



Report 1/23/2026

### FYI

Steve Gooch 51 (running for Lt. Governor) am honored to serve as a member on the Appropriations, Finance, Reapportionment and Redistricting, Regulated Industries and Utilities, and Transportation Committees.

With these goals in mind, there is much to accomplish before adjourning in April. There were a few bills that did not make it across the finish line last year, (Recommitted) and I intend to advocate for them:

- [SB 28](#)- The Red Tape Rollback Act streamlines our state's regulatory process and cleans house on unnecessary, wasteful mandates.
- [SB 30](#)- Stops radical doctors from prescribing puberty blockers to children.
- [SB 32](#)- Increases criminal penalties for violence against law enforcement.
- [SB 104](#)- Prohibits the use of Chinese artificial intelligence on state devices.
- [SB 120](#)- Ends the promotion of radical DEI ideology in our higher education institutions.
- [SB 303](#)- Requires the use of paper ballots and American-made voting equipment to maximize election integrity.

### SB 254

**"Georgia Hemp Farming Act,"; delta-9-THC in consumable hemp products; provide milligram limits** House Withdrawn, Recommitted

A licensed retail dealer in distilled spirits may obtain a retail consumable hemp establishment license and, upon obtaining such license. Retail dealer may sell or offer for sale consumable hemp products to consumers. **Get drunk and high from the same dealer.**

### HB 51

**Georgia Environmental Finance Authority; finance and perform certain duties for projects relating to natural gas facilities; authorize Senate Recommended**

(E) For the purposes of storing, supplying, and distributing natural gas outside any certified area of a nonmunicipal gas company, as such term is defined in paragraph (5) of Code Section 46-1-1, including, but not limited to, pipelines, storage tanks and facilities, natural gas distribution systems, equipment, vehicles, conveyances, real or personal property or rights therein and appurtenances, furnishings, accessories, and devices thereto necessary or useful and convenient for the storage, supply, and distribution of natural gas. **Allows Storage of natural gas**

5) "Gas company" means any person certificated under Article 2 of Chapter 4 of this title to construct or operate any pipeline or distribution system, or any extension thereof, for the transportation, distribution, or sale of natural or manufactured gas.

**HB 91**

Licensure for graduates of foreign colleges or schools of veterinary medicine who are board certified in a specialty; provide. Senate Recommended Increase number of Vets

**HB 187**

Professions and businesses; contractors; change certain provisions Senate Recommended

Brings requirements of Law up to date of with practices of the construction industry. Bill 45 pages long.


**HOUSE JUDICIARY – CIVIL**

**HB 181** Vital Records – Foreign Birth Adoption – child automatically acquires US citizenship exempt from reporting adoption from court of jurisdiction.

**HB 531** Appeal & Error – appellate procedures. Limits liability – immunity available to state, city or county – Limit \$3mil single occurrence; \$5mil aggregate liability; no punitive damages.

**SB 111** Georgia Consumer Privacy Protection Act – protect personal data

**HOUSE JUDICIARY – NON – CIVIL**

**HB 10**  GA Booking Photo Privacy Protection Act – prohibits disclosure of arrest booking photos to protect those not yet convicted of crimes; provide short title, definition, removal procedures for remove for pay publications & websites.

**HB 57** CRIMES & OFFENSES - INCEST – step-grandparent – include “half blood”  
in OCGA §16-6-22

<a href="#"><u>HB 390</u></a>	<b>HALO ACT</b> – re: unsecured judicial release, requirement, effect of failure of person charged to appear for trial (OCGA §16-10-24)
<a href="#"><u>HB 675</u></a>	<b>Crimes &amp; Offenses</b> – criminal offenses re: material support of terrorism
<a href="#"><u>SB 61</u></a>	<b>Stalking, doxxing</b>
<a href="#"><u>SB 163</u></a>	<b>Brady Law Regulations</b> – bringing actions vs GOVT for unauthorized act re: regulation of weapons
<a href="#"><u>SB 268</u></a>	<b>Offenses – interference with 1<sup>st</sup> responder</b>

### **HOUSE JUDICIARY – JUVENILE**

<a href="#"><u>HB 434</u></a>	<b>Crimes &amp; Offenses – selling child for financial gain</b>
<a href="#"><u>HB 435</u></a>	<b>Crimes &amp; Offenses</b> – sexual exploitation of children; expand limitation to include DFACS

### **SENATE JUDICIARY**

<a href="#"><u>HB 447</u></a>	<b>Crimes &amp; Offenses – gift card theft, forgery, fraud</b>
<a href="#"><u>HB 460</u></a>	<b>Evidence: exclude certain</b> communication attys/client in penal institution
<a href="#"><u>HB 530</u></a>	<b>Courts: authorization electronic filing in Probate Court</b>
<a href="#"><u>HB 535</u></a>	<b>Penal Institutions</b> – credit for time served
<a href="#"><u>HB 618</u></a>	<b>Property</b> – require real property seller make disclosure of flood damage
<a href="#"><u>SB 27</u></a>	<b>Stalking – doxxing penalties, protective order</b>
<a href="#"><u>SB 29</u></a>	<b>DNA sampling, collection, analysis</b> – arrested for felony when booked or processed at detention facility
<a href="#"><u>SB 163</u></a>	<b>Brady Law Regulations – bringing action vs GOVT for unauthorized acts</b> re: regulation of weapons

### **House Committee Governmental Affairs**

**These are the House bills that have had some activity in January 2026:**

#### **Second readers-**

[HB90](#)- second reading 1/12/2026 – amend Article 1 of Chapter 13 of Title 50 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to general provisions regarding administrative procedure, so as to provide that the "Georgia Administrative Procedure Act" shall apply to all executive branch agencies; to provide for certain exceptions; to revise a definition; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes. Summary of changes- To change the definition of agency to mean officer of the executive branch (not to exclude Governor, state board of pardons and paroles, financing and investment commission, state properties commission, board of bar

examiners, board of corrections and its penal institutions, and state board of workers compensation and all public authorities without exceptions.

**HB 913**-second reading 1/12/2026- amend Part 1 of Article 3 of Chapter 5 of Title 50 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to general authority, duties, and procedure of the Department of Administrative Services relative to state purchasing, so as to prohibit a governmental entity from entering into contracts for the licensing of software applications that limit such governmental entity's ability to install or run such software applications on certain desktop or server hardware of such governmental entity's choosing; to provide for a definition; to provide for related matters; to provide an effective date and applicability; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

**Summary of changes-** Redefine governmental entity as any department, agency, board, bureau, commission, authority, county, municipal corporation, school system, or other political subdivision of this state. **Add to code:** A contract procured by a governmental entity for the licensing of software applications designed to run on generally available desktop or server hardware shall not limit such governmental entity's ability to install or run such software applications on the desktop or server hardware of such governmental entity's choosing.

**HB 963**-second reading 1/16/2026- amend Chapter 5 of Title 21 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to government transparency and campaign finance, so as to prohibit foreign nationals from contributing to or participating in any campaign to bring about the approval or rejection by the voters of any proposed question which appears on the ballot; to provide for definitions; to require certifications by certain campaign committees as to compliance with such prohibition; to prohibit the disclosure of certain protected donor information; to provide for a penalty; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

**Summary of changes-** Amendments and additions to GA code to require campaign or campaign committee filings to affirm that no money over \$100,000 was funded by foreign nationals or companies owned by foreign nationals. No donor info is to be disclosed unless there is an alleged violation of this code.

**SB 214**-second reading 1/14/2026- amend Chapter 2 of Title 21 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to elections and primaries generally, so as to authorize electors to cast physical absentee on-request ballots as an alternative to using other authorized means of casting in-person votes; to provide procedures for form, collection, and tabulation of such ballots; to revise reporting provisions to reference such ballots; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes. **Summary of changes-** Adding definition for ballot on demand printing and optical scanning voting system utilizing nonelectronic ballot markers and ballot on demand printing, that also create scanned images of tabulated ballots. The state shall furnish a uniform optical scanning voting system and ballot on demand printing system. This bill is adding verbiage about optical scanning voting system and ballot on demand printing system verbiage to the existing code.

#### **Senate recommitted-**

**HB 414-** Recommitted 1/12/26-amend Chapter 5 of Title 21 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to government transparency and campaign finance, so as to revise the

definition of "person" to include certain nonresidents of the state; to provide the State Ethics Commission with supplementary investigatory powers related to persons, documents, or information located outside of the state; to revise venue provisions to address out-of-state persons; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

**Summary of changes-** Added verbiage to define person: and shall include a 'nonresident' as that term is defined in Code Section 9-10-90 who commits an act or omission or transacts business within the state which if performed by a resident of this state would be subject to this chapter." To compel a nonresident of Georgia to provide documentation as requested and if need legal means, then venue is Fulton County.

**HB 521-** Recommitted 1/12/26-amend Article 8 of Chapter 36 of Title 36 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to municipal deannexation, so as to revise procedures related to the deannexation of certain properties; to provide for related matters; to provide for an effective date; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes. **Summary of changes-** Change code verbiage to include deannexation in addition to annexation for reporting and mapping purposes. Also add verbiage: in any county in which an airport is owned or operated either by such county or a local authority and such airport is adjacent to 9,000 acres or more of property currently or formerly owned by a municipality that has no incorporated territory within such county, any proposed annexation pursuant to this article is contingent upon the adoption of a resolution by the governing authority of such county consenting to such annexation. If the county is the owner of all parcels proposed for deannexation and the governing authority of the county consents, the governing authority of the municipal corporation shall approve such deannexation within 90 days of the date of the filing of a deannexation application unless it finds that the deannexation would be detrimental to the health, safety, and welfare of the residents and property owners of the area to be deannexed or to the area remaining within the municipality

**HB 244-**Recommitted 1/12/26-amend Code Section 36-81-7 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to audit of financial affairs and transactions, contents, copy to state auditor, and public inspection, so as to provide for local governments to request and receive in certain circumstances due date extensions related to filing annual audits with the state auditor; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes. **Summary of changes-** Change code verbiage for local governments' audit and reporting requirements from \$550,000 to \$2.5 million. State auditor to provide reporting templates to local governments. Local governments with expenditures of \$1million or less to provide annual reports with copies of financial statements and notes. And to audit no less than every fifth year.State auditor can grant exceptions for unusual expenditures to audit filings. County officers shall be required to cooperate with local governments in filing audit reports. Outlines process for failures to comply with annual audit reporting.

## **Senate Committee Education and Youth**

**These are the Senate bills that have had some activity in January 2026:**

**Senate Read and Referred-**

**SB 381**-Read and referred on 1/13/26-amend Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the "Quality Basic Education Act," so as to provide for grants to eligible local units of administration for students living in poverty; to provide for definitions; to provide for the calculation of grant amounts; to provide that a minimum required portion of grant funds be used by local units of administration for direct program expenditures for the benefit of students living in poverty; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes. **Summary of changes**-creates new code section which in the first part defines students living in poverty and in the 2nd part, compels the State Board of Education to provide grants to eligible local units of administration for the purpose of supplementing services and instruction to students living in poverty, subject to appropriations by the General Assembly. Mandates least 90 percent of the grant funds received by an eligible local unit of administration under this Code section be used for direct program expenditures for the benefit of students living in poverty. Any portion of that 90 percent not so expended must be returned to the State.

