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Weekly Legislative Report #4

Week Ending February 7, 2025

Amended FY 2025 – On to the Senate

The House passed the \$40.5 billion [Amended FY 2025](#) budget Thursday that takes advantage of a surplus to fund improvements to the state's prison system and provide disaster relief to victims of Hurricane Helene. The FY Amended 2025 budget would increase state spending by \$4.4 billion over the original budget the General Assembly adopted last session. Of that increase, \$2.7 billion would come out of the state's surplus, or rainy day, funds.

Governor Kemp made the prison system and hurricane relief major priorities of the mid-year budget he presented to the legislature last month. The House increased both, raising the number of additional correctional officers the state plans to hire from the 330 the governor recommended to more than 400. To help offset the cost of the increased hiring, the House version of the mid-year budget calls for reducing Governor Kemp's request for the design and construction of new modular prison units from four to two. That would reduce the total prison package from \$372 million to \$333 million.

The House also increased the hurricane relief package Kemp proposed by \$197 million to \$811 million. Monies will go to residents, business owners, farmers, timber producers and others who suffered severe losses when Hurricane Helene hit Georgia last September.

Other highlights in the mid-year budget include a \$1 billion one-time income tax rebate for specific Georgia tax filers and \$1.7 billion for transportation and water projects. The transportation funding includes \$530 million to help the state Department of Transportation maintain and improve roads and highways vital to the movement of freight throughout Georgia. And it includes \$98 million to hold GDoT harmless for the suspension of the gas tax in response to Hurricane Helene, another \$200 million for expenses that GDoT experienced in response to Hurricane Helene. Last, \$2.3889 billion is the projected collection of motor fuel taxes. Total state and federal funds: \$4.1766 billion.

The water projects the Governor is recommending include \$500 million to increase surface water supplies in Coastal Georgia as an alternative to dipping into environmental groundwater to supply the Hyundai electric-vehicle manufacturing plant now under construction west of Savannah. A new water intake on the Savannah River is expected to deliver 20 million gallons a day by 2030.

The mid-year budget, which would cover state spending through June 30, fully funds Georgia's Quality Basic Education (QBE) formula for students in grades K-12, something the state has only been able to do in recent years. Another \$50 million would go for one-time school safety grants, which Governor Kemp announced last month. Every public school in Georgia would get \$68,000 to spend as local school officials see fit.

GDoT Board Elections

A caucus of Georgia state representatives and senators from Congressional Districts 6, 7, and 8 recently held elections for State Transportation Board in the Senate Chamber. Current Board representative Tim Golden was re-elected to represent his congressional district on the Board, and Doug Stoner and Joe Stein were newly elected.

Doug Stoner, a life-long resident of Cobb County, was elected to represent Congressional District 6 which includes portions of Cobb, Douglas, Fayette and Fulton counties. Stoner has previously served in both the Georgia House and Senate.

Retired U.S. Air Force Major General Joe Stein of Gwinnett County was elected to represent Congressional District 7, which includes Forsyth, Dawson and Lumpkin counties and portions of Cherokee, Hall and Fulton counties. Stein is completing four years of service as a member of the Forsyth County Development Authority.

Tim Golden of Valdosta represents Congressional District 8 located in central and south-central Georgia. He was elected to the board in 2015 and previously served in the Georgia House and Senate.

School Safety

Speaker Jon Burns introduced school-safety legislation this week stemming from last year's school shooting in Barrow County that killed two teachers and two students. The comprehensive proposal calls for improvements in information sharing among schools through a new anonymous app, increases penalties for those who make terroristic threats, and provides tax incentives to encourage gun owners to purchase firearm safety storage devices.

"The Georgia House is committed to taking strong action to ensure no parent, student or teacher ever has to fear for their safety when they drop their children off at school, go to class or go to work," Burns, R-Newington, said during a news conference at the state Capitol. "This school safety plan is a comprehensive approach to securing our school buildings, prioritizing the mental health of our children and keeping Georgia's students safe."

The legislation also would require schools to use an anonymous reporting app where tips could be evaluated quickly and provided to law enforcement and other necessary personnel across the state as needed. The measure would provide for the mandatory suspension of students who make threats until law enforcement and school personnel determine the student is cleared to return to school.

Next Week

The legislature will be in session Monday for Day 14 and remain in session through Thursday before taking Friday off for the Valentine's Day weekend. It will be a busy week with committee and appropriations subcommittee meetings taking center stage.

Tracking List

Here are the bills we are tracking. New activity is noted in **green**. Click on the [Bill Number](#) to access the current version of the bill.

The 2025 Legislative Session is the first session of the 2025-2026 Term of the Georgia General Assembly. Therefore, bills not passed or defeated during this session will be carried over to the 2026 session. Bills pending in the House or Senate Rules Committees at adjournment sine die of the 2025 session will be recommitted to the committee from whence they came.

