

UPDATE

Legislative Update 2015 Final Legislative Update

On Thursday, April 2nd, the Georgia General Assembly reconvened for the 40th and final legislative day of the 2015 legislative session. The day is also known as Sine Die, latin for “the end” and is widely regarded by those in and around the Capitol as the busiest legislative day of the year. This Sine Die proved no different, as dozens of bills were debated and passed back and forth between the House and Senate before receiving a final vote. The following bills are those we have been tracking that received a favorable vote and will be sent to Governor Nathan Deal’s desk to be signed into law:

HB 72, sponsored by Rep. Wendell Willard (R – Sandy Springs, 51) received favorable passage from the Senate. The bill relates to crimes and offenses against disabled adults and the elderly by expanding and clarifying the definitions in the Georgia Code relating to their protection.

HB 86, sponsored by Tommy Benton (R – Jefferson, 31), received passage on the final legislative day. The bill would transfer the Division of Aging Services to the Georgia Adult and Aging Services Agency.

HB 131, also known as “The End to Cyberbullying Act,” was passed by the Senate. The bill, sponsored by Rep. Pam Dickerson (D – Conyers, 113) would expand the statutory definition of ‘bullying’ to include acts done through electronic means. The expansion of this definition would include acts of cyberbullying done on school property, at school events, on school vehicles, and at bus stops or any acts committed while using a school computer, school network, or any other electronic school technology.

HB 177 also saw final passage on Sine Die. The bill, sponsored by Rep. David Wilkerson (D – Austell, 38), requires that certain school personnel who are required to report suspected child abuse be notified by the receiving agency upon the receipt of such report and upon completion of the subsequent investigation.

HB 198, sponsored by Rep. Katie Dempsey (R – Rome, 13) was passed. The bill, also known as the Jason Flatt Act—so-named after the young man who took his own life in 1997—requires two hours of annual suicide prevention training for certified school system personnel, including school social workers. The bill is part of a nationwide effort aimed at fostering awareness and prevention of youth suicide, also called the “Silent Epidemic.”

HB 268, a bill sponsored by Rep. Mandi Ballinger (R – Canton, 23), has also been sent to the Governor for his signature. The bill seeks to modify the requirements for the mandatory reporting of child abuse in an effort to protect and enhance the welfare of Georgia’s children. Under the guidelines of the bill, a person receiving reliable information that child abuse has occurred would have a duty to report such abuse to the Division of Family and Child Services.

The General Assembly also passed HB 512, sponsored by Rep. Rick Jasperse (R – Jasper, 11). This bill changes the governing, regulation, and administration of mental health services by establishing an “advisory council” to create the policy and direction for disability services by assessing local needs and priorities and providing support to local facilities.

SB 8, sponsored by Sen. Renee Untermann (R – 45) saw final adoption as part of a significant effort by the General Assembly to address the growing problem of human sex trafficking in Georgia. S.B. 8 seeks to increase the criminal penalties for people convicted of sexual trafficking and requires that they register on the Sex Offender Registry. More importantly, however, the bill increases the mental and physical health services offered by the state to these children to help them recover and rehabilitate their lives.

SB 53 was passed and signed by the Governor back in March. That bill, sponsored by Sen. Greg Kirk (R – 13), extends the sunset provision on licensed professional counselors to perform 1013s. The bill was signed into law by Governor Deal on March 10th.

Although the legislative process involving the General Assembly has concluded and the bills have been sent to the Governor, he still has 40 days in which to consider the bills. For each bill, the Governor has three options: he can sign the bill into law, veto the bill (at which point it will be returned to the General Assembly for veto override consideration) or do nothing, in which case the bill will automatically become law at the end of the 40 day period.

We will continue to keep you updated on any significant changes regarding the aforementioned bills.

Date of Last Recorded Action: 4/9/2015

HB 0072	Work	Crimes and offenses; protection of disabled adults and elder persons; expand and clarify	Willard, Wendell 51 st	
	4/9/2015 - House - House Sent to Governor		House: JudyNC	Senate: H&HS
HB 0086	Watch	Social services; provide for transfer of the Division of Aging Services to the Georgia Adult and Aging Services Agency; provisions	Benton, Tommy 31 st	
	4/6/2015 - House Sent to Governor		House: HumR	Senate: H&HS
HB 0092	Watch	Labor; allow employees to use sick leave for care of immediate family members; provisions	Benton, Tommy 31 st	
	1/28/2015 - House Second Readers		House: I&L	Senate:
HB 0131	Work	The End to Cyberbullying Act; enact	Dickerson, Pam 113 th	
	4/9/2015 - House - House Sent to Governor		House: Ed	Senate: ED&Y

