



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



April 17, 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.

URGENT ACTION: Urge Congress to Authorize Additional Funding for the PPP

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and SBA Administrator Jovita Carranza announced that the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) has reached the \$350 Billion cap on its funding set by Congress in the CARES Act. **By law, the SBA is no longer able to issue new loan approvals.**

This is on the heels of the Senate failing to reach unanimous consent on competing proposals to recapitalize the PPP funds last week. While negotiations are ongoing, what we know is that it will likely be **next week** before there is a bi-partisan agreement to increase funding for this program.

The PPP is vital to retaining our employees and to keeping our industry's small businesses solvent. With the **Department of Labor announcing today that Americans filed another 5.2 million jobless claims this week, meaning more than 22 million have filed for unemployment** since the health crisis began, it is clear that there continues to be a massive economic dislocation of the American workforce and that programs, such as the PPP, are more critical than ever.

We urge you to join us in asking Congress to act NOW and reauthorize funds, so the SBA can continue to provide relief to Americans across the country.

[SEND A LETTER TODAY!](#)

Speaker Ralston Appoints Committee on Resuming 2020 Session

On Friday, House Speaker David Ralston announced the creation of a committee to make recommendations on resuming the 2020 Legislative Session. Speaker Ralston has asked Majority Leader Jon Burns and Minority Leader Bob Trammell to serve as co-chairs of this newly formed committee, which will be charged with examining protocols for how the General Assembly may conduct business in the wake of COVID-19.

Representatives Matt Hatchett, William Boddie, and Mark Newton have also been asked to serve. Representative Boddie serves as the Minority Whip in the House and Representative Hatchett is the Majority Caucus Chairman. There are several non-legislative appointments included in the committee as well. Bill Reilly (Clerk of the House), Holli Pitcock (Speaker's Office Director of Constituent Services), Spiro Amburn (Chief of Staff to Speaker), as well as the House Messenger Betsy Theroux have been appointed.

To see the memo, please visit [here](#).

Senator Blake Tillery to Succeed Senator Hill as Senate Appropriations Chairman

On April 6, news broke that long-time Georgia lawmaker Senator Jack Hill suddenly passed away at the age of 75. Senator Hill was admired by colleagues and constituents alike, and this news sent shockwaves through legislative circles in Georgia.

Senator Hill served as Chair of the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee. Navigating the budgetary complexities of a world with COVID-19 will be complicated further by losing Senator Hill's institutional knowledge and a steady hand. He has served a critical role in drafting the state's annual budget since 2003, making him one of the most influential Senators in the state. Budget negotiations are often protracted and sometimes tense, and the Senator's calm disposition made him the ideal leader for this vital role.

As Georgia braces for the budgetary impact of COVID-19, Senator Blake Tillery (R-Vidalia) has been chosen as Senator Hill's successor to serve as the Chair of Appropriations. Senator Tillery is one of Governor Kemp's floor leaders, and an attorney from the 19th District representing Appling, Wheeler,

Wayne, Toombs, and Montgomery counties. He has served on the Committees on Assignments, Economic Development and Tourism, and Reapportionment. His new Chairmanship will provide him the opportunity to showcase his leadership skills as a rising star in the Georgia General Assembly. To learn more about the Senate Appropriations Committee, [click here](#).

Governor Kemp, President Trump Contemplate Plans to Reopen for Business

Businesses and public sector employees have been meeting for the last three weeks to discuss the impact of restrictions on Georgia's economy and the steps that companies have taken to curb the spread of COVID.

While these discussions are in their infancy, they are essential to developing a plan to safely return to "more routine operations" as a press release from the Governor's office characterized the goal of the meetings. The Governor has recently been quoted as saying his primary focus is on increasing testing capacity and processing, but he is committed to outlining a plan to move the economy forward.

The Governor's examination of the issue runs parallel to new guidance from the White House. On Thursday, the president urged Governors to weigh relaxing social-distancing rules in "phases." This plan will be influenced by the availability of testing, among other factors here in Georgia.

While Kemp's Executive Order is set to expire on April 30th, the administration is treading carefully. It's unlikely they will issue a sweeping change but instead approach the issue in phases. The Governor is clearly working to balance public health and economic priorities as we head towards an expected peak in early May.

Kemp has been speaking with business leaders across sectors (banking, manufacturing, agriculture, lodging) to make plans for the future while keeping a keen focus on healthcare capacity in Georgia.

President Trump Issues Guidelines for Reopening the Economy

On Thursday, April 16th, President Trump announced a three-phase plan to reopen the economy. These guidelines are broken up into three "phases" for both individuals and employers and are contingent on case levels for each state. Each phase requires a 14-day period of downward trajectory based on those case levels. The criteria include showing a downward trajectory of COVID-like symptoms reported over 14 days in a given state or region, as well as a decline in documented cases or positive tests during the same 14-day window.

Guidelines for All Phases: Employers

- Develop and implement appropriate policies, in accordance with Federal, State, and local regulations and guidance, and informed by industry best practices, regarding:
 - Social distancing and protective equipment
 - Temperature checks
 - Testing, isolating, and contact tracing
 - Sanitation
 - Use and disinfection of common and high-traffic areas
 - Business travel
- Monitor workforce for indicative symptoms. Do not allow symptomatic people to physically return to work until cleared by a medical provider.
- Develop and implement policies and procedures for workforce contact tracing following employee COVID+ test.

The full report including each phase broken out can be found here – [GUIDELINES - OPENING UP AMERICA AGAIN](#)

Additional Resources for Hotels

[Georgia Department of Public Health COVID-19 Daily Status Report](#)

[GHLA COVID-19 Resource Page](#)

Your GHLA is maintaining a resource page for Georgia hoteliers with real-time information.

[Paycheck Protection Program FAQ](#)

The US Department of Treasury issued updated guidelines on April 15th for the Paycheck Protection Program.

CARES Act FAQ

Senate Leadership has developed this Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act comprehensive FAQ. Topics include health systems, Medicare, small businesses, debt relief, EIDLs & economic injury grants, and more.

Small Business Loan Guide

The House Small Business Committee's loan guide includes FAQs geared toward small businesses to walk them through the loans available in the CARES Act. These include PPP, EIDL, debt relief, and more.

Employee Retention Credit

Senate Finance Chairman Grassley created an FAQ to answer questions about the CARES Act employee retention credit.

FFCRA Employment FAQ

The Department of Labor released an extensive FAQ focused on the paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave provisions included in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.

Small Business Guide to DOL Guidance FAQ

AHLA's labor counsel, Ulman Policy, created this FAQ to help hoteliers navigate the DOL's guidance as it relates to COVID-19 legislation and requirements.

GHLA / AHLA Additional Frequently Asked Questions

[Legal & HR](#) | [Operations](#) