

Gold Dome Report – Legislative Day 22 (2024)

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There was a sigh that could be heard throughout the third floor of the Georgia State Capitol on Friday as lawmakers worked hastily through their committee discussions and rules calendars. This activity was despite technology glitches that occurred as lawmakers started the day — internet connectivity is critical to keeping up with actions! All, including staff and lobbyists, seemed to be pleased to be wrapping up the work week and heading home for the weekend. But we could not go anywhere before getting you this [#GoldDomeReport](#).

Prior to gaveling in for the day on the House Floor, Speaker Jon Burns (R-Newington) made a visit to the House Rules Committee meeting to recognize Vice Chairman of the House Rules Committee Mandi Ballinger (R-Canton) for her work on the committee since the untimely death of Chairman Richard Smith (R-Columbus). Burns also thanked newly-named House Rules Chairman Butch Parrish (R-Swainsboro) for stepping into the role as chairman of the House Rules Committee.

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Floor Notes

The House took up the following measures on Legislative Day 22:

- [HB 546](#) - Georgia Pharmacy Practice Act; pharmacy care; revise definition — PASSED 155-0
- [HB 872](#) - Medical professionals; rural assistance; expand service cancelable loan program for health care providers to include dental students — PASSED 150-3
- [HB 874](#) - Schools; automated external defibrillators; require — PASSED 151-1
- [HB 988](#) - Georgia Technology Authority; annual inventory of artificial intelligence usage by

state agencies; provide — PASSED 147-0

- [HB 1058](#) - Motor vehicles; federal regulations regarding safe operation of motor carriers and commercial motor vehicles; update reference date — PASSED 152-0
- [SB 353](#) - Highways, Bridges, and Ferries; duties when death results from an accident upon a highway in certain instances; allow for delegation — PASSED 152-0

The Senate took up the following measures on Legislative Day 22:

- [SB 341](#) - Official Code of Georgia Annotated; relating to inactive boards, panels, authorities, centers, commissions, committees, councils, task forces, and other such bodies and certain procedures of the General Assembly; repeal — PASSED BY SUBSTITUTE 48-0
- [SB 322](#) - Sheriffs' Retirement Fund of Georgia; increase in dues; provide — PASSED BY SUBSTITUTE 47-1
- [SB 448](#) - Official Code of Georgia Annotated; revise, modernize, correct errors or omissions in, and reenact the statutory portion of said Code, as amended, in furtherance of the work of the Code Revision Commission — PASSED 46-2
- [SB 212](#) - Probate Court Judges; relating to elections; end activities and duties — PASSED BY SUBSTITUTE 35-12
- [SB 436](#) - Farm Use Vehicles; define a term — PASSED 48-0
- [SR 487](#) - Taiwan; its relations with the United States and the State of Georgia; commend — ADOPTED 48-0

Committee Reports

House Ways and Means Committee

Chairman Shaw Blackmon (R-Bonaire) called the House Committee to order to discuss the following measures.

- [HB 971](#), authored by Representative Mark Newton (R-Augusta), amends Title 48 to create the “Firearm Safe Handling and Secure Storage Tax Credit Act”. The measure seeks a \$300 tax credit if they obtain safety training and/or a secure storage device. The measure received a DO PASS recommendation
- [HB 1069](#), authored by representative Chas Cannon (R-Moultrie), amends Code Section 48-5-7.5. Currently, when a landowner cuts timber they contract with a logging company and receive payment on a per tonnage rate. This is sent to the county tax office for the tax digest. The measure seeks to allow the Forestry Commission to request this information. After some gentle ribbing, the measure received a DO PASS recommendation.

House Education Committee

Chairman Chris Erwin (R-Homer) and the Education Committee took up the following bills in an early morning meeting:

- [HB 579](#), authored by Representative Carter Barrett (R-Cumming), amends Article 33 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 regarding the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Act. It seeks to revise the prior school year requirement; revise provisions for expedited completion of a student's first Individualized Education Program; revise the requirement that students who previously qualified for the scholarship have an Individualized Education Program or Section 504 plan; provide for calculating maximum scholarship amounts for certain students; and provide for

deadlines by which the Department of Education shall publish certain information. A substitute was before the committee and an amendment was proposed by Representative Becky Evans (D-Atlanta) to address line 97 addressing ethnicity and students who receive free and reduced lunch. The amendment was adopted and the legislation was given a DO PASS recommendation.

