least 250 participants and would provide medications approved by the Food and Drug Administration. HB 187 passed with a vote of 47 to 2. – **HB 187**



### **Allowing Raffles for Depositing Money in a Savings Account**

Sen. P.K. Martin (R – Lawrenceville) carried House Bill 193 which would allow banks to offer promotional raffles to be held in exchange for depositing money into a savings account. HB 193 passed with a vote of 51 to 2. – **HB 193**

### **Regulations for Live Aboard Vessels**

House Bill 201, carried by Sen. William Ligon (R – White Oak) and presented by Sen. Ben Watson (R – Savannah), would require live aboard vessels to keep a detailed record of when pump out facilities are used. The bill also grants the Department of Natural Resources the authority to create rules regarding long-term anchoring of live aboard vessels in estuaries. HB 201 passed with a vote of 45 to 0. – **HB 201**



### **Extending Eligibility to Receive the HOPE Scholarship**

Sen. Chuck Payne (R – Dalton) carried House Bill 218 which would extend the time period students are eligible to receive the HOPE scholarship to 10 years from a student's graduation from high school. The bill allows for an exception for students who serve in the military during the 10 year time period. HB 218 passed with a vote of 47 to 5. – **HB 218**

### **Charges on Solid Waste and New Tires**

House Bill 220, carried by Sen. Blake Tillery (R – Vidalia), would extend the sunset on hazardous waste disposal fees to 2022, decrease the surcharge for the disposal of certain solid waste and decrease the fee imposed on new replacement tires. HB 220 passed with a vote of 45 to 0. – **HB 220**

### **Making Changes to Several Georgia Tax Credits**

Sen. John Albers (R – Roswell) carried House Bill 224 which would make updates to certain tax credits including the Rehabilitation of Historic Structures tax credit, Quality Job tax credit and Investment tax credit. Additionally, the bill outlines which tax credits cannot be transferred to an affiliated entity of the taxpayer. HB 224 passed with a vote of 46 to 2. – **HB 224**

### **Georgia Massage Therapy Practice Act**

Sen. Jeff Mullis (R – Chickamauga) carried House Bill 242 which would require the Georgia Board of Massage Therapy to regulate the practice of massage therapy through an expansion of its functions. Under HB 242, applicants must maintain professional, bodily injury and property damage liability insurance coverage and provide evidence of it to the board to ensure proper coverage. Additionally, HB 242 outlines sentencing and fee amounts for a person, business or education program violating any rules or regulations. HB 242 passed with a vote of 51 to 3. – **HB 242**



### **Sales Tax from Marketplace Sellers and Facilitators**

House Bill 276, carried by Sen. Chuck Hufstetler (R – Rome), would require the collection of sales tax from marketplace facilitators who conduct at least \$100,000 in sales to Georgia customers. The sales tax would be remitted to the Department of Revenue through the marketplace facilitator on behalf of the marketplace seller. Additionally, HB 276 would provide a transportation sales and use tax exemption for ride sharing, limo and taxi services. HB 276 passed with a vote of 52 to 3. – **HB 276**

### **Financial Condition of Insurers**

Sen. P.K. Martin (R – Lawrenceville) carried House Bill 277 which would change how insurers calculate their financial condition and assets by allowing “good will” to be used in the calculation. Additionally, the threshold the Insurance Commissioner utilizes when determining what constitutes an “extraordinary dividend” would be updated. HB 277 passed with a vote of 51 to 0. – **HB 277**

### **Establishing Flat Fees for Filing Certain Documents**

Sen. William Ligon (R – White Oak) carried House Bill 288 which would require the clerk of the superior court to charge a flat fee of \$25 for the filing of certain real estate documents and a \$10 per page fee for the filing of maps or plats. HB 288 passed with a vote of 52 to 2. – **HB 288**

### **HIV Pre-Exposure Drug Pilot Program**

House Bill 290, carried by Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick (R – Marietta), would direct the Department of Public Health to conduct a three-year pilot program for providing HIV pre-exposure drugs to at-risk people. HB 290 passed with a vote of 52 to 0. – **HB 290**

### **Setting the Term of the Hall County Superior Court**

President Pro Tempore Butch Miller (R – Gainesville) carried House Bill 296 which would set the term of the Hall County Superior Court to begin on the second Monday in January, April and July, and the first Monday in October. HB 296 passed with a vote of 53 to 0. – **HB 296**