**SB 401**- Read and referred 1/16/26-amend Part 14 of Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to other educational programs under the "Quality Basic Education Act," so as to provide that local boards of education shall be required to provide instruction in firearm safety in kindergarten through grade 12; to provide that such instruction may be incorporated into a course of study in health and physical education; to provide for the adoption of content standards by the State Board of Education; to provide that local boards of education may establish a curriculum in firearm safety; to provide requirements for such curriculum; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes. **Summary of changes**- revising Code Section 20-2-308, which is reserved to compel local BOEs to provide age-appropriate, grade-appropriate instruction on firearm safety for K thru 12 and can be incorporated into health and PE. State BOE to adopt content standards and local BOE to establish the curriculum.

#### **Senate Recommended-**

**HB 200**- Recommended 1/12/26-amend Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to elementary and secondary education, so as to provide for the State Board of Education to establish a three-year pilot immersive writing program for eligible public elementary schools; to provide for eligibility; to provide for grant funds for eligible public elementary schools to develop and implement immersive writing programs for students in grades two through five; to provide for applications and selection to participate in the pilot program; to provide for assessment and reporting on the impacts of the pilot program; to authorize the State Board of Education to promulgate rules and regulations to implement the pilot program; to provide for automatic repeal; to provide for related matters; to provide for an effective date; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes. **Summary of changes**- establish common minimum facility requirements which each public school facility shall meet in order to be certified for use new school constructions after 7/1/27 has minimum standards for safety and playground spaces. **New code proposal**- establish an immersive writing pilot program for grades 2 thru 5 with funding up to \$2 million in

grants for each school year from 2026 to 2029. State BOE to establish pilot program and criteria for participation. Code section to be repealed on July 1, 2029.

**HB 451-** Recommitted 1/12/26-amend Part 14 of Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to other educational programs under the "Quality Basic Education Act," so as to provide that local boards of education shall be authorized to provide instruction in hunting safety in grades six through 12; to provide for the adoption of content standards by the State Board of Education; to provide that local boards of education may establish a curriculum in hunting safety; to provide for instructor requirements; to provide legislative findings; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

**Summary of changes-**add new code section to authorize local BOEs to add instruction in hunting safety for grades 6 thru 12. State BOE to adopt standards for hunting safety instruction. Local BOE to establish hunting safety curriculum to be taught by DNR certified hunter safety instructor.

**SB 22-** Recommitted 1/12/26-amend Article 2 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the State School Superintendent, so as to require the Department of Education to publish relevant and applicable federal guidance documents and related information; to provide for definitions; to require annual notice from the State School Superintendent to designated committees and offices of the General Assembly and the Office and Planning and Budget; to authorize the State Board of Education to adopt rules; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes. **Summary of changes-**replace repealed code section requiring guidelines for how the state school Superintendent and the state board of education responds to Federal guidance documents. Provides for time limits in response and publishing guidance documents on state BOE website.

**SB 65-** Recommitted 1/12/26-amend Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to elementary and secondary education, so as to provide for mandatory kindergarten for all children prior to entering into first grade; to lower the age of compulsory school attendance from six years old to five years old; to provide for related matters; to provide for contingent effectiveness; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes. **Summary of changes-**lowers the age for children subject to this code from prior to 7 years old to prior to 5 years old. Compels local school systems to offer full day kindergarten programs for all children for 1 year before enrolling in 1st grade. Makes Mandatory attendance in a public school, private school, or home school program required for children between their fifth and sixteenth birthdays.

**SB 171-** Recommitted 1/12/26-amend Part 3 of Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to educational programs under the "Quality Basic Education Act,"so as to require the State Board of Education to develop an advanced mathematics pathway; to require the state board to adopt policies related to such advanced mathematics pathway; to authorize local school systems to offer the advanced mathematics pathway in grades three through five; to require local school systems to offer the advanced mathematics pathway in grades six through eight; to provide for reporting; to authorize local school systems to provide related supports and services; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes. **Summary of changes-**Add new code section to provide an advanced mathematics

pathway for grades three through eight which culminates in students taking a high school level mathematics course in middle school and shall adopt policies for such advanced mathematics pathway. Developed by State BOE and administered and reported on by local school systems.

**SB 295**- Recommitted 1/12/26-amend Part 8 of Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to State Board of Education under the "Quality Basic Education Act," so as to require local school systems to maintain and publish a registry of all contracts worth more than \$10,000.00 involving the use of any state funds; to provide for such information to be included on the contract registry; to require local boards of education to adopt policies; to provide for enforcement; to prohibit waivers; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes. **Summary of changes**-add new code to compel local school systems by August 1, 2026, to maintain a contract registry that includes a complete record of all contracts, agreements, and other financial obligations in an amount greater than \$10,000.00, if such contract, agreement is financed using any state funds. This registry is to be completed within 60 days of the contract/agreement and published on the school system website. State DOE will create template for local school system registry. Provides for punishment for failure to comply.