- [HB 1104](#), authored by Representative Omari Crawford (D-Decatur), seeks to address mental health risks of student athletes. It amends Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20. The substitute before the committee allows individuals like associations to aggregate information and share that information with groups. Section 1 of the substitute addresses the pre-participation screening forms, now currently used, but does not make any additional requirements — it allows school boards to update these forms. Section 2 adds that materials are to be posted about the importance of mental health (now information is shared on concussion and cardiac issues and risks). This legislation includes mental health risks. It adds that coaches view mental health awareness videos, if available, on these health concerns. The substitute received a DO PASS recommendation.
- [HB 127](#), authored by Representative Mesha Mainor (R-Atlanta), amends Chapter 2 of Title 20 to establish rules and regulations for local school system outreach efforts regarding English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). This is particularly of interest to Gainesville City Schools as it has the largest number of non-native English-speaking students. It requires interpretation services to be required — particularly helpful to parents when they have a special needs child and are in an “IEP” meeting. Representative Scott Hilton (R-Peachtree Corners), as a parent of a special needs child, indicated this was an “awesome” bill. The legislation does not conflict with current federal law on the provision of these services and Representative Mainor indicated that she had talked with the Department of Education (DOE) about the bill. Districts, according to DOE’s Matt Cardoza, receive federal funds to pay for these interpretation services. Mainor indicated that the bill has options in it on how these services may be provided but this legislation establishes the procedure. The committee provided a DO PASS recommendation on the legislation.

House Regulated Industries - Professional Licensing Subcommittee

Chairman Jason Ridley (R-Chatsworth) and the Professional Licensing Subcommittee met before noon to address the following:

- [HB 1050](#), authored by Representative Karen Mathiak (R-Griffin), brought a substitute version of the legislation to the subcommittee for its consideration after hosting a meeting of the various licensed groups impacted by her proposal. The legislation amends Article 1 of Chapter 10A of Title 43 relating to the licensing provisions of professional counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists. It now includes a new definition for the term, “supervisor,” changes the number of hours required from 80 to 90 quarter hours with a supervised internship or practicum, and a new Code section at O.C.G.A. 43-10A-16.1 to address confidential relations and communications between a licensed professional counselor, a licensed associate professional counselor, a master’s social worker, a licensed clinical social worker, a licensed marriage and family therapist, or a licensed associate marriage and family therapist — placing them on the same basis as those provided for between attorney and client. An amendment was offered in the subcommittee to address the definition of “supervisor” to mean a “person who meets the licensure and other requirements established by the standards committee for that specialty which is being supervised.” The new version stripped out the language defining the term, “diagnose,” the language relating to accreditation, and Section 4 of the original legislation. That amendment was adopted to the

substitute, and the legislation, as amended, received a DO PASS recommendation. The legislation moves to the full committee.

- [HB 1175](#), authored by Representative Chas Cannon (R-Moultrie), seeks to amend Chapter 33 of Title 43 relating to physical therapists granting direct referral privileges. The legislation received a DO PASS recommendation, moving the legislation forward to the full committee.
- [HB 349](#), authored by Representative Al Williams (D-Midway), addresses Chapter 10 of Title 43 relating to barbers and cosmetologists licensing requirements. Williams indicated that the legislation was a “re-do” of the law and offered a substitute for the subcommittee’s consideration. In part, the legislation allows for mobile barber shops under certain conditions. There were a couple of questions raised by subcommittee members around “threading” as that practice was not addressed in the legislation. There was also some public comment opposing the legislation, noting the preference to look at [SB 354](#). The substitute received a DO PASS recommendation, moving forward to the full committee.