### **“Abandoned Motor Vehicle Act”**

House Bill 307, carried by Sen. Jesse Stone (R – Waynesboro), would restrict when vehicles can be towed or immobilized in private paid parking lots. Specifically, the bill would prohibit towing or immobilizing vehicles in a paid, private parking lot between midnight and 9 a.m. HB 307 specifies that the owner of a towed vehicle has up to 30 days to retrieve the property in their car. The bill would also establish the method and manner a peace officer may inspect and order the towing of an abandoned vehicle. Finally, HB 307 specifies federal law supersedes state law in certain circumstances and that courts may charge no more than \$14 for a copy of a disposition order. HB 307 passed with a vote of 48 to 3. – **HB 307**



### **Extending Benefits to Firefighters’ Estate**

Sen. Chuck Hufstetler (R – Rome) carried House Bill 319 which would allow the estate of a firefighter, who did not designate a beneficiary or whose beneficiaries predeceased them, to receive certain allowances and benefits from the Georgia Firefighters’ Pension Fund. HB 319 passed with a vote of 53 to 0. – **HB 319**

### **Georgia’s Hope Act**

House Bill 324, carried by Sen. Matt Brass (R – Newnan), would create a five-member Georgia Access to Medical Cannabis Commission to oversee the sale of low-THC cannabis oil to Georgians who are registered patients suffering from designated diagnoses. The proposed commission would be in charge of: obtaining oil outside of Georgia as they have sovereign immunity working on behalf of the state, issuing one Class 1 and one Class 2 license for the production, growing, manufacturing and dispensing of the low THC oil, conducting a retrospective study to ensure proper participation of minority and women-owned businesses and overseeing the issuing of 10 safe access retail licenses. Under HB 324, The University of Georgia and Fort Valley State University would be able to apply for federal licenses to grow marijuana for the purposes of converting it into cannabis oil for research. Additionally, the state Board of Pharmacy would be allowed to license pharmacies interested in selling oil to registered patients. HB 324 passed with a vote of 44 to 8. – **HB 324**



### **Prohibiting the Restraint of Pregnant Women in Custody**

Sen. Renee Unterman (R – Buford) carried House Bill 345 which would prohibit women in custody who are in their second or third trimester, in labor or immediately after birth from being shackled or restrained, with certain exceptions. Additionally, certain types of searches and examinations of pregnant women would be prohibited. HB 345 passed with a vote of 52 to 1. – **HB 345**

### **Authorizing Redevelopment Powers**

House Bill 349, carried by Sen. Bruce Thompson (R – White), would allow of redevelopment powers of a county or its redevelopment agency upon authorization through a resolution by the governing authority. HB 349 passed with a vote of 51 to 0. – **HB 349**

### **Projects of Regional Significance Tax Exemption**

Sen. Brian Strickland (R – McDonough) carried House Bill 352 which would extend the sunset on the sales and use tax exemption for projects of regional significance to June 30, 2021. HB 352 passed with a vote of 50 to 3. – **HB 352**

### **SPLOST Fund Reporting**

Sen. Zahra Karinshak (D – Duluth) carried House Bill 379 which would require local governments that receive any proceeds from the special purpose local option sales tax (SPLOST) to report any projects and purposes of the funds within 180 days following the close of each fiscal year. HB 379 passed with a vote of 52 to 0. – **HB 379**



### **Changing the Definition of “Criminal Gang Activity”**

House Bill 424, carried by Sen. John F. Kennedy (R – Macon), would include human trafficking for labor or sexual servitude, keeping a place of prostitution, pimping, or pandering within the definition of “criminal gang activity.” HB 424 would also revise Georgia’s Rape Shield Statute to clarify what kinds of evidence may be admitted in court. HB 424 would further provide that the Child Hearsay Statute would now apply to any hearing or trial that takes place on or after this bill’s effective date. Finally, HB 424 would strike a provision from current Georgia Code classifying a first-time battery conviction against an individual 65-years or older as a misdemeanor of a high and aggravated nature. HB 424 passed with a vote of 50 to 0. – **HB 424**

### **Local Government Annual Reports**

Sen. Tyler Harper (R – Ocilla) carried House Bill 456 which would update when local governments need to perform an annual audit report of their budget. For any local governments spending less than \$550,000 annually, an audit would need to be completed every two years. Those with an expenditure amount over this threshold would be required to perform an audit every year. HB 456 passed with a vote of 49 to 0. – **HB 456**

