

Gold Dome Report – Legislative Day 19 (2024)

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Legislators observed Georgia Day on Monday, acknowledging the first immigrants who landed with James Oglethorpe to create the 13th colony a mere 291 years ago. The House of Representatives honored the day by showing a new video by the Georgia History Festival, and the representatives provided historical highlights of the individuals who first immigrated here. The Senate, on the other hand, spent the day mired in a scrum over modern-day immigration policy. There's always something to learn under the Gold Dome.

In addition to Georgia Day, legislators celebrated a number of other "days at the Capitol," including Together Georgia Day, Cancer Prevention Day, and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc. Day. They also did some work. More on that part in this #GoldDomeReport.

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Floor Notes

The House took up the following measures on Legislative Day 19:

- [HB 300](#) - Solar Technology Trust Fund; fund within state treasury; establish — PASSED 146-0
- [HB 461](#) - Revenue and taxation; proceeds to local government regulatory fees be used to pay for regulatory activity and not general operations; require — PASSED 163-0
- [HB 516](#) - Transportation, Department of; increase minimum amount for a public road construction or maintenance contract that prohibits negotiation — PASSED 167-2
- [HB 576](#) - Health; prohibit certain health care providers and facilities from discriminating against potential organ transplant recipients due solely to their vaccine status — PASSED

98-71

- [HB 809](#) - Occupational therapists; perform dry needling as a physical agent modality if certain training and education requirements are met; authorize — PASSED 164-3
- [HB 925](#) - Protecting Religious Assembly in States of Emergency (PRAISE) Act; enact — POSTPONED
- [HB 977](#) - Elections; number of contests subject to risk-limiting audits; expand — PASSED 164-3
- [HB 984](#) - Insurance, Department of; Office of the Safety Fire Commissioner; update practices — PASSED 158-0
- [HB 997](#) - Motor vehicles; require disqualification to operate a commercial motor vehicle upon receipt of notification from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration of a positive drug test - PASSED 162-1
- [HB 1022](#) - Colton-McNeill Act; enact — PASSED 158-0
- [HB 1033](#) - Utility Worker Protection Act; enact — PASSED 161-0.
- [HB 1037](#) - Georgia Commission on Maternal and Infant Health; create — POSTPONED
- [HB 1044](#) - Contracts; increase dollar value of certain public works contracts exempt from provisions relating to retention of contractual payments — PASSED 154-8

The Senate took up the following measures on Legislative Day 19:

- [SR 543](#) - America's Borders; increased protections; support — PASSED 31-15

Committee Reports

House Education - Policy Subcommittee

The Policy Subcommittee of House Education was called to order by Chair Scott Hilton (R-Peachtree Corners) Monday afternoon to discuss the following measures:

- [HB 579](#), authored by Representative Carter Barrett (R-Cumming), amends Title 20 regarding Georgia's Special Needs Scholarship. This measure would make changes to the law students with IEPs use to take public funds to go to private schools. LC 49 1780S includes many changes. First, it removes section one of the original bill because the Department of Education will do this. The section regarding electronic payments has changed, and the department will still be able to mail statements. The substitute also modifies the electronic payment process and edits the calculator's timeline. The department will provide an estimate soon after the appropriations bill's passage, with amounts published by July 1 for parents. Section three is new and includes transparency so parents can better choose programs that can support their children.

Representative Lydia Glaize (D-Fairburn) asked if the changes addressed the needs of early elementary students. No changes were made in this regard.

Buddy Costley of the Georgia Association of Educational Leaders appreciated the changes but expressed concern over the measure, specifically with accountability. Stephanie Tanner of the Georgia School Board Association similarly expressed appreciation for the changes in accountability and transparency but also expressed concern for vouchers.

The measure received a DO PASS recommendation.

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- [HB 1104](#), authored by Representative Omari Crawford (D-Decatur), amends Title 20. The measure seeks to address mental health in student-athletes. The author cited statistics that highlighted higher rates of mental illness in this population. The measure will require athletic associations and state departments to capture data, provide support, and direct families and students to support.

Representative Lydia Glaize (D-Fairburn) asked about line 22 regarding mental health screenings during physical health screenings. There is already a form to address this. In line 36, Glaize continued to ask about the suicide hotline. Representative Brent Cox (R-Dawsonville) clarified that during a student's physical, this will require an additional form. There is no other form. This would highlight and share the school's statistics with the coaches and staff. Robin Hines from the Georgia High School Athletic Association spoke in favor of the measure.

The measure received a DO PASS recommendation.

House Education - Curriculum Subcommittee

Chair Bethany Ballard (R-Warner Robins) called the Curriculum Subcommittee to order to discuss the following measures:

- [HB 127](#), authored by Representative Mesha Mainor (R-Atlanta), amends Title 20. LC 49 1727S seeks to ensure students who speak English as a second language have access to interpreters during Individualized Education Plan meetings.

Representative Segun Adeyina (D-Grayson) clarified line 43 regarding reasonable requests. The author explained some of the federal requirements for interpretation services.

