



February 2, 2024

Welcome to GHLA @ the Capitol, your weekly update about news you need to know related to Georgia's lodging industry and the 2024 General Assembly. GHLA's legislative team will be your eyes and ears under the Gold Dome.

Legislative Schedule

This week the legislature was in session Monday through Thursday for days 11-14. The House and Senate passed a new adjournment calendar on Thursday this week. This Monday is no longer a session day and will be made up on Friday, February 16th for Legislative Day 22. Those are the only two changes in the new adjournment resolution, HR 987, which can be viewed [here](#). The legislature will reconvene on Tuesday, February 6 for legislative day 15.

Chairman Richard Smith

On Tuesday morning, General Assembly received the unfortunate news that House Rules Chairman, Richard Smith, passed away at the age of 78 after battling the flu. Representative Smith was first elected to serve in the House of Representatives in 2004 and was appointed Rules Chairman in 2020. He was one of the most influential members in the House and left a lasting impact Georgia. The Governor and Marty Kemp made an appearance in the House Chamber on Tuesday to mourn the passing of Chairman Smith and show remembrance. Representative Smith will be greatly missed by all at the Capitol and around the great state of Georgia. Click here to see Governor Kemp's statement.

Cash Mandate

[HB 904](#) sponsored by Rep. Todd Jones is a bill to require retailers and restaurants to accept cash for in store purchases. This is an issue the GA Restaurant Association is following closely. The bill received a hearing in the House Agriculture and Consumer Affairs Committee this week where concerns about mandates on business owners and public safety of employees were shared by legislators. The bill remains in the committee for future discussion.

Statewide Music Office

This week [SB 396](#) by Sen. Sonya Halpern passed the Senate Economic Development and Tourism Committee. This bill would create a statewide music office under the Georgia Department of Economic Development. The purpose of the office would be to maximize partnerships in the music industry and elevate Georgia for national tours, with the goal of positioning Georgia as a global leader. This bill is pending in the

Senate Rules Committee.

Sports Betting

After years of failed attempts, this may be the year Georgia legalizes online sports betting. [SB386](#) by Senator Clint Dixon (R-Gwinnett) sailed through the Senate Committee on Economic Development this week with an 8-2 vote and was heavily debated on the Senate Floor before passing 35-15. Of note, there was a last-minute floor amendment to require a constitutional amendment that would first need the approval of a majority of Georgia voters, before the GA Lottery Commission could oversee sports betting. The legislation proposes that 16 licenses will be awarded to Atlanta pro sports teams, the PGA, The Augusta National Golf Club, Atlanta Motor Speedway, and the lottery corporation.

High-Demand Career List

[HB 982](#), by Representative Gambill, would require the State Workforce Development Board to develop, approve, and annually publish a High-demand Career List identifying those careers most critical to the state's current and future workforce needs. This bill is based on the recommendations from the Joint Study Committee on Dual Enrollment for Highly Skilled Talent at Younger Ages and is part of the Governor's legislative package. HB 982 was favorably reported by the House Higher Education Committee on Thursday, February 1.

Short-Term Rental Property

[HB 1121](#) sponsored by Representative Bethany Ballard (R-Warner Robbins) was dropped in the hopper yesterday and will be first read in the House Chamber on Tuesday, February 6. This bill would prohibit local governments from suspending or prohibit the continued use of property as a short-term rental unit by a property owner under certain circumstances. Stay tuned for more updates on this bill as it works its way through the legislative process.

State Travel Guide Announcement

Governor Kemp and the Georgia Department of Economic Development celebrated the release of the 2024 Official State Travel Guide on Tuesday this week. The travel guide highlights Georgia's diverse geography and spotlight's different locations around the state to inspire visitors and travelers alike. The Travel Guide contains nearly 130 pages of attractions, travel inspiration, events, restaurants, activities, and much more to create memorable experiences. Check out the guide [here](#).

Legislative Tracking Update

House Bills

[HB1047](#) - Income tax; reduction of state income tax over time; revise provisions

[HB1049](#) - Insurance Business Transfer Act; enact

[HB1055](#) - Georgia Eviction Records Restriction Act; enact

[HB1059](#) - Representative Sandra Scott - (D-Rex) relating to landlord and tenant, so as to provide for residential eviction diversion programs for disabled and low-income

persons.