### **Senate Committee on Government Oversight**

**HB 485** Official Code of Georgia Annotated; various provisions enacted prior to 2013 which are contingent upon funding and which remain unfunded; repeal

**SB 103** Department of Administrative Services, companies owned or operated by Iran to bid on or submit a proposal for a state contract; prohibit

**SB 104** State Government; use or installation of any artificial intelligence system on state equipment when the company that developed or deployed such artificial intelligence system is associated with the People's Republic of China; prohibit

**SB 117** Public Officers and Employees; a misdemeanor offense for violations regarding complaints by public employees; provide

**SB 170** Georgia Interagency Council for the Homeless; create

**SB 289** Codes of Ethics for Government Service; a definition of "formal charges" regarding ethical violations by members of certain boards, commissions, or authorities; provide

**HB 494** Motor vehicles; require mopeds to be covered by a form of minimum financial responsibility for accident damages covered by a form ( nothing specified)

[SB 21](#)

custodial authority maintain temporary custody of an illegal alien as

such term is defined in Code Section 42-4-14, including a United States Department of Homeland Security Form I-247 ...custodial authority maintain temporary custody of an illegal alien as

such term is defined in Code Section 42-4-14, including a United States Department of Homeland Security Form I-247....local officials and employees of such local governing body is waived

[SB 421](#) unassigned

A BILL to be entitled an Act to amend Chapter 80 of Title 36 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to general provisions applicable to counties, municipal corporations, and other governmental entities, so as to prohibit local governments, authorities, and political subdivisions from entering into nondisclosure agreements regarding electricity usage or water usage of any entity; to provide for a short title; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

[HB 733](#) **Georgia Insurance Consumer and Policyholder Advocacy Act**

To establish a consumer advocate position within the office of the Insurance Commissioners office .....however? Commissioner of Insurance; to provide for definitions; to provide for the duties of such advocate;

[HB 108](#) **Safeguarding American Veteran Empowerment Act or SAVE Act**

to provide certain protections for veterans

**School Safety (HB 268):** The committee is prioritizing legislation to create an Office of Safe Schools within the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency (GEMA/HS) to support threat management teams and establish standardized, state-wide behavioral protocols for school, teacher, and student protection.

**Firearm Safety Measures (HB 711):** The committee is reviewing legislation aimed at prohibiting the possession of devices that attach to firearms to produce rapid fire.

**Local Law Enforcement & First Responders (HB 752):** Strengthening training, certification, and standards for firefighters and paramedics is a priority.

[HB 291](#) Health; certification of community health workers

A BILL to be entitled an Act to amend Title 31 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to health, so as to provide for the certification of community health workers; to provide for definitions; to provide for the establishment of the Georgia Community Health Worker Certification Committee; to provide for membership, powers, and duties of the committee; to provide for the approval of training programs

HB 329 Professional and businesses; authorize certified nurse practitioners and physician assistants to perform artificial insemination

SB 30 Hospitals and Related Institutions; hormone therapies and puberty-blocking medications for certain purposes to minors; prohibit prescribing or administering

if such parents or legal guardians do not consent to the prescription or administration of puberty-blocking medications to such minor and resolution is not provided in a **parenting plan**, either party may petition a court of competent jurisdiction to determine what is in the best interest of such minor and such **court order shall** be provided to the prescribing physician;

## **Agriculture and Consumer Affairs Committee**

### HB163

The purpose of the bill is to ensure transparency and prevent consumers from being misled about the type of meat products being served.

**(Recommend that the Senate pass this Bill.)**

### HB91

This does not align with America First Policies since it is recruiting foreigners for veterinarians.

**(Recommendation – Don't pass.)**

### HB413

Portable sawmills are to be treated as farm equipment and the “waste” from using the sawmill is to be considered as agricultural products.

**(Recommend that this Bill be passed.)**

### HB449

This Bill puts the water utilities under the jurisdiction of the Public Service Commission, and includes rate increase controls .

(Recommend that this Bill be passed.)

#### HB529

Consumers are too lazy to read, and don't understand, the details in contracts, so Consumer Protection is needed, however, there should be no exemptions.

(Recommendation is to delete the exemptions and then pass this Bill.)

#### HB490

This is intended to help fight human trafficking and makes training mandatory, somewhat like safety training.

(Recommend passage by the Senate.)

### **Economic Development and Tourism Committee**

#### HB490

Human Trafficking Training for innkeepers.

The substitution changed the definition of "hotel" to "innkeeper", increased the scope of who is to take the training, and gives more specific details about who is to report incidents.

This is intended to help fight human trafficking and makes training mandatory, somewhat like safety training.

(Recommend passage by the Senate.)

### **Game, Fish and Parks Committee**

#### HB115

Law enforcement must check abandoned boats and mark them. If a boat is left for 5 days or is unsafe, it can be removed. The state must try to find and notify the owner. Owners have 30 days to remove the boat and pay costs, or it is treated as abandoned. If they do not, the boat can be sold, licenses and registrations can be suspended, and the owner may face fines or jail, with harsher punishment for repeat offenses.

It took 15 pages just to say those 5 sentences above. I didn't know abandoned boats were that big of a problem. The biggest problem with the verbiage in this Bill was that it repeated itself too many times.

(Recommendation is not to pass until less, and more concise language is used.)

#### HB432

Georgia turkey annual permits are now \$0.00. Out of State are \$100.00.

(Recommend passage.)

#### HB443

Lowers costs for migratory fishing license.

(Recommend Senate to pass.)

#### HB451

Allows for 6<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> grades hunter safety classes.

(Recommend passage by Senate.)

**HB 133** Student Character Development Act; enact

4/4/2025 House withdrawn, recommitted

A BILL to be entitled an Act to amend Subpart 2 of Part 1 of Article 16 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated

Allows school districts to permit students with parental consent attend a 'Released time course' that entails religious moral instruction during the school day. The person or organization will maintain attendance records and make those available to the school district. Transportation is provided by parent or with consent from the parent. No school funds are to be used and they can't be held on school property unless there is an equal access use policy to other groups. The student will be held responsible for missed work. Background check is to be done on the individuals providing program. While in the programs students are not to be counted absent. As far as academic credit it will only be provided based on secular criteria and qualifications of the instructor.

**HB 198** Education; use of school facilities by certain youth groups; provide

2/27/2025 House withdrawn, recommitted

A BILL to be entitled an Act to amend Chapter 2 of Title 20 (20-2-12) of the Official Code of Georgia

This bill defines the term 'patriotic society' in Title 36 to include Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. Instructs schools to allow and not prohibit the use of school facilities for use by patriotic society groups. If denied the Principal is to include in writing a reason for the denial.

