



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



April 10, 2020

Welcome to GHLA @ the Capitol, your weekly update about news you need to know related to Georgia's lodging industry and the 2020 General Assembly. GHLA's legislative team will be your eyes and ears under the Gold Dome.



The CARES Act is an important step, but more must be done!

We appreciate what Congress and the Administration have done to help American workers and the industries that drive our economy, including hotels. Unfortunately, the reality is that Congress needs to do more. The hotel industry will not recover overnight.

We need Congress to increase the limit on SBA loans to 4 times monthly operating costs, which include payroll, mortgage or rent, and utilities. The current limit of 2.5 times monthly payroll will not allow a business owner to meet both payroll and debt service beyond an estimated 4-8 weeks. It's also critical that we relax the requirements for SBA loan forgiveness. Currently, a business that receives a payroll protection loan can have that loan forgiven if their payroll returns to January levels by June 30. It is unrealistic to expect that hotels will be anywhere close to normal by June.

AHLA has sent a letter to leaders in Congress regarding technical corrections and critical enhancements to the CARES Act and future legislation addressing economic fallout from COVID-19. Additionally, AHLA has expressed support for plans made by President Donald Trump, Leader Mitch McConnell, and Speaker Nancy Pelosi to provide an additional \$250 billion in loans for small businesses.

Now, we need your help to amplify this message to your Member of Congress! Please use the link below to add your name in support of these changes and improvements to the CARES Act. We also ask that you share this link with your network to ensure our industry's voice is heard during this next phase of the debate.

[SIGN THE LETTER HERE](#)

Governor Kemp Extends Executive Order, Limits Short-Term Rentals

On Wednesday, April 8, Governor Kemp announced that he would be extending the shelter-in-place order through the end of April in addition to other more restrictive measures related to flattening the curve. Long-term care providers will have to implement strict mandates to control the spread, as the Georgia National Guard and the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency oversee the creation of additional emergency preparedness measures.

The Administration sounded encouraged by recent data on the virus but planned to keep up the momentum throughout the state in recognition of how quickly COVID-19 has spread, especially to our most vulnerable.

During the announcement, the Governor also voiced his intent to prohibit short-term rentals through the end of the shelter-in-place. The Executive Order excuses any arrangements that have been reserved or executed before noon on Tuesday. The Governor's Executive Orders can be viewed [here](#). This prohibition does not apply to hotels, which may remain open under the Executive Order.

While this move may have been a surprise to some, it was in response to some recent criticism over keeping the beaches in Georgia open during the shelter-in-place. While on its face keeping

the beaches open may sound counterintuitive, the Governor pointed out that parks and beaches are some of the few places that Georgians can safely visit while practicing social distancing. It was never the Administration's intention to signal that Georgia is a vacation spot during COVID-19, and the temporary ban on STRs is a reflection of their goals through the shelter-in-place.

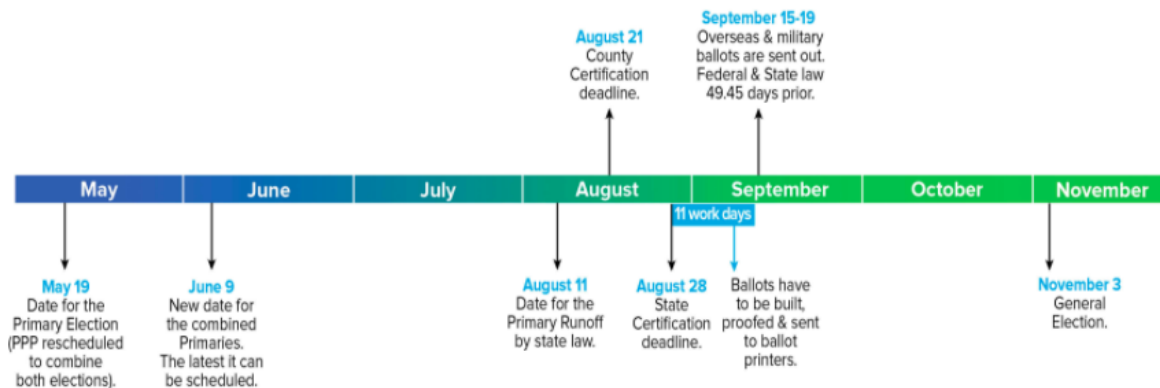
Georgia Postpones Primary Election Until June 9

On Thursday, April 9, Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger announced that he would be postponing the statewide general primary and presidential primary election until June 9, 2020. Along with the announcement of pushing the primary date, his office plans to make absentee ballots available to 6.9 million active voters in Georgia.

The office cited significant concern over the dangers for poll workers and voters when early in-person voting begins. The postponed date will allow their office to provide additional protection and resources to county elections officials. Georgia joins the ranks of 16 other states that have delayed or switched to vote-by-mail during COVID-19. For a graphic of how the Secretary's office chose the new date, please see below.

This step may help prevent the continued spread of COVID-19, as the peak is expected to hit just a few days before early voting would have begun. Election officials throughout the state have struggled to find Georgians willing to work in their precincts. Typically locations such as churches and assisted living centers serve as voting locations, and right now, it would be unsafe for them to do so. The full release can be found [here](#).

How we landed on June 9th, 2020 for General/PP Primary Election



DOL Participates in Hotel and Lodging Industry Q&A

On April 6, 2020, Georgia Department of Labor Commissioner Mark Butler provided an overview of Georgia's emergency partial unemployment process and answered a series of questions in a Q&A format for the Georgia Hotel and Lodging Association ("GHLA").

Ken Winkler, the General Counsel to the Georgia Hotel and Lodging Association and shareholder at Berman Fink Van Horn, facilitated the Q&A and fielded questions from members throughout the hour. Ken has practiced employment law since 1994 and has acknowledged how truly unique the COVID-19 situation is for the hotel and lodging industry.

Ken has drafted a comprehensive summary of Commissioner Butler's comments on his call with the GHLA membership. The summary, as well as a recording of the Q&A, is linked below as a helpful resource to our members.

Commissioner Butler offered to answer additional questions from GHLA members as our industry may have specific concerns that will not be addressed by more general DOL guidance. GHLA is collecting those questions on your behalf. Please use [the linked form here](#) and we will get them to the Commissioner's office.

Notes on Georgia Unemployment

[Click here to download the summary.](#)

Link to Conference Call

[Georgia Department of Labor Update from Commissioner Butler.](#)

DOL Releases Contractor Guidance

The GDOL just released information on "Federal Unemployment Aid Coming to Georgians Not Eligible for State Benefits." This includes individuals who are self-employed, gig workers, 1099 independent contractors, or those with limited work history who will not qualify for state unemployment benefits. That information at the time of this message is posted on the main [GDOL COVID 19 information page](#).

Legislative Tracking Update

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

[Visit our main page.](#)

You are currently subscribed to a mailing list of Georgia Hotel & Lodging Association. If you wish to unsubscribe, please [click here](#).