New Legislation

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

H.B.1283	Juvenile code; use of deadly weapon; revise provisions	Rep. Holt Persinger (R-119)	https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/67074
H.B.1284	Education; establishment of school bus routes; provide suggested standards	Rep. Lauren Daniel (R-117)	https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/67077
H.B.1286	Georgia Hemp Farming Act; regulate hemp products	Rep. John Corbett (R-174)	https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/67079
H.B.1290	Quality Basic Education Act; course of study in sex education and HIV/AIDS prevention instruction is age appropriate and provides instruction on consent and intimate partner violence and abuse	Rep. Debra Bazemore (D-069)	https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/67093
H.R.1135	House Study Committee on Credit Card Fee on State Sales and Excise Tax and Their Impact on Georgia Merchants	Rep. Todd Jones (R-025)	https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/67081

	and Consumers; create		
H.R.1136	General Assembly; law for sports betting, pari-mutuel betting, and casino gambling; authorize - CA	Rep. James Beverly (D-143)	https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/67095

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

S.B.505	Hospitals and Related Institutions; required publication by hospital of certain financial documents on its website; provisions; revise	Sen. Blake Tillery (R-019)	https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/67068
S.B.509	Education; the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia and any public postsecondary institution from asking applicants whether they have been arrested, charges; prohibit	Sen. Clint Dixon (R-045)	https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/67098
S.B.511	"Combating Threats from China Act of 2024 - Higher Education"; enact	Sen. Marty Harbin (R-016)	https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/67088
S.B.512	Victims of Human Trafficking Fund and the Victims of Human Trafficking Fund Commission; create	Sen. Shawn Still (R-048)	https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/67086
S.B.513	Sexual Offenses; provisions of Code Section 16-6-16; provide	Sen. Shawn Still (R-048)	https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/67083
S.B.514	Kidnapping, False Imprisonment, and Related Offenses; required human trafficking training	Sen. Shawn Still (R-048)	https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/67082

	program for hotels; provide		
S.R.616	Victims of Human Trafficking Fund; allocation of certain additional penalties and assessments; provide -CA	Sen. Shawn Still (R-048)	https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/67085
S.R.619	Senate Public Utility Once Source Billing of Local Governments Study Committee; create	Sen. Ed Harbison (D-015)	https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/67100

What's Next

The General Assembly is in adjournment on Monday, Feb. 19, and will reconvene for Legislative Day 23 on Tuesday, Feb. 20 at 10 a.m.

The House is expected to take up the following measures on Legislative Day 23:

- [HB 793](#) - Professional counselors; authorize applicants enrolled in a master's degree program to take the master's social work licensing exam; provisions
- [HB 987](#) - Education; grants; revise definition of qualified local school system school by reducing the minimum required millage rate or equivalent millage rate from 14 mills to 10 mills
- [HB 995](#) - Education; administration of a nationally recognized multiple-aptitude battery assessment that predicts success in the military to certain public school students; require
- [HB 1020](#) - Income tax credit; military zones that qualify for designation as less developed areas; revise
- [HB 946](#) - Special district mass transportation sales and use tax; intergovernmental agreements; revise requirements

The Senate is expected to take up the following measures on Legislative Day 23:

- [SB 374](#) - the "Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors Act of 2021," so as to change provisions relating to land surveyor interns and professional land surveyors
- [SB 449](#) - certification as nursing aid and employer sponsored training and competency examination program
- [SB 370](#) - posting model notice with human trafficking hotline information in business and on internet, so as to require certain establishments to post human trafficking hotline information
- [SB 232](#) - relating to courts, so as to provide for probate court fees; to provide for funding of the State Children's Trust Fund
- [SB 360](#) - relating to capital outlay funds in elementary and secondary education, so as to provide that capital outlay funds may be used for educational facilities for voluntary pre-kindergarten programs provided by the school system
- [SB 427](#) - relating to commerce and trade and food, drugs, and cosmetics, respectively, so as to provide for disclosure requirements for advertisements for legal services and for drugs

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](#), [Day 18](#), [Day 19](#), [Day 20](#), and [Day 21](#).

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