**HB 200** State Board of Education; establish a three-year pilot immersive writing program for eligible public elementary schools

1/12/2026 Senate Recommended

This bill amends some language for playground requirements providing all schools built after 2027 shall meet these requirements. Provides for areas of "ability appropriate" areas, minimum sizes, access, fencing, and 20 percent minimum is shaded. Also requiring specific types of equipment is included. Wheel chair and other provisions for other exceptionalities will be provided for. 20-2-335 providing for a pilot immersive writing program grades 2 to 5. This will provide funding to integrate into existing curricula areas. Funding shall be up to 2 million dollars each year for each school for up to 3 years. The State board of Education shall establish the requirements and criteria to select participating schools. The State will monitor and evaluate the cooperation.

**HB 221** Education; equal athletic opportunities for public school students; provide

2/5/2025 House second readers

Part 14 of article 6 of chapter 2

This states that school systems provide equal opportunities of sports and levels of competition, providing comparable faculties, equipment and funds. All provision should be equal or they shall be noncompliant. If there is no such interest by the other sex, determined by a student survey then they are not required to provide the other

opportunity. Schools have to designate one person to coordinate these efforts. Schools will have a method of complaint to file and then the school will need to address and prepare corrective measures. Gives students methods to report and receive compensation if found.

### HB 267 Riley Gaines Act

2/28/2025 Senate read and referred

Amended part 3 of Article 15 of Chapter 20

This act provides for separate changing and restroom for males and females in schools. Outlines areas and arrangements will be specific to “sex”. This bill changes the wording from “Gender” to “sex” and defines sex and disallows students for “self-stipulation” the determination is made by medical / school records. Explains that opposite sex members may assist small children in those areas and that family members may attend to opposite sex members as needed. Stipulates sleeping on overnight trips shall be by biological sex only. This also provides that a reasonable accommodation be made for ones that are unwilling or unable to use a multiple occupancy area. Female and male are defined specifically.

This provides for teams for males, females, or coed.

20-1-54 provides that institutions do not permit any male to compete or take a roster spot on any team designated for women. Information relies on birth certificate at the time of birth. This prohibits any visual inspection to confirm a student’s biological sex. Allows for anyone deprived opportunity a means of to apply for damages, and forbids unequal discrimination but this allows to distinguish between the sexes.

### Higher Education

Rep Chuck Martin – chair.

Lynn Riley – Student Finance Committee:

Pattern and trends report – Grants.

Funds directly to the institution. Pell eligible. Most credit hours earned. Two million rolled over from 2024. Ten million for 2026. For 2 years, allowed student access to higher education. Funds are use it or share it Direct costs only. Allocation according to a formula and if not used returned to the pot.

Achieve Atlanta also supports eight hundred students, most run out of funds. Need to tap into 2500 amount from GA grants.

### House bill 56

Georgia Public Safety Memorial grant - children and spouses of killed or disabled law enforcement individuals. Recent funds. 3.8 million dollars in reserve. Volunteering positions needs amending, especially for off duty. Volunteers are now covered.

### [House bill 172](#)

Need more large animal vets. More forgiveness of loans for training for large animal vets. Need (want) to serve in rural communities. Accountability that they are practicing on large animals.

Amended – with substitute – loan amount increases to \$90,000, with loan time period increased to four, which allows them to set up a practice.

### [House bill 217](#)

Work with technical colleges to get High school diplomas for drop out and kicked out students at 16 years old. One million dollars per pilot sight. Eligible for the Hope grant. Total of 2,320 students using program. Located all over Georgia. Increase program into southern Georgia.

### [House bill 150](#)

Requires transparencies for foreign countries of concern of any funding to the Georgia school system. The higher education system to track and report the type of funding, it's source and it's amount and purpose. Does not prohibit the funds, just transparency of all foreign adversaries. Biggest funder is China. Stealing of intellectual property is of concern. Undermining our democracy is of concern. Promoting national security.

## *Senate Committee on Natural Resources and the Environment*

### Key Senate Bills/Resolutions in 2026

#### SB135 – Coastal Island Preservation Act

- Status: Introduced during 2025, still active in the 2025-2026 session.
- Progress:
  - ▶ Senate read and referred (Feb 11, 2025)
  - ▶ Pending in Natural Resources & the Environment Committee — has not yet advanced past committee referral/public action as of early 2026.

Stage: Committee Referral (no vote or hearing reported yet)

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#### SR480 – Southern Pine Beetle / Forest Threat Resolution

- Status: *Introduced 2025* and carried over into 2026 legislative session.
- Progress:
  - ▶ Senate read and referred to the Natural Resources & the Environment Committee (March 2025)
  - ▶ Has not been reported out of committee yet.

Stage: *Committee Referral (no vote or hearing reported yet)*


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✦ SR480 – Southern Pine Beetle / Forest Threat Resolution

- Status: Introduced 2025 and carried over into 2026 legislative session.
- Progress:
  - ▶ Senate read and referred to the Natural Resources & the Environment Committee (March 2025)
  - ▶ Has not been reported out of committee yet.

Stage: Committee Referral (still sitting on the committee)

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 New/Active 2026 Session Movement

In Georgia, bills filed in 2025 that did not complete the process can still move during 2026 — the second year of this two-year session. That means *both* SB135 and SR480 are still active, *even though most progress so far happened in 2025*.

! No new Senate Natural Resources bills showing updated committee action (e.g., hearings, votes) in early 2026 have been published yet on public tracking sites for this particular committee.