### **Foster Care System and Juvenile Code Updates**

Sen. Blake Tillery (R – Vidalia) carried House Bill 472 which would make several updates to the Foster Care System and Juvenile Code in Georgia. Under HB 472, the definition of “fictive kin” would be updated to include those who are not related to the child but have a relationship with them prior to their placement. Additionally, “temporary alternatives to foster care” would be added as another option for juvenile courts to place children. HB 472 would update code so that no staff member from the Department of Juvenile Justice could serve as a juvenile court intake officer and add options courts can consider when removing a child from their home, among other updates. HB 472 passed with a vote of 50 to 0. – **HB 472**

### **Revising the Child Abuse Reporting Process**

House Bill 478, carried by Sen. Elena Parent (D – Atlanta), would make numerous changes to the child abuse reporting process. HB 478 establishes the age threshold for a child abuser at 18 years old and clarifies that an investigator of child abuse has 30 days to file a report to the Department of Family and Child Services. The bill further outlines the appeals process an alleged child abuser may follow to remove their name from the Child Abuse Registry. HB 478 passed with a vote of 51 to 0. – **HB 478**

### **Low Income Housing Project Tax Credit and Surprise Billing**

Sen. Chuck Hufstetler (R – Rome) carried House Bill 540 which would allow the Low Income Housing Project tax credit to be used against retaliatory tax imposed by the Insurance Commissioner. Additionally it includes language from the Consumer Coverage and Protection for Out of Network Medical Care Act. HB 540 passed with a vote of 50 to 0. – **HB 540**

### **Creating the Georgia Commission on Freight and Logistics**

House Resolution 37, carried by Sen. Brandon Beach (R – Alpharetta), would create the Georgia Commission on Freight and Logistics. The Commission would be composed of 22 members and would analyze funding and policy priorities that would enhance Georgia's logistics industry. HR 37 passed with a vote of 51 to 1. – **HR 37**

### **Savannah Logistics Technology Innovation Corridor**

House Resolution 239, carried by Sen. Ben Watson (R – Savannah), would establish the Savannah Logistics Technology Innovation Corridor which would be divided into two parcels in the region one and one half miles of land extending from Interstate 95 between Highway 204 to the north and Belfast-Keller Road to the south. HR 239 passed with a vote of 51 to 0. – **HR 239**

### **Naming and Dedicating Roads and Bridges**

Sen. Brandon Beach (R – Alpharetta) carried House Resolution 346 which would name and dedicate certain roads, interchanges and bridges throughout Georgia. HR 346 passed with a vote of 50 to 0. – **HR 346**

### **Commending David Andrews**

Sen. Brandon Beach (R – Alpharetta) sponsored Senate Resolution 268 commending New England Patriots center David Andrews on his second Super Bowl win. Andrews is a native of Johns Creek, Georgia, played for the University of Georgia and signed with the Patriots in 2015. – **SR 268**

### **Recognizing Henry Elich**

Senate Resolution 486, sponsored by President Pro Tempore Butch Miller (R – Gainesville), celebrated Henry Elich on his 100th birthday. Mr. Elich is a survivor of Plaszów and Theresienstadt concentration camps who brings inspiration and kindness to those he encounters. – **SR 486**





**Senate Agree to the House Substitute on:**

<b>SB 122</b> (54-0)	<b>SB 132</b> (48-0)
<b>SB 6</b> (50-0)	<b>SB 133</b> (51-0)
<b>SB 37</b> (55-0)	<b>SB 158</b> (52-0)
<b>SB 48</b> (50-0)	<b>SB 168</b> (52-0)
<b>SB 60</b> (53-0)	<b>SB 183</b> (50-0)
<b>SB 77</b> (33-17)	<b>SB 207</b> (51-0)
<b>SB 79</b> (51-0)	<b>SB 212</b> (48-0)
<b>SB 91</b> (52-0)	<b>SB 213</b> (45-1)
<b>SB 108</b> (52-0)	<b>SB 216</b> (51-0)
<b>SB 115</b> (52-0)	

**Senate Agree to House Amendment to Senate Substitute:**  
**HB 321** (50-2)

**Senate Agree to House Substitute as Amended:**  
**SB 214** (22-31) – Proposed AM 36 0747 Failed

**Senate Disagreed to the House Substitute to:**  
**SB 72**

**Conference Committees were appointed for the following bills:**  
**SB 110** - Sen. John F. Kennedy, Sen. Mike Dugan, Sen. Jesse Stone  
**HB 264** - Sen. Matt Brass, Sen. P.K. Martin, Sen. Jeff Mullis  
**HB 324** - Sen. Matt Brass, Sen. Bill Cowsert, Sen. Brian Strickland



**The Georgia Senate will reconvene at 10:00 a.m. on**  
**TUESDAY, APRIL 2.**