Many advocates came forward to speak in favor of the measure. The measure received a DO PASS recommendation

Senate Finance Committee

Chairman Chuck Hufstetler (R-Rome) called to order the Senate Finance Committee Tuesday afternoon for first hearings only on several measures:

- [SB 403](#), authored by Senator Frank Ginn (R-Danielsville), amends Title 48 relating to tax assessments. The measure prevents a local government from sending an anticipated tax bill. Hufstetler discussed a similar bill. Senator Bill Cowsert (R-Athens) asked if current notices have expected appraisals. The anticipated bill is a mass appraisal and is calculated with classes of property based on market conditions.
- [SR 575](#), authored by Senator Billy Hickman (R-Statesboro), allows schools with E-SPLOSTs to be able to use 0-15% of funds for supplies, tutors, technology, and instructional support. Senator Jason Esteves (D-Atlanta) clarified that this is optional for schools and not required and expressed concern over systems becoming reliant on this fund.

New Legislation

The following new legislation of interest has been introduced in the House:

H.B.1219	Transportation,	Rep. Deborah "Deb"	https://www.legis.ga.gov
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	Department of; pilot program to determine the efficacy of traffic laws relating to excessive noise levels; provide	Silcox (R-053)	/legislation/66886
H.B.1221	State Board of Education; procedures for student transfers between local school systems; provide	Rep. Tyler Smith (R-018)	https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/66888
H.B.1224	Postsecondary education; revise definition of approved school; provisions	Rep. Tim Fleming (R-114)	https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/66896
H.B.1226	Georgia Released Time Education Act; enact	Rep. Scott Hilton (R-048)	https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/66898
H.B.1227	Georgia Unlawful Squatting Act; enact	Rep. Mandisha Thomas (D-065)	https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/66899
H.B.1228	Local government; procedures for the acquisition of certain professional services; provisions	Rep. Tyler Smith (R-018)	https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/66900
H.R.1073	Future Business Leaders of America Week in the State of Georgia; February 11-17, 2024; recognize	Rep. Will Wade (R-009)	https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/66907
H.R.1083	House Study Committee on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Workforce for Georgia's Growing Economy; create	Rep. Matthew Gambill (R-015)	https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/66901

The following new legislation of interest has been introduced in the Senate:

S.B.480	Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce; student loan repayment for mental health and substance use professionals serving in certain capacities; provide	Sen. Mike Hodges (R-003)	https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/66883
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S.B.481	Georgia Health Care Professionals Data System; establishment; definitions; collaboration with state licensing boards; provide	Sen. Mike Hodges (R-003)	https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/66882
S.B.483	Minors; enter into the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children; definitions; provisions; provide	Sen. Bo Hatchett (R-050)	https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/66890
S.B.484	State's Employee Benefit Plan Council; establish health savings accounts and continually provide for education or salary reductions for such accounts; require	Sen. Jason Esteves (D-006)	https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/66893
S.B.485	Trial upon Accusation; certain offenses be charged by accusation of the district attorney; allow	Sen. Harold Jones (D-022)	https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/66919

What's Next

The General Assembly will reconvene for Legislative Day 20 on Tuesday, Feb.13, 2024, at 10 a.m.

The House is expected to take up the following measures on Legislative Day 20:

- [HB 873](#) - Courts; juvenile treatment court divisions; create
- [HB 909](#) - Georgia Bureau of Investigation; restriction and seal of First Offenders Act; provide
- [HB 1010](#) - Public officers and employees; increase number of hours permitted for paid parental leave
- [HB 1083](#) - Community Health, Department of; adult residential mental health services licensing; extend grace periods
- [HB 1162](#) - Internal Revenue Code and Internal Revenue Code of 1986; revise terms and incorporate certain provisions of federal law into Georgia law
- [HR 804](#) - Local government; temporary loans are payable from end of calendar year to 12 months of initial funding date; change date - CA

The Senate is expected to take up the following measures on Legislative Day 20:

- [SB 412](#) - Professions and Businesses; administrative and civil sanctions against charitable

organizations, paid solicitors, and solicitor agents for certain violations; change provisions

- [SB 424](#) - West Georgia Judicial Circuit; create
- [SB 389](#) - Georgia National Guard; adjutant general to be the official sponsor of the state sponsored life insurance program; provide
- [SB 334](#) - "Helping Firefighters Beat Cancer Act"; enact
- [SB 340](#) - Sales and Use Taxes; firearm safes and firearm safety devices; exempt
- [SB 426](#) - Motor Vehicles and Traffic; requirements for joining of a motor carrier and motor carrier's insurer to a cause of action; revise
- [HB 63](#) - Insurance; insurers providing policies for groups of 20 or more to furnish claims experience at the request of a group policyholder; require

See our coverage of [Day 1](#), [Day 2](#), [Day 3](#), [Day 4](#), [Day 5](#), [Day 6](#), [Day 7](#), [Day 8](#), [Day 9](#), [Day 10](#), [Day 11](#), [Day 12](#), [Day 13](#), [Day 14](#), [Day 15](#), [Day 16](#), [Day 17](#), and [Day 18](#).

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