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Governmental Affairs

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Weekly Legislative Report #5

Week Ending February 14, 2025

Tort Reform Moving On

Tort reform legislation, ([SB 68](#) and [SB 69](#)), backed by Republican Gov. Brian Kemp and aimed at reining in huge jury awards supporters say cripple Georgia businesses, has cleared a state Senate committee following a five-hour hearing this past Monday night. The Senate Judiciary Committee voted 8-3 to advance the tort reform measure to the full Senate for consideration. Among other things, [SB 68](#) would shield property owners from liability claims stemming from criminal acts committed by third parties outside of the owner's control, allow lawyers for defendants in suits stemming from car accidents to introduce evidence showing the injured party was not wearing a seatbelt, and require plaintiffs in liability cases to show the jury their actual medical costs when the jury is deliberating on compensation.

Speaker Names Interim Chief of Staff

Former Governor Nathan Deal's chief of staff, Chris Riley, will serve in that role in the House Speaker's office on an interim basis, announced Speaker Jon Burns. Riley will fill in for former state Rep. Terry England, who has served as Burns' chief of staff since 2023. England suffered a serious accident on his farm in Barrow County last weekend. Riley comes with a considerable amount of experience as he served as Deal's chief of staff during his entire tenure as governor. The Speaker told his House colleagues this week that England is getting better every day and will return to his post in the speaker's office after he recovers.

Next Week

The legislature will be in recess Monday for Presidents' Day and then convene on Tuesday for Day 18 and will remain in session through Friday, which will complete legislative day 21. The truck weight bill, [HB 164](#), is on the House Transportation Committee meeting agenda to be heard next Thursday and the tort reform bills ([SB 68](#) and [SB 69](#)) may hit the Senate floor next week as well.

The Senate is expected to complete their review of the FY 25 amended budget as the House continues their work on the FY 26 budget.

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, **Passed House, Sent to Senate**

[HB 238](#), Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council (Rep. Eddie Lumsden – R)
So as to require the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council to create and maintain an at-risk adult training course focusing on officer response to individuals with Alzheimer's disease or dementia. **Status:** Referred to Public Safety and Homeland Security Cmte

Business – Tort Reform

[SB 68](#), Tort Reform (Sen. John Kennedy – R)
Relating to civil practice, contracts, motor vehicles, and torts, respectively, so as to provide for substantive and comprehensive revision of provisions regarding civil practice, evidentiary matters, damages, and liability in tort actions; to provide limitations relative to pain and suffering testimony; to provide for timing of answers and discovery; to provide for dismissals of civil actions; to provide for definitions. **Status:** Referred to Judiciary Cmte, **Passed Cmte by Substitute, Pending Rules Cmte**

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

Relating to banking and finance, and depositions and discovery under the "Georgia Civil Practice Act," respectively, so as to regulate third-party litigation financing practices in this state. **Status:** Referred to Judiciary Cmte, [Passed Cmte by Substitute, Pending Rules 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, Passed 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, Withdrawn and Recommitted, [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, Passed Cmte, Pending Rules Cmte, Passed House, Sent to Senate, [Referred to State and Local Governmental Operations 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 Governmental 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 Cmte

[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:** Referred to Economic Development & Tourism Cmte, House Cmte, Passed Cmte, Pending Rules Cmte, Passed House, Sent to Senate, Referred to Economic Development & Tourism Cmte

[HB 360](#), Revenue and taxation; revise tax credit (Rep. Chuck Efstrotation – R)

So as to revise a tax credit for the rehabilitation of historic structures; to authorize the credit to be claimed in the taxable year the year a certificate of occupancy is obtained for certain preapproved rehabilitations. **Status:** [Referred to Ways and Means Cmte](#)

[HB 380](#), To repeal the act creating the LCRA. (Rep. Gerald Greene – R)
To repeal an Act creating the Lower Chattahoochee Regional Airport Authority, approved May 5, 2006 as amended. **Status:** [Referred to Intragovernmental Coordination Cmte](#)

[HB 381](#), To Amend the Lower Chattahoochee RTA (Rep. Gerald Greene – R)
To amend an Act to create the Lower Chattahoochee Regional Transportation Authority, so as to add Clay, Marion, and Webster counties to the authority; to revise provisions for the appointment of members; to add references to said additional counties. **Status:** [Referred to Intragovernmental Coordination Cmte](#)

[HB 387](#), Local government; Service delivery agreement (Rep. Brad Thomas – R)
So as to require service delivery agreement to include a growth boundary agreement component. **Status:** [Referred to Governmental Affairs 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, Passed Cmte by Substitute, Pending Rules 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](#)

[HB 317](#), Workforce and Residential Infrastructure District for Georgia Act; enact (Rep. Ron Stephens)
Relating to local government, so as to provide for a short title; to provide for establishment of community development districts. **Status:** [Referred to Governmental Affairs 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](#), Passed Cmte, Pending Rules Cmte

[SR 131](#), Sports Betting and Casino Gambling Activities (Sen. Carden Summers – R)
So as to authorize the Georgia General Assembly to provide by law for the operation and regulation of sports betting and casino gambling activities in this state. **Status:** [Referred to Regulated Industries and Utilities Cmte](#)

Elections

Environmental & Natural Resources

[HB 287](#), Environmental Protection Division; Environmental Advisory Council (Rep. Trey Rhodes – R)
Relating to Environmental Protection Division, Environmental Advisory Council, duties of council and its members and director, appeal procedures generally, permit applications, and inspections, so as to update the reference date to standards, rules, and regulations. **Status:** [Referred to Game, Fish, and Parks Cmte](#)