However, it's still early in the 2026 calendar year, and committees haven't posted updated minutes or hearing results for these bills on the legislature's official site as of mid-January 2026.

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✦ Other Relevant Environmental/Natural Resource Bills in 2026 Legislative Session

These are related bills in the current 2025-2026 session (not necessarily in this Senate committee) that touch on natural resources issues — but were in House committees or other Senate committees:

- HB562 — surface mining moratorium bill in *House Natural Resources & Environment Committee* (house side).
- HB561 — House bill restricting mining permits (House Natural Resources & Environment Committee).

*(Note: these aren't in the Senate Natural Resources & Environment Committee — just showing broader environmental legislation in the session.)*

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## ✦ Summary of Stages (Early 2026)

Bill	2026 Status	Stage
SB135	Still active 2025-26	Pending in committee — <i>no hearing or vote yet</i>
SR480	Still active 2025-26	Pending in committee — <i>no hearing or vote yet</i>

## 📅 What's Next in 2026

- Both SB135 and SR480 could be scheduled for a committee hearing at any time during the session if the chair or leadership chooses.
- Once heard, the committee can vote to report the bill favorably, amend it, or table (stall) it.
- If favorably reported, the bill moves to the *Senate calendar* for second and third readings.

## Georgia Senate Committee on Insurance and Labor

### ✦ Active Insurance & Labor Committee Bills

#### Bill Number

SB 409	Intro / 25% (first reading in Senate)	Amends insurance laws to <b>provide homeowner protection</b> relating to insurer use of aerial/satellite images, definitions, correction periods, regulations, etc.
SB 364	Intro / 25%	would create <b>new penalties for insurers</b> that knowingly give misleading information on rates/underwriting.
SB 262	Intro / 25%	Require <b>health benefit policies to cover preventive services</b> (e.g., screenings, immunizations) without cost-sharing and protects health savings account eligibility.
SB 267	Intro / 25%	Direct the <b>Employee Benefit Plan Council to establish health savings accounts</b> and provide ongoing education/salary reductions.
SB 265	Intro / 25%	Requires health benefit policies to cover <b>medically necessary orthotic and prosthetic devices</b> and components.
SB 282	Intro / 25%	Regulates <b>earned wage access services and fees</b> under the Fair Business Practices Act.
SB 273	Intro / 25%	Proposes changes to Georgia's <b>minimum wage law</b> , including a potential increase.

**Bill  
Number**

<b>SB 324</b>	Intro / 25%	Addresses <b>protections for life insurance policyholders and beneficiaries</b> with added reporting or ownership requirements.
<b>HB 250</b>	Engrossed / 50%	<b>Regulates professional employer organizations (PEOs)</b> governs registration and oversight.
<b>HB 323</b>	Engrossed / 50%	Modifies Medicare supplement insurance to allow issuance/renewal for individuals under age 65.
<b>HB 87</b>	Engrossed / 50%	Requires health insurance to cover <b>medically necessary orthotic/prosthetic devices</b> (similar to SB 265).
<b>HB 569</b>	Engrossed / 50%	Revisions to <b>employment security law</b> regarding benefit notices and appeals definitions.
<b>HB 612</b>	Engrossed / 50%	Change administrative provisions for <b>mental health and developmental disability programs</b> , with relevance to insurance administration.
<b>HB 373</b>	Engrossed / 50%	Requires major medical insurance to include <b>annual prostate cancer screenings</b> .

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**✦ Some Issues the Committee Has Recently Considered**

Even if not all are currently active, the Insurance and Labor Committee has engaged with bills on topics like:

- Barring use of **state funds for gender-affirming care** in state health plans (e.g., SB 39, which was advanced in committee in 2025).
- Proposed changes to **homeowners insurance notices** and coverage requirements.
- Requirements for **orthotics and prosthetics coverage** in private health plans.

**Georgia House *Natural Resources & Environment* Committee**

**1. Water planning & state resource management**

- The committee *recently passed* **House Resolution 1008**, a measure to **revise how Georgia organizes its water regional planning districts**—basically to help state

agencies respond more efficiently to water challenges and emergencies. It passed out of committee by voice vote and will move forward in the legislative process.

## 2. Bills currently pending in committee

- **HB 644 (2025-26 session)** is pending in the committee. It would *amend environmental permitting processes* by allowing the Georgia Environmental Protection Division director to consider *out-of-state regulatory history* when reviewing certain permit applications.

## 3. Ongoing oversight and hearings (related but broader)

- Committees in the Georgia House are holding meetings and public hearings on natural-resource topics such as **water use, wildlife management, and federal land policies**—though some listings you may see online (like those from U.S. Congress) reflect the *U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources*, which is a different federal body.

### Recent/Recent Past Major Focus Areas (2024–2025)

The Natural Resources & Environment Committee has been involved in or *considered* a range of environmental issues over the past couple of years, including:

#### Protection of the Okefenokee Swamp

- Several bills (like an *Okefenokee Protection Act* and a *mining moratorium on Trail Ridge*) were *discussed in subcommittee hearings* as part of ongoing debate over mining near the swamp.

#### Conservation priorities

- Organizations like the *Georgia Conservancy* have been tracking and supporting bills to expand conservation programs and protect state parks and wildlife areas; the committee plays a role in advancing or reviewing those when introduced.

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### Bills Currently Pending in Committee

*(Assigned but not passed out or scheduled for a vote yet)*

#### 1. HB 561 — Okefenokee Protection Act

**Status:** Introduced → Pending in Natural Resources & Environment Committee.

**Last action:** House Second Readers.

**What it would do:** Prohibit the Georgia EPD director from issuing, modifying, or renewing surface mining permits on **Trail Ridge** at the Okefenokee Swamp for future applications/amendments. Aims to protect the swamp's ecology.

