



## *House of Representatives*

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STANDING COMMITTEES:  
APPROPRIATIONS  
HUMAN RELATIONS & AGING  
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
PUBLIC SAFETY & HOMELAND SECURITY

- Georgia is the 46<sup>th</sup> lowest tax state in the US per capita, \$1,864. (2017 Tax Foundation)
- Georgia has maintained a AAA bond rating by all 3 rating agencies for 21 years in a row.
- Georgia ranked the No. 1 top state for business for the 5<sup>th</sup> year in a row.
- We have restored the Georgia Rainy Day Fund to over \$2.3 billion.
- Georgia has reduced the size of government even while the population growth has exploded. Georgia has 17.5% fewer State employees than in 2007.
- Georgia has purchased over 187,000 acres of sensitive land to protect permanently since 2007 alone. DNR now manages over 1 million acres of Georgia land.

### **2018 Legislative Session Highlights - Budget**

- The FY 2019 Budget is set by a revenue estimate of \$26.2 billion – an increase of \$1.2 billion, or 4.9%, over the FY 2018 original budget.
- Education = 54%; healthcare = 22%; transportation = 7%; public safety = 8%. These four areas comprise 91% of the budget.
- Completely eliminates austerity reductions and fully funds the Quality Basic Education (QBE) formula for the first time since 2003. Over \$1.4 billion added since FY 2015.
- \$4.8 million for growth in charter school grants.
- 99 new residency slots in primary care medicine.
- Funds three new FQHC's (Federally Qualified Health Centers). One in Bryan County.
- Provides \$16 million in school security grants.
- Combats opioid epidemic by expanding drug task forces statewide.
- Additional \$26.7 million for Dual enrollment.
- \$1.8 million for the REACH Georgia Scholarship to provide 226 additional scholarships.
- \$35 million for the Savannah Harbor Expansion Project (SHEP).

### **2018 Legislative Session Highlights - Bills**

- HB 657 – Combatting Illegal Gun Possession (Sponsored by Rep. Petrea)
  - This bill makes it a felony for any person to knowingly and intentionally provide a firearm to a felon.
- HB 618 – Skidaway Island Incorporation (sponsored by Rep. Petrea)
- HB 918 – Comprehensive Tax Reform
  - Saves Georgia taxpayers an estimated \$5 billion over the next five years.
  - Doubles the standard deduction for Georgia taxpayers to \$4600 for a single taxpayer, \$3000 for a married taxpayer filing a separate return, and \$6000 for a married couple filing a joint return effective tax year 2018.
  - Decreases the income tax rate from 6% to 5.75% effective tax year 2019 and to 5.5% effective tax year 2020.
- HB 673 – Distracted Driving
  - Prohibits an individual from physically holding or supporting a wireless telecommunication device or sending any text-based communication on such device.

- HB 332/HR 238 – the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Act (co-sponsored by Rep. Petrea)
  - Dedicates a portion of state sales and use tax collected on sporting goods equipment to conservation efforts across Georgia. Such efforts include grants supporting: state parks and trails, local parks and trails, the stewardship of conservation lands, and the acquisition of land.
  - Pursuant to HR 238, the Constitutional Amendment, in the 2018 General Election, Georgia voters will vote to authorize the state to dedicate up to 80% of the state portion of sales and use tax collected on sporting goods equipment to the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Trust Fund.
- HB 217 – Student Scholarship Organization Tax Credit (co-sponsored by Rep. Petrea)
  - Student scholarship organizations (SSOs) – which provide scholarships to students from public schools to attend a private school.
  - Raises the cap on available credits for 2018 to \$58 million, for 2019 through 2028 to \$100 million.
- HB 678/Senate Bill 8 address out-of-network balance billing (i.e. surprise medical bills). Out-of-network balance billing is a situation where a patient receives care – typically unknowingly – from an out-of-network provider. Often, these bills result from emergency situations where the patient is unable to choose the emergency facility or physician to which they are taken.
- SB 339 – Campus Free Speech
  - Addresses free speech on college campuses by requiring the Board of Regents to develop a free speech policy to be implemented across the University System of Georgia.
- HB 787 – Charter Schools and Needs-Based Scholarships
  - Provides additional funding and flexibility for our state charter schools.
- SB 118 – Autism Coverage Extension
  - Increases the age of coverage for the treatment of Autism from six-years to twenty-years old.
- SB 355 – Cost Recovery for Future Nuclear Power
  - Future nuclear power construction projects will not be eligible to recover their financing costs before construction is completed.
- HB 159 – Comprehensive Adoption Reform
  - The first comprehensive adoption reform our state has seen in nearly thirty years. This legislation will modernize and streamline our state’s adoption practices.
- HB 834 – Protecting Victims of Domestic Violence
  - Victims of family violence will be able to terminate a residential lease without penalty.
- SB 407 – Criminal Justice Reform
  - Bail reforms; increases penalty for the second conviction of theft of firearms to 5 to 10 years.
- HB 749 – Military Retirement Benefits Exemption for Surviving Dependents
  - Exempts compensation benefits of spouses and dependents of deceased veterans from state income tax.