

2020 Legislative Session Days 1-4

This past week the Georgia General Assembly kicked off the 2020 legislative session and legislators gathered under the Gold Dome to do the people's business. This report contains highlights from Governor Kemp's State of the State, legislation that has been passed, and new bills that have been introduced.

Governor Kemp's State of the State:

Governor Kemp announced that his proposed budget for FY21 would include the final installment of \$2,000 toward his pledge to increase teacher salaries by \$5,000. On health care, the Governor expressed support for legislation that remedies surprise billing and noting that he will "demand transparency" and "insist on fairness" in the healthcare industry. Additionally, the Governor called for a tripling of the adoption tax credit, from \$2,000 to \$6,000, as well as lowering the adoption age from 25 to 21.

Budget

Following Governor Kemp's State of the State, the Office of Planning Budget released the entirety of the Governor's Budget Reports for Amended FY 2020 and FY 2021. While the Amended FY20 proposal reflects a decline in State general fund receipts (and therefore cuts) of nearly \$404 million (-1.5%) from receipts projected when the FY20 budget was originally passed, the FY21 proposal reflects an increase over the original FY20 budget of over \$488 million (+1.9%). To review the Governor Kemp's budget report [click here](#).

Taxes:

The House and Senate finally agreed on a final version of [HB 276](#) by Rep. Brett Harrell (R-Snellville). This bill helps ensure sales taxes are collected on all purchases made online. This legislation is projected to produce around \$80 million per year in additional local sales tax revenue. This bill has been sent to the Governor for his consideration.

[HB 730](#) by Rep. Ron Stephens (R-Savannah) creates a new tax exemption for all tangible personal property sold to or used by a host committee tasked with recruiting, planning, and raising funds to host a nonrecurring major sporting event expected to generate over \$50 million in the host locality. This bill was referred to the House Ways and Means Committee

[HB 762](#) by Rep. John Carson (R-Marietta) provides a deduction from the Georgia net taxable income of corporations for assessments paid by a taxpayer that was imposed on such taxpayer pursuant to the Federal Deposit Insurance Act (12.U.S.C.1817(b)). This bill was referred to the House Ways and Means Committee.

City Legislation:

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[HB 779](#) by Rep. Shaw Blackmon (R-Bonaire) changes the distribution of the Title Ad Valorem Tax (TAVT) fee between local governments to allow cities to recoup some of this lost revenue by changing their distribution from 23% to 28% in a city with a county school district. The legislation would change the allocation for cities from 23% to 49% in a city with a city school district. This bill has been referred to the committee of Ways and Means

Business and Licenses:

[HB 773](#) by Representative Scot Turner (R-Holly Springs) provides for reciprocal licensing of professions, occupations and trades for individuals who are licensed outside of the State of Georgia, including other countries, if such individuals meet certain conditions. This bill was referred to the House Regulated Industries Committee.

Insurance:

[SB 299](#) by Sen. P.K. Martin (R-Lawrenceville) adds a requirement for all disability income insurance insurer to provide monthly confirmations of premium payments or an annual disclosure of premiums received and coverage provided. This bill was referred to the Senate Insurance and Labor Committee.

[SB 293](#) by Sen. Chuck Hufstetler (R-Rome) is known as the “Balance Billing Consumer Protection Act”. The bill provides for certain consumer protections against balance billing for health care services. Specifically, with regard to emergency medical services, the bill requires an insurer to pay for such services without prior authorization or any retrospective payment denial and regardless of whether the services are provided by a provider participating in the insurer’s network.

Military:

[HB 735](#) by Rep. Shaw Blackmon (R-Bonaire) removes the age limit the tax exemption in (a)(5)(D) for income received for military retirement benefits. This bill was referred to the House Ways and Means Committee.

[HB 767](#) by Rep. Sandra Scott (D-Rex) would ask the Department of Public Health to collect information on suicides of individuals who die within the state and who have served in the armed forces of the United States. It further would require that the Department prepare an annual report on veteran suicide. This bill was referred to the House Defense and Veteran’s Affairs Committee.

[HB 771](#) by Rep. Sandra Scott (D-Rex) allows members of the armed forces of the United States who are abiding in Georgia incident to active military duty and their spouses and dependents qualify for in-state tuition. Eligibility would continue as long as the active duty member establishes residency in the state within 30 days of receipt of honorable discharge from military service and is continuously enrolled in the degree or another program in which he or she was

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enrolled at the time of discharge. This bill was referred to the House Higher Education Committee.

[HB 772](#) by Rep. Sandra Scott (D-Rex) provides the creation of a “Green Call Act” in Article 10 of Chapter 3 of Title 35. This relates to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, allowing that agency to work cooperatively with the office of the Governor, the Georgia Lottery Corporation, and other appropriate law enforcement agencies to develop and implement a statewide alert system so as to allow notification of the public when a veteran or military service member, known to have a physical or mental health condition related to his or her service or who is at imminent risk of self-harm or is missing. This bill was referred to the House Defense and Veteran’s Affairs Committee.

[HR 894](#) by Rep. Sandra Scott (D-Rex) creates the Joint Study Committee on Veterans’ Suicide as rates of mental health problems and suicides for members of the United States’ armed forces remains high.

Immigrant Related Bills:

The bills listed below were introduced last year and we will be closely monitoring them this year as the session progresses.

[HB 202](#) by Rep. Jesse Petrea (R-Savannah) requires the Commissioner of Corrections to, on the official website used by the department, publish a report of aggregate data on the immigration status, offenses, and home countries of inmates who are not United States citizens and who are confined under the authority of the department. Additionally, the commissioner must report, in a similar manner, the percentage of inmates, in relation to the population in confinement, that are not citizens of the United States.

[HB 270](#) by Rep. Jeff Jones (R-Brunswick) mandates the Department of Motor Vehicles to participate in the E-Verify (RIDE) program and prohibits anyone from using their foreign I.D. as a form of identification when going to vote.

[HB 360](#) by Rep. Pedro Marin (D-Duluth) allows the Department of Motor Vehicles to issue driver safety cards noncitizen residents who are ineligible for a driver's license, temporary permit, or identification card.

[HB 400](#) by Rep. Jeff Jones (R-Brunswick) mandates the Department of Motor vehicles to participate in the E-Verify (RIDE) program. The bill would also replace the licenses of those with DACA with one that has the words “NOT U.S. CITIZEN” AND “NOT FOR FEDERAL USE”.

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[HB 532](#) by Rep. Jeff Jones (R-Brunswick) taxes remittances sent to outside the state. Transactions of \$500 or less receive a \$10 flat fee, the fee is 2% of transactions over \$500. Georgia Residents will receive a tax credit or reimbursement for all of these fees.

[HB 670](#) by Rep. Bee Nguyen allows the department of Motor Vehicles to issue driver's licenses to undocumented immigrants.