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## 2. HB 562 — Five-Year Mining Moratorium

Natural Resources & Environment Committee.

**Last action:** House Second Readers.

**What it would do:** Impose a **five-year moratorium** on accepting **new surface mining permit applications** or requests to modify existing permits for expanded surface mining operations on Trail Ridge.

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## 3. HB 663 — Motor Vehicle Emissions Fee Revisions

**Status:** Introduced → Pending in Natural Resources & Environment Committee.

**Last action:** House Second Readers.

**What it would do:** Change provisions relating to the **fee for motor vehicle emissions inspections** under the Board of Natural Resources.

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## 4. HB 644 — EPD Regulatory Review

**Status:** Introduced → Pending in Natural Resources & Environment Committee.

**Last action:** House Second Readers.

**What it would do:** Allow the **Environmental Protection Division (EPD)** director to consider an applicant's **out-of-state regulatory history** when reviewing certain environmental permit applications.

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## 5. HB 611 — Water Pollution Reporting

**Status:** Introduced → Pending in Natural Resources & Environment Committee.

**Last action:** House Second Readers.

**What it would do:** Require publicly owned treatment works (like sewage treatment plants) to provide certain information to the EPD. (Pending text & discussion online)

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## 6. HB 570 — Jurisdiction Over International Orgs

**Status:** Introduced → Pending in Natural Resources & Environment Committee.

**Last action:** House Second Readers.

**What it would do:** Acknowledge that certain **international organizations have no jurisdiction** in Georgia. (Still at committee assignment stage)

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## 7. HB 983 — Prescribed Burning Exemption

**Status:** Introduced → Pending in Natural Resources & Environment Committee.

**Last action:** Assigned to committee.

**What it would do:** Clarify that **prescribed burning for silviculture (forest management)** is exempt from some permit/notice requirements.

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## 8. HB 956 — Solid Waste Trust Fund Use

**Status:** Introduced → Pending in Natural Resources & Environment Committee.

**Last action:** Committee assignment.

**What it would do:** Expand allowable **uses of the Solid Waste Trust Fund** to support solid waste management programs.

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## Resolutions Pending in Committee

*(These are not laws but formal statements of intent or direction)*

### HR 513

A resolution encouraging Congress to study the **dispersion of chemicals from aircraft** and its effects on Georgia's air, soil, and water quality.

### HR 11

A resolution urging the EPD, EPA, and **DeKalb County** officials to resolve ongoing **sewage pollution and spills**.

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## Next Steps / What to Watch

- **Committee hearings:** These pending bills need to be scheduled for a hearing before they can move forward.

- **Subcommittee activity:** Some may go to subcommittees like Environmental Quality or Resource Management first.
- **Crossover timing:** If a bill doesn't advance out of House committee by *Crossover Day* (mid-session), it typically won't proceed.

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## Okefenokee Protection Act

### What it proposes:

- Would amend Georgia's surface mining law to **prohibit the director of the Environmental Protection Division (EPD)** from issuing, modifying, or renewing **any surface mining permit on Trail Ridge** for any *permit application or amendment submitted on or after July 1, 2025*.
- Effectively aimed at **preventing future surface mining** near the ecological buffer of the Okefenokee Swamp.

### Current status:

## ● House Bill 562 — 5-Year Mining Moratorium

### What it proposes:

- Seeks a **five-year moratorium** (July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2030) on the **EPD accepting new surface mining permit applications or requests to modify existing permits** that would *expand the area* affected by surface mining on Trail Ridge.
- This *moratorium* would delay future mining permits — while not necessarily stopping existing permitting efforts for the demonstration mine already in process.

### Current status:

- Introduced **Feb 20, 2025**; read for a second time in the House.
- **Pending in the House Natural Resources & Environment Committee.** No further action has been taken in committee.

### Recent activity:

- Like HB 561, this bill **received a committee hearing**, but it **wasn't called for a vote before Crossover Day** — meaning it *did not move to the House floor*.
- 

## Bills Referred to the Committee in 2026

### 1) HB 956 – Expand Solid Waste Trust Fund Uses

**Action:** Introduced *Jan 14, 2026* and referred to the Natural Resources & Environment Committee (House).

**What it would do:** Amend state law to expand allowable uses of the **Solid Waste Trust Fund** for waste management programs. This is a *2026 referral* tied to policy from last year.

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### 2) HR 1008 – Water Regional Planning Resolution

**Action:** Referred *Jan 13, 2026* to the Natural Resources & Environment Committee.

**What it is:** A **House resolution** ratifying amendments to Georgia's **statewide water management plan** — including changes to regional water councils and membership structures.

**Status:** This resolution **passed out of committee early in 2026**.

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## “Held Over” (Still Active from 2025)

Bills introduced during the *2025* portion of the session that were **assigned to the Natural Resources & Environment Committee and remain active in 2026**:

### 3) HB 561 – Okefenokee Protection Act

**Where it stands:** Introduced in 2025 and still pending in committee in 2026. Would prohibit future surface mining permits on Trail Ridge near the Okefenokee Swamp.

### 4) HB 562 – Five-Year Mining Moratorium

**Where it stands:** Also from 2025, still in committee. Seeks a five-year moratorium on new or modified surface mining permit applications on Trail Ridge.

### 5) HB 644 – EPD Regulatory Review Changes

**Where it stands:** From 2025 and still pending committee action in 2026. Would allow the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) director to consider out-of-state regulatory history when reviewing certain permits.

