



House of Representatives

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STANDING COMMITTEES:
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APPROPRIATIONS
GAME, FISH & PARKS
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
PUBLIC SAFETY AND HOMELAND SECURITY
SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

My Bills

HB 1064: Adds a new income tax exemption of up to \$17,500 of military retirement income for individuals under 62 years old and an additional \$17,500 exemption for individuals under 62 years old who have at least \$17,500 of earned income. Georgia has the 5th largest veteran population in the country – this bill provides much-needed tax relief to the brave men and women who have served our country.

HB 203: Creates a specialty Tybee Island Lighthouse license plate that benefits the Tybee Island Historical Society.

Mental Health Care

HB 1013: The historic Mental Health Parity Act seeks to improve Georgia's struggling mental health system in the following ways:

- Requires that health care insurance plans that provide coverage for mental health treatment or substance abuse disorders do so in accordance with the federal "Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008."
- Requires that state health insurers providing coverage for mental health and substance use disorders do so to the same degree as the treatment for a physical illness.
- Authorizes cancelable educational loans for Georgia residents enrolled in educational training for primary care medicine, psychiatry, mental health, substance use, clinical nurse specialist in mental health, or other licensed clinicians or specialists.
- Creates a three-year assisted outpatient treatment grant program to establish the efficacy of the assisted outpatient treatment model in Georgia.
- States that an officer can transport a patient to a receiving facility if they have probable cause to believe the individual is mentally ill, requiring involuntary treatment, and have consulted with a physician who authorizes transportation for the purpose of evaluation.
- Creates a grant program to fund accountability courts serving the mental health and co-occurring substance use disorder population.
- Funds at least a five new co-responder programs.
- Requires DCH to provide Medicaid coverage for any prescription prescribed to an adult by a licensed practitioner medically necessary for the treatment of delusion and mood disorders, including schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, if certain criteria are met.

Safeguarding Education

HB 1178: Governor Kemp’s “Parent’s Bill of Rights” codifies a “Parent’s Bill of Rights” and certifies that no state or local government entity, local board of education, or any officer, employee, or agent thereof may infringe upon the fundamental right of a parent unless the infringement is reasonable and necessary to achieve a narrowly-tailored, compelling state interest that cannot be achieved by any less restrictive means.

The fundamental rights of parents include:

- The right to direct the moral and religious upbringing of their minor child
- The right to review all instructional materials intended for use in the classroom of their minor child
- The right to apply to enroll their minor child into a public or private school, or other available options
- The right to access and review all records relating to their child unless prohibited by law
- The right to access information relating to promotion and retention policies and high school graduation requirements
- The right to consent in writing before a photograph, video, or voice recording of their child is made.

HB 1084: The “Protect Students First Act” prevents the use of and reliance on curricula or training programs in state public schools which espouse "divisive concepts" such as:

- One race is inherently superior to another race.
- The United States of America is fundamentally racist.
- An individual, by virtue of their race, is inherently racist or oppressive toward individuals of other races.
- An individual should be discriminated against or receive adverse treatment because of their race
- An individual bears responsibility for actions committed in the past by other individuals of the same race.
- An individual should feel anguish or any other form of psychological distress because of his or her race.
- Meritocracies are racist or were created by individuals of one race to oppress individuals of another race.
- Any other form of race scapegoating or race stereotyping.

The bill also provides that if an athletic association determines that it is necessary and appropriate to prohibit students whose gender is male from participating in athletic events that are designated for students whose gender is female, then the athletic association may adopt a policy to that effect, and that policy shall be applied to all of the association's participating high schools.

SB 514: The “Unmask Georgia Students Act” provides that no local board of education, local school superintendent, governing body of a charter school, or school personnel can make or enforce any rules that require students to wear face masks or face coverings while present in any area of a school, unless that rule allows a parent or guardian to elect their child be exempt from such rule. If a parent exempts their child from the rule, they are not required to provide a reason or show any certification of a child's health status.

HB 1: Prevents public institutions of higher learning from restricting certain forms of speech to “free speech zones” on campuses by classifying all unrestricted outdoor areas of campuses as public forums. It will not restrict the ability of a public institution to restrict or prevent disruptive, violent, or harassing speech, nor would it protect individuals engaged in materially and substantially disrupting another person’s speech.

Fiscal Responsibility

HB 304: suspends the state motor fuel excise tax upon the signature of the governor through the last moment of May 31, 2022.

HB 1302: Provides a one-time income tax refund equal to the lesser of the taxpayer's 2020 income tax liability or \$250 for a taxpayer filing as single, \$375 for a taxpayer filing as head of household, or \$500 for a married couple filing a joint return.