HB 0139	Watch	Dropout Deterrent Act; enact	Stephens, Mickey 165 th
		2/2/2015 - House Second Readers	House: Ed Senate:
HB 0177	Work	Social services; school personnel required to report child abuse shall be notified by child protective agency upon receipt of report and completion of investigation; provide	Wilkerson, David 38 th
		4/6/2015 - House Sent to Governor	House: JuvJ Senate: H&HS
HB 0198	Watch	Jason Flatt Act-Georgia; enact	Dempsey, Katie 13 th
		4/6/2015 - House Sent to Governor	House: Ed Senate: H&HS
HB 0218	Watch	Preventing Government Overreach on Religious Expression Act; enact	Teasley, Sam 37 th
		2/10/2015 - House Second Readers	House: Judy Senate:
HB 0229	Watch	Domestic relations; grandparent rights to visitation and intervention to great-grandparents and siblings of parents; expand	Strickland, Brian 111 th
		2/10/2015 - House Second Readers	House: JuvJ Senate:
HB 0244	Watch	Safe Harbor/Rachel's Law Act; enact	Efstration, Chuck 104 th
		2/10/2015 - House Second Readers	House: JudyNC Senate:
HB 0268	Work	Child abuse; mandatory reporters; change provisions	Ballinger, Mandi 23 rd
		4/9/2015 - House Sent to Governor	House: JuvJ Senate: JUDYNC
HB 0280	Watch	State Sexual Offender Registry; individual convicted of trafficking a person for sexual servitude; require registration	Reeves, Bert 34 th
		4/2/2015 - House Withdrawn, Recommitted	House: JudyNC Senate:
HB 0359	Watch	Professions and businesses; separate standard committees for professional counseling specialty, social work specialty, and marriage and family specialty; change certain provisions	Beskin, Beth 54 th
		2/18/2015 - House Second Readers	House: Regl Senate:
HB 0395	Watch	Professions and businesses; provide definition	Chandler, Joyce 105 th

		for term psychological testing; provisions		
		2/20/2015 - House Second Readers	House: H&HS	Senate:
HB 0498	Watch	Professions and businesses; professional counseling; revise definition	Hawkins, Lee 27 th	
		3/2/2015 - House Second Readers	House: Regl	Senate:
HB 0512	Work	Mental health; governing and regulation; change certain terminology and provisions	Jasperse, Rick 11 th	
		4/7/2015 - House Sent to Governor	House: HumR	Senate: H&HS
HR 0766	Work	House Study Committee on Bullying in Schools; create	Dickerson, Pam 113 th	
		4/2/2015 - House Withdrawn, Recommitted	House: Ed	Senate:
SB 0003	Work	'Supporting and Strengthening Families Act'; power of attorney from parent to another person; care of minor child; provide for	Unterman, Renee 45 th	
		2/12/2015 - House Second Readers	Senate: H&HS	House: Judy
SB 0008	Work	Crimes and Offenses: children who have been sexually exploited; make provisions; create Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Children Fund Commission	Unterman, Renee 45 th	
		4/9/2015 - Senate - Senate Sent to Governor	Senate: JUDYNC	House: JuvJ
SB 0035	Work	Crimes and Offenses; provide leaving certain children in vehicles; cruelty to children in the third degree	James, Donzella 35 th	
		3/18/2015 - House Second Readers	Senate: JUDYNC	House: JudyNC
SB 0038	Watch	Medicaid; authorization of appropriations; medical assistance payments to providers of Medicaid expansion	Fort, Vincent 39 th	
		1/26/2015 - Senate Read and Referred	Senate: APPROP	House:
SB 0039	Watch	Abortion; change certain provisions relating to criminal abortion	Orrock, Nan 36 th	
		1/26/2015 - Senate Read and Referred	Senate: H&HS	House:

SB 0040	Watch	Health; repeal Code Section 31-1-40	Fort, Vincent 39 th
		1/26/2015 - Senate Read and Referred	Senate: GvtO House:
SB 0041	Watch	"Georgia Family Planning Initiative"; enact; definitions; authorize public and private funding	Tate, Horacena 38 th
		1/26/2015 - Senate Read and Referred	Senate: H&HS House:
SB 0042	Watch	Employment Security; provide leaving employer due to family violence; good cause in connection with claim for unemployment benefits	Butler, Gloria 55 th
		1/26/2015 - Senate Read and Referred	Senate: I&L House:
SB 0053	Work	Mental Health; authorizing licensed professional counselor to perform certain acts; revise sunset prov.; repeal in its entirety June 30, 2018	Kirk, Greg 13 th
		3/10/2015 - Senate Date Signed by Governor	Senate: H&HS House: H&HS
SB 0056	Watch	Education; mandatory education for children between ages 6 and 16; raise the age of mandatory attendance	Fort, Vincent 39 th
		1/27/2015 - Senate Read and Referred	Senate: ED&Y House:
SB 0060	Watch	Education; raise the mandatory education from 16 to 17 1/2; adult literacy for purposes of conformity; revise provisions	Jackson, Lester 2 nd
		1/28/2015 - Senate Read and Referred	Senate: ED&Y House:
SB 0242	Work	Labor and Industrial Relations; allow employees to use sick leave for the care of immediate family members	Williams, Michael 27 th
		4/2/2015 - Senate Withdrawn & Recommitted	Senate: H&HS House:
SR 0388	Watch	Constitution; prevent discrimination in the public funding of social services; allow religious/faith based organization to receive public aid -CA	Heath, Bill 31 st
		3/5/2015 - Senate Read Second Time	Senate: GvtO House:

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