

2021 Legislative Update Week 3

The Georgia General Assembly completed day 16 of the 40-day legislative session on Thursday, February 11th.

Governor Kemp announced on Wednesday last week that Georgia has administered over 1,000,000 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. Georgia is now receiving approximately 146,000 doses per week from the federal government supply chain with demand continuing to outstrip supply.

As we anticipated, the number of bills and resolutions being introduced has increased. Many of those measures relate to election reform, and hearings on some of this legislation has begun. Discussions surrounding absentee ballot procedures will continue throughout the session.

House Bill 80, the FY 2021 Amended Budget cleared the House. The Senate Appropriations Sub-Committees have met. The Senate Appropriations Committee gave approval to their version of the budget at an 8am meeting last Thursday. HB80 was voted on by the Senate and passed. Budget writers from the two Chambers will then hammer out the differences. Final passage of the amended budget which provides funding through June 30th 2021 will likely occur by the end of this week.

Among the various bills that are under consideration now are:

[Senate Bill 1](#) by Senator Dean Burke (R-Bainbridge) which would require companies with ERISA insurance plans to report healthcare data to the State's all payer claims data base. This measure concerns many employers providing health insurance coverage to their employees. It was heard in the Senate Finance committee this week. No vote was taken as the author expressed a willingness to work with the opponents.

[Senate Bill 6](#) by Senator John Albers (R-Roswell) which requires a review and evaluation of state tax credits was overwhelmingly approved by the Senate and is now assigned to the House Ways and Means Committee.

[House Bill 86](#) by Representative Ron Stephens (R-Savannah) which would legalize sports betting sponsored by Representative Ron Stephens and supported by major league professional sports teams passed the House Economic Development Committee this week. The bill provides for operation through the Georgia lottery Corporation.

[Senate Bill 52](#) by Senator Bruce Thompson (R-District 14) grants a legal safe harbor for companies that experience a data breach if the companies have taken certain measures to reasonably protect the personal identifying information. This bill was assigned to the Senate Science and Technology Committee and is expected to have a hearing next week.

[HB 98](#) by Representative Eddie Lumsden (R-Armuchee) and [SB 95](#) by Senator Frank Ginn (R-Danielsville) allow government entities to conduct meetings through teleconference.

[House Bill 112](#) by Representative Trey Kelley (R-Cedartown) extended the liability protection to businesses for COVID-19 claims for 1 year through July 14, 2022. This legislation passed the Special Committee on Civil Justice last week and [should be considered for full House vote this week](#).

[House Bill 150](#) by Representative Bruce Williamson (R- Monroe) seeks to prohibit cities and counties from adopting restrictions on the type of fuel used in future development. [SB 102](#), the companion bill was introduced in the Senate by Senator John Kennedy (R-Macon). HB 150 will be heard in the Energy Subcommittee of the House Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications Committee on Monday.

The Greater North Fulton Chamber is part of the Regional Business Coalition of Metropolitan Atlanta (RBC), an organization of over a dozen of the largest and most active Chambers of Commerce throughout the metro Atlanta region. RBC member chambers represent over 15,000 member companies who employ millions of metro Atlanta residents. The RBC's primary goal is to represent the interests of RBC Chamber members on regional public policy issues impacting our transportation, water and air quality and to advocate for solutions that improve metro Atlanta's quality of life and economic vitality.