HB 1437: The "Tax Reduction and Reform Act of 2022"

- Eliminates the personal income tax brackets and replaces them with a flat tax rate of 5.49 percent. This bill also allows for future annual reductions of one-tenth of 1% until reaching 4.99%.
- Eliminates the standard deductions of \$5,400 for single and head of household taxpayers and \$7,100 for married taxpayers filing a joint return, as well as the additional deductions of \$1,300 for taxpayers over the age of 65 or blind.
- Increases the personal exemptions from \$2,700 to \$12,000 for single and head of household taxpayers and from \$7,400 to \$18,500 for married taxpayers filing a joint return.
- Increases the amount of earned income allowed to be included in the retirement income exemption from \$4,000 to \$5,000.
- Caps the amount of state and local taxes allowed to be deducted at \$10,000.

Public Safety

SB 319: Repeals the requirement for a weapons carry license for those who are not otherwise ineligible to possess and carry a firearm. In other words, if a Georgian is currently eligible to obtain a concealed carry permit, they are considered a "lawful weapons carrier" and granted the same ability to carry as an individual with a concealed carry permit.

HB 1188: Governor Kemp's bill provides that each act of child molestation shall be charged as a separate offense, clarifying the previously ambiguous code.

SB 479: Increases the penalty for those 1) who are on probation as a felony first offender, who are on probation for a felony, or who have been convicted of a felony in Georgia or elsewhere, and 2) who receive, possess, or transport a firearm. This bill also makes it a separate violation for each firearm that is connected to the crime.

HB 1319: Creates the Georgia Law Enforcement Officer (LEO) Service Cancelable Loan to provide a \$2,000/yr loan for eligible Georgia peace officers to pursue an associate or bachelor's degree in criminal justice. It also creates a loan forgiveness program for medical examiners employed by the GBI as the next step in creating a compensation package to attract and retain talent in a nationally competitive environment.

Other Bills of Interest

SB 441: Provides original jurisdiction to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) to identify and investigate election-related claims if there is evidence that is sufficient to change or place in doubt the result of an election. In an election-related investigation, the GBI director is authorized to issue a subpoena, with the consent of the Attorney General, to compel the production of books, papers, documents, or other tangible items.

HB 389: Increases penalties on employers who cheat their employees and competitors by targeting inappropriate classification of workers.

SB 345: Bans any state or local agency, government, or school from requiring a Covid-19 vaccination. This bill does not apply to healthcare providers.

HB 1443: Provides that a food truck, if it holds a permit in good standing with its county of origin, may operate in any other county in the state without having to obtain an additional permit.

2023 Budget

The Fiscal Year 2023 is set by a revenue estimate of \$30.2 billion, an increase of \$2.9 billion or 10.8% over the FY 2022 original budget. The rebound of state revenue presents the opportunity to make significant investments in state government that will resonate for many years.

The FY 2023 budget invests:

- \$758 million in the state's human capital infrastructure to stop the revolving door of state employees that, ultimately, impacts services delivered to 10.7 million Georgians.
- \$612 million to provide a \$5,000 cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for state employees, the first COLA received since FY 2008.
- \$25.7 million to allow state employees to withdraw and be compensated for up to 40 hours of accrued leave annually.
- \$119.8 million to increase the employer 401(k) match up to 9% and refund a COLA for state retirees.
- \$11.8 billion in state funds and a \$382 million austerity restoration to fully fund the Quality Basic Education (QBE) program in the Department of Education and restore all reductions made in FY 2021 due to the decline in state revenues from the Covid-19 pandemic—the most state funds ever appropriated to K-12 education.
- \$30.3 million for growth in the State Commission Charter School supplements and state special charter schools.
- \$712,028 in additional School Nutrition program funding to assist school districts in keeping school lunches affordable. When combined with the pay raise, the School Nutrition program totals \$31.3 million.
- \$28.2 million to provide one year of postpartum Medicaid coverage to mothers in order to address Georgia's high incidence of maternal mortality. Extending medical coverage an additional six months beyond the current six month limit after delivery will provide greater access to healthcare services for new mothers.
- \$99.9 million for the University System of Georgia (USG). USG will not increase tuition this year.
- \$25 million in lottery funds in the Georgia Student Finance Commission (GSFC) to increase the minimum factor rate to 90% for the HOPE Scholarship.
- Funds to support the House of Representatives' behavioral health initiatives, including: \$2.2 million for assisted outpatient treatment (AOT); \$897,060 to expand the co-responder mobile crisis team to 10 new sites; and \$220,050 to establish a technical assistance coordination center for mental health accountability courts.
- \$15.5 million for the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) to hire 68 new positions to combat crime and support the criminal justice system through the processing of evidence.
- \$976,918 to fund 10 SWAT Unit troopers in the Department of Public Safety.
- \$577,480 for a 10% salary increase for Troop C officers to combat crime in the metro Atlanta area.
- \$3.6 million for 10 new accountability courts including six mental health, two adult felony drug, one veterans' treatment, and one family treatment accountability court.