[HB1061](#) - Representative Eddie Lumsden (R-Armuchee) - Allows the City of Summerville to levy an excise tax to fund tourism product development.

[HB1062](#) - Representative Eddie Lumsden (R-Armuchee) - Allows Chattooga County to levy an excise tax to fund tourism product development.

[HB1067](#) - Representative Eddie Lumsden (R-Armuchee) - Allows the Town of Trion to levy an excise tax to fund tourism product development.

[HB1069](#) - Representative Chas Cannon (R-Ellaville) - relating to assessment of standing timber, penalty for failure to timely report, effect of reduction of property tax digest, and supplemental assessment, so as to authorize the disclosure of records to the State Forestry Commission.

[HB1076](#) - Buildings and housing; provide circumstances under which a manufactured or mobile home shall become real property

[HB1092](#) – Representative Frazier (D-Hephzibah) - relates to the sale of alcoholic beverages and authorizes the sale of alcoholic beverages for consumption on the premises from 12:30 PM until Midnight on up to four Sundays.

[HB1101](#) - Fair Business Practices Act of 1975; require cash overpayments to be remitted by merchants in the form of store credit under certain circumstances

[HB1102](#) - Sanctuary State Deportation Act; enact

[HB1105](#) - The Georgia Criminal Alien Track and Report Act of 2024; enact

[HB1108](#) - Housing authorities; deemed to be political subdivisions of this state; provide

[HB1114](#) - Representative Will Wade (R-Dawsonville) - would allow the Georgia Department of Insurance Commissioner to collect additional data from certain insurers, insurance rating organizations, and state agencies from July 1, 2024 to November 1, 2029 to determine tort-related risks of insurers.

[HB1116](#) - Representative Debbie Buckner (D-Junction City) - extends the sunset date for the historic home portion of the tax credits for rehabilitation of historic structures and extends the provision for automatic repeal relating to these tax credits.

[HB1121](#) - Representative Bethany Ballard (R-Warner Robins) relating to general provisions applicable to counties and municipal corporations, so as to prohibit local governments from suspending or prohibiting the continued use of property as a short-term rental unit by a property owner under certain circumstances.

[HB1129](#) - Representative Scott Holcomb (D- Atlanta) - provides that a victim of human trafficking is not criminally liable for any sexual crime committed as a result of being a victim of human trafficking.

[HB1130](#) - Representative Scott Holcomb (D- Atlanta) - would provide immunity from criminal prosecution for offenses committed by victims of human trafficking.

[HB1134](#) - Representative Steven Sainz (R-St. Mary's) - would extend the sunset date of the tax credits for the certified rehabilitation of historic structures to at least January 2029.

House Resolutions

[HR918](#) - Golden Isle Greenway; official corridor in Georgia; designate

Senate Bills

[SB403](#) - Ad Valorem Taxation of Property; language required to be included in the

notices of current assessment; revise

[SB404](#) - Individual Tax Rates; reduction of the state income tax over time; revise provisions

[SB414](#) - "Personal Privacy Protection Act"; enact

[SB429](#) - "Small Business Protection Act of 2024"; enact

[SB430](#) - COVID-19 Pandemic Business Safety; provisions for rebuttable presumptions of risk by claimants in certain COVID-19 liability claims; revise

[SB435](#) - 'Infrastructure and Community Development Act'

[SB430](#) – Senator Dolezal (R-Cumming) repeals certain warning requirements for COVID-19 liability claims to revise the provisions for rebuttable presumptions of risk by claimants.

[SB444](#) - Alcoholic Beverages; retail dealers to offer discounts to consumers through premiums, coupons, or rebates; authorize

[SB447](#) - Senator Randy Robertson (R-Cataula) provides that a franchisor may not terminate a franchise unless under certain circumstances. Act to be referred to as the "Georgia Restaurant Franchise Relations Act"

Senate Resolutions

[SR533](#) - Community Development Districts; provide general law for the creation and comprehensive regulation; authorize General Assembly -CA

[SR538](#) - Sports Betting; Georgia General Assembly provide by law for sports betting and casino gambling in this state by July 2, 2025; authorize and require

GHLA Full Legislative Tracking Update

Please [click here to go to our Legislative tracking page](#) for the complete list of bills we are watching.