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Aging

[HB 36](#), Guardians and Wards (Rep. Rob Leverett – R)

Relating to guardians and wards, so as to revise the list of providers who are authorized to participate in the process. **Status:** Referred to Judiciary Cmte, Passed Cmte, Pending Rules Cmte

Business – Tort Reform

[SB 68](#), Tort Reform (Sen. John Kennedy – R)

Civil Practice, substantive and comprehensive revision of provisions regarding civil practice, evidentiary matters, damages, and liability in tort actions. **Status:** Referred to Judiciary Cmte

[SB 69](#), Tort Reform (Sen. John Kennedy – R)

Georgia Courts access and consumer protection act. **Status:** Referred to Judiciary Cmte

Business

[HB 116](#), Public Safety; Motor Carrier Compliance Division Rename (Rep. Lauren McDonald III – R)
Relating to the Motor Carrier Compliance Division of the Department of Public Safety so as to change the name of the Motor Carrier Compliance Division of the Department of Public Safety to Commercial Vehicle Enforcement **Status:** Referred to Motor Vehicles Cmte; **Pending Rules Cmte**

[HB 129](#), Ad Valorem Tax; Bona Fide conservation to use property (Rep. Chas Cannon – R)
Relating to preferential assessment for bona fide conservation use property and bona fide residential transitional property **Status:** Referred Ways & Means Cmte

City & County Governments and Regional Commissions

[HB 92](#), Revenue and Taxation, Postpone Date (Rep. Shaw Blackmon – R)
Revenue and taxation; postpone date by which local governing authorities can opt out of base year homestead exemption. **Status:** Referred to Ways & Means Cmte, Passed Cmte by Substitute, **Pending Rules Cmte**

[HB 137](#), Contracts: Increase Dollar Value of Public Works (Rep. Victor Anderson – R)
Relating to contracts for public work, to increase the dollar value of certain public works contracts exempt from the provisions relating to retention of contractual payments **Status:** Referred to Governmental Affairs Cmte, **Pending Rules Cmte**

[SB 38](#), Development impact fees: Education (Greg Dolezal – R)
Provide for development impact fees for education **Status:** Referred to Economic Development & Tourism Cmte

[SB 51](#), State, County, and Municipal Road System (Sen. Ed Setzler – R)
Revise contracting procedures related to the acquisition of certain professional services by counties and municipalities **Status:** Referred to State and Local Government Operations Cmte

[HB 152](#), Transportation, Department of; revise contracting procedures (Rep. Matt Reeves - R)
So as to revise contracting procedures related to the acquisition of certain professional services by counties and municipalities **Status:** Referred to Governmental Affairs

[HB 216](#), CHIPS Advancement in Research and Economic Development Act (Rep. Vance Smith – R)
So as to create the Georgia CHIPS and Advanced Technology Commission; to amend Chapter 34 of Title 50, relating to the One Georgia Authority, so as to abolish the Georgia CHIPS and Advanced Technology Consortium **Status:** House First Reader, House Second Reader, **Referred to Economic Development & Tourism Cmte**

Economic Development

[HB 51](#), GEFA Finance of Natural Gas Projects (James Burchett – R)
So as to authorize GEFA to finance and perform certain duties in connection with projects relating to natural gas. **Status:** Referred to Natural Resources & Environment Cmte; **House withdrawn and recommitted to Rural Development Cmte**

[SB 13](#), GEFA Finance of Natural Gas Projects (Carden Summers – R)

So as to authorize GEFA to finance and perform certain duties in connection with projects relating to natural gas. **Status:** Referred to Regulated Industries & Utilities Cmte

[HB 159](#), Georgia Housing and Finance Authority (Rep. Clint Crowes – R)

So as to increase the outstanding bond limit **Status:** Referred to Budget and Fiscal Affairs Oversight Cmte

Elections

Environmental & Natural Resources

Government – General

[SB 46](#), “Government Serves the People Act”: enact (Marty Harbin – R)

To improve government service delivery in this state; to provide for the appointment of a State of Georgia Government Service Delivery Lead within the Georgia Technology Authority to coordinate such efforts

Status: Referred to Government Oversight Cmte

[SB 37](#), Georgia Board for Artificial Intelligence: “AI Accountability Act”: enact (John Albers – R)

So as to require that all governmental entities develop and maintain artificial intelligence system usage plans **Status:** Referred to Economic Development and Tourism Cmte

[HB 175](#), Education; Early care and education programs and Head Start program (Rep. Todd Jones – R)

So as to revise provisions regarding employee comprehensive background checks for early care and education programs and Head Start programs **Status:** Referred to Education Cmte

Health – General

[HB 102](#), Community Health; Georgia Quality Reporting Project (Rep. Sharon Cooper – R)

Provide for the establishment of the Georgia Quality Reporting Project **Status:** Referred to Public and Community Health Cmte

[HB 118](#), Education; Relating to early care and learning (Rep. Rick Townsend – R)

So as to revise the requirements of childcare learning center and family childcare learning homes; require that such centers and homes maintain at least one portable airway clearance device **Status:** Referred to Education Cmte

[HB 178](#), Social Services; treatment services under Medicaid; Provisions (Rep. Sharon Cooper - R)

So as to require the Department of Community Health to submit a Section 1115 waiver request to the federal centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for a demonstration project to provide treatment services under Medicaid to persons in this state living with HIV **Status:** Referred to Public and Community Health