## 6) Other 2025 Referrals Still Alive

These were referred in 2025 and technically still pending unless acted on, because bills carry over:

- **HB 611** – Water pollution reporting requirements
- **HB 570** – Jurisdiction language regarding certain organizations
- **HR 11** – Resolution urging action on sewage pollution & spills

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### Process Note (2026 Session)

- **Georgia’s legislative session runs in two years (2025 – 2026)** — bills introduced in 2025 that *didn’t pass* by the end of that calendar year **remain alive in 2026** unless explicitly defeated or withdrawn.
- In January 2026, the legislature began **referring new and carry-over bills** to committees, including Natural Resources & Environment, for hearings, testimony, and committee votes.

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### Summary of Where Things Are Now (2026 Focus)

Bill / Resolution	Committee Status (2026)	Notes
<b>HR 1008</b>	Passed out of committee	Water planning resolution passed early 2026.
<b>HB 956</b>	Referred in 2026	Expands Solid Waste Trust Fund uses.
<b>HB 561</b>	Held over	Okefenokee protection, pending committee.
<b>HB 562</b>	Held over	Surface mining moratorium, pending.
<b>HB 644</b>	Held over	EPD regulatory review bill, pending.
<b>HB 611, HB 570, HR 11</b>	Held over	Carried from 2025, still pending.

## House Insurance Committee

### 1. Ongoing Insurance Market Study

- A *House resolution* (HR 659) created the **House Study Committee on Insurance Market Reform** to look into skyrocketing premiums, limited coverage options, and competition issues in Georgia's insurance markets.
- This study committee is actively gathering input from stakeholders and regulators to inform potential future legislation. The committee's composition and role were modified slightly after it passed with changes.

### 2. Hearings & Testimony on Insurance Cost Drivers

- In 2025, the committee held meetings on **rising auto and homeowners insurance rates**, hearing from the Insurance Commissioner, industry experts, and consumers. Topics included fraud, regulatory enforcement, and tort reform effects.

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### Key Bills Currently in or Passed Through Committee (2025–2026 session)

#### HB 408 – Repeal some insurance licensing education requirements

- **Status:** *Pending in House Insurance Committee*
- **Focus:** Repeals certain pre-licensing education for insurance license applicants and shortens re-exam waiting periods.
- Progress hasn't moved to the House floor yet — it's still undergoing committee consideration.

#### Bills that previously moved through the Insurance Committee

Some health/insurance-related bills have already **cleared or moved beyond** the Insurance Committee in the 2025 session and were referred to the Senate for further action:

- **HB 94:** Requires fertility preservation coverage for certain medical treatments — *crossed over to Senate Insurance & Labor Committee*
- **HB 373:** Prostate cancer screening coverage mandate — *crossed over*
- **HB 410:** Department of Insurance operational efficiency changes — *crossed over*
- **HB 422:** High deductible plans in state health plan — *crossed over*

These are now being considered on the **Senate side** (Insurance & Labor Committee).

#### SB 39 – State health plan coverage bans

- Originally spearheaded in the Senate to *remove gender-affirming care from state employee insurance plans*, this bill previously crossed into the House (assigned to the Health, not Insurance, Committee). It's separate from the Insurance Committee's primary docket but is part of insurance-related legislative activity you might track.
-

## Where Things Stand in the Process

### House Insurance Committee → House Floor → Senate Insurance Committee

- After a bill is voted **out of the House Insurance Committee**, it moves to the **full House calendar** for debate; if passed there, it goes to the **Senate**, usually to the **Senate Insurance & Labor Committee**.
  - Some health/insurance bills *already cleared* the House and are being weighed in the Senate. Others are still *in committee review* as of the most recent legislative action.
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### Upcoming/Recent Committee Activity

- Previous subcommittee notices show *life & health insurance bills* (like pediatric autoimmune coverage and life-insurance liability changes) were scheduled for hearings earlier in the session. These usually feed into full committee decisions.
- 

### Quick Summary for Action

Bill	Insurance Committee Status	Next Step
HB 408	In Committee	Awaiting vote/markup
HB 94, 373, 410, 422	Passed Insurance Committee	Now in <b>Senate Insurance &amp; Labor Committee</b>
HR 659 (Study)	Active Insurance Market Reform work	Committee reports & recommendations forthcoming

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[SB 9](#)

'Person' means any employee, staff member, or other similarly affiliated individual of a political party, political body, candidate, campaign committee, political action committee, or any other political committee. Such term shall not include a broadcaster, cable provider, online service, internet service provider, streaming platform, or any employees or agents thereof, who otherwise would not fall under this definition of person except for their sale of advertising to a person as defined in this paragraph. (b) A person commits the offense of fraudulent election interference if he or she, with knowledge of its falsity, publishes, broadcasts, streams, or **uploads materially deceptive media** within 90 days of an election

Who decides??

[SB 325](#)

SB 325 Education; local school systems and public schools to employ or accept as volunteers school chaplains; authorize

Status: 03/06/2025 - Senate Read and Referred

A BILL to be entitled an Act to amend Code Section 20-2-182 of the O.C.G.A., relating to program weights to reflect funds for payment of salaries and benefits, maximum class size, reporting requirements, and application to specific school years, so as to authorize local school systems and public schools to employ or accept as volunteers school chaplains; to amend Code Section 19-15-1 of the O.C.G.A., relating to definitions concerning child abuse, so as to include school chaplains in the definition of "child protection professional"; to amend Code Section 49-5-41 of the O.C.G.A., relating to

persons and agencies permitted access to records, so as to authorize school chaplains to review records of reports of child abuse

assigned; to authorize school chaplains to be employed or accepted as volunteers in addition 7 to or in lieu of school counselors and to authorize school chaplains to perform duties of 8 school counselors; to provide that school chaplains need not be certificated professional 9 personnel;

to amend Code Section 49-5-41 of the Official 13 Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to persons and agencies permitted access to records, so 14 as to authorize school chaplains to review records of reports of child abuse