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, [Passed Cmte](#), [Pending Rules 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, [Passed Cmte](#), [Pending Rules Cmte](#)

[HB 291](#), Certification of community health workers (Rep. Darlene Taylor – R)

So as to provide for the certification of community health workers; To provide for the establishment of the Georgia Community Health Worker Certification Committee **Status:** [Referred to Public and Community Health Cmte](#)

[HB 373](#), Insurance; annual prostate cancer screenings for certain men (Rep. Lydia Glaize – D)

So as to require coverage for annual prostate cancer screenings for certain men; so as to require coverage for annual prostate cancer screenings for certain men. **Status:** [Referred to Insurance Cmte](#)

[HB 352](#), Georgia Gestational Diabetes Management Act; enact (Rep. Devan Seabaugh – R)

So as to revise coverage criteria to include Medicaid recipients with gestational diabetes. **Status:** [Referred to Public Community and Health Cmte](#)

Hospitals -- CON (Certificate of Need)

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

[HB 262](#), Grant program for purpose of acquiring and installing backup generators (Rep. Angie O'Steen)
So as to provide for a grant program for the purpose of acquiring and installing backup generators; to provide that the department shall consult with the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency in establishing grant criteria. **Status:** Referred to Rural Development Cmte, **Passed Cmte, Pending Rules Cmte**

[HB 298](#), Requirements for nurse staffing in hospitals (Rep. Trey Kelley – R)
So as to provide requirements for nurse staffing in hospitals; to require a written nurse services staffing plan; to provide for the establishment of nurse staffing committees. **Status:** **Referred to Health 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:** **Referred to Health and Human Services 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, **Passed Cmte, Pending Rules Cmte**

[SB 130](#), Medical education funding and the service cancelable loan program (Sen. Mike Hodges – R)
To provide for medical education funding to certain medical organizations facilities; to provide for a physician in certain residency or fellowship programs to be eligible for the service cancelable loan program. **Status:** **Referred to Health and Human Services Cmte**

[SB 131](#), Georgia Health Care Professionals Data System; establishment (Sen. Mike Hodges – R)
Relating to Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce, so as to provide for the establishment of the Georgia Health Care Professionals Data System. **Status:** **Referred to Regulate Industries and Utilities Cmte**

[SB 162](#), Georgia Composite Medical Board; Provide (Rep. Chuck Hufstetler – R)
So as to provide for the board to implement an automated credentialing system for healthcare providers in this state. **Status:** **Referred to Regulated Industries and Utilities Cmte**

Insurance

Mental Health & Developmental Disabilities

[SB 132](#), Insanity and Mental Incapacity; (Sen. Brian Strickland – R)
So as to require a hearing before a court orders an evaluation of the mental competency of an accused person to stand trial. **Status:** **Referred to Judiciary Cmte**

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, Passed Cmte, Pending Rules Cmte, [Passed Senate, Sent to House, Referred to Insurance & Labor Cmte](#)

[SB 60](#), Pharmacy Benefits Manager (Sen. Chuck Hufstetler)

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, House First Reader, House Second Reader

[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, Passed 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, withdrawn and recommitted to Public and Community Health Cmte, [Passed Cmte by Substitute, Pending Rules Cmte](#)

[HB 322](#), Ga. Board of Dentistry (Rep. Lee Hawkins – R)

So as to revise provisions regarding the Georgia Board of Dentistry issuance of a dental or dental hygiene license for the sole purpose of teaching or instructing in an accredited dental school, dental hygiene school, or academic medical center in this state. **Status:** Referred to Health Cmte

Study Committees

Taxes

[HB 111](#), Personal state income tax rate reduction (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 personal state income tax; to provide for related matters. **Status:** Referred to Ways & Means Cmte, Passed Cmte, Pending Rules Cmte

[HB 112](#), Income tax; One-time Tax Rebate (Rep. Lauren McDonald III – R)

So as to provide for a one-time tax credit for individual taxpayers who filed income tax returns for the 2023 and 2024 taxable years. **Status:** Referred to Ways & Means Cmte, Passed Cmte, Pending Rules Cmte

[HB 282](#), Ad valorem tax; property; change certain definitions - (Rep. Vance Smith – R)

Relating to ad valorem taxation of property, so as to change certain definitions regarding such taxation. **Status:** Referred to Ways & Mean Cmte

[HB 365](#), Strategic Industrial Development Enhancement (SIDE) Tax Credit Act; (Rep. Rick Jasperse – R)

So as to create a temporary income tax credit for certain expenditures relating to projects promoting industrial infrastructure enhancement and connectivity to provide for definitions; to provide for eligibility approval by the Department of Community Affairs; to provide for limitations upon such tax credit; to authorize the sale or transfer of unused credits; to provide for an aggregate annual limit; to provide for terms and conditions. **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](#), Highways, bridges, and ferries; allowable variance for weight limitations upon a vehicle or load - (Rep. Steven Meeks – R)

Relating to dimensions and weight of vehicles and loads, so as to repeal automatic repeal provisions relating to an allowable variance for weight limitations upon a vehicle or load hauling certain commodities within a certain range and areas of the state; to provide for the enforcement of such provisions by local law enforcement officers; to provide for related matters. **Status:** Referred to Transportation Cmte

Workers' Comp

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