[HB 185](#), Professions and businesses; the Dietetics Practice Act (Rep. Ginny Ehrhart – R)

So as to repeal and reenact Chapter 11A, the Dietetics Practice Act, relating to torts **Status:** Referred to Regulated Industries Cmte

Hospitals -- CON (Certificate of Need)

[SB 95](#), Life Plan Communities (Sen. Watson – R)

Relating to exemptions from the certificate of need program, so as to revise an exemption from certificate of need requirements concerning life plan communities. **Status:** Referred to Health Cmte

Hospitals

[HB 170](#), Insurance; benefit provider to disclose certain payments (Rep. Karen Mathiak – R)
Relating to authorization and general requirements for transaction of insurance, so as to provide for a benefit provider to disclose certain payments to treating healthcare providers **Status:** Referred to Insurance Cmte

[SB 80](#), Tax Credits; the definition of “rural hospital organization” (Sen. Carden Summers – R)
Relating to eligibility to receive tax credits, so as to revise the definition of "rural hospital organization" **Status:** Read and Referred, Referred to Health Cmte

[SB 101](#), Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy; testing in the newborn screening (Sen. Randy Robertson – R)
So as to require testing for Duchenne muscular dystrophy in the newborn screening system **Status:** Referred to Health & Human Services Cmte

Insurance

Mental Health & Developmental Disabilities

Military Base Support

Pharmaceuticals

[HB 139](#), Pharmacies: Prohibit drug manufacturers and wholesaler (Rep. Todd Jones – R)
To prohibit drug manufacturers and wholesalers from preventing a licensed pharmacies from acquiring and dispensing drugs purchased from entities that participate in particular federal drug discount program **Status:** Referred to Health Cmte

[SB 5](#), Certification of private review agents (Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick – R)
Relating to certification of private review agents, so as to provide for health insurers to implement and maintain a program. **Status:** Referred to Insurance & Labor Cmte

[SB 60](#), Pharmacy Benefits Manager (Sen. Chuck Hufestler)
So as to provide that such managers have a duty of care to insureds, health plans, and providers **Status:** Referred to Insurance and Labor Cmte

Public Health

[HB 43](#), Disadvantaged Community Drinking Water Program (Rep. Viola Davis – D)
To establish the Disadvantaged Community Drinking Water Program, to provide for requirements. **Status:** Referred to Natural Resources & Environment Cmte

[HB 46](#), Maternal Mortality Review Cmte (Rep. Viola Davis – D)
To provide for the composition of the Maternal Mortality Review Committee. **Status:** Referred to Public & Community Health Cmte

[HB 83](#), Cigarette tax increase (Rep. Michelle Au – D)
Increase tax rate on a pack of cigarettes. **Status:** Referred to Ways & Means Cmte

[HB 84](#), Increase tax rate on consumable vapor products (Rep. Michelle Au – D)

Relating to taxes on tobacco and vaping products, so as to increase the rate of the tax on consumable vapor products; to provide that the proceeds derived from such increase are intended to be appropriated for healthcare purposes. **Status:** Referred to Ways & Means Cmte

[HB 89](#), Maternal Mortality Review Cmte (Rep. Sharon Cooper – R)
Public Health, Department of; require healthcare providers, facilities, and pharmacies to provide the Maternal Mortality Review Committee with psychiatric or other clinical records. **Status:** Referred to Public & Community Health Cmte, Passed Cmte by Substitute, Pending Rules Cmte

[HB 96](#), Revenue and taxation; Pack of cigarettes (Rep. Sam Park – D)
Relating to taxes on tobacco and vaping products, so as to increase the rate of the tax on each pack of cigarettes to the national average tax on cigarettes **Status:** Referred to Ways & Means Cmte

[HB 124](#), Insurance for pediatric autoimmune neuropsychiatric disorders (Rep. Mitchell Scoggins – R)
Relating to requiring coverage for healthcare services for pediatric autoimmune neuropsychiatric disorders such as streptococcal infection (PANDAS) **Status:** Referred to Insurance Cmte; **Pending Rules Cmte**

[HB 173](#), Education; Department of; Adolescent Vaccinations Information (Rep. Darlene Taylor – R)
So as to require the Department of Education to provide to parents and guardians of students entering the sixth grade information regarding recommended adolescent vaccinations in print or electronic form **Status:** Referred to Education Cmte

Study Committees

Taxes

[HB 111](#), Income Tax; reduce rate of tax (Rep. Soo Hong – R)
Relating to the imposition, rate, computation, exemptions, and credits relative to income taxes, so as to reduce the rate of the tax **Status:** Referred to Ways & Means Cmte

Transportation

[HB 76](#), Require public hearings for local projects of significant impact (Rep. Stacey Evans – D)
To require public hearings for local transportation projects of significant impact. **Status:** Referred to Transportation Cmte

[HB 164](#), Truck Weights (Rep. Steven Meeks – R)
Relating to dimensions and weight of vehicles and loads; to provide for the enforcement of such provisions. **Status:** Referred to Transportation Cmte

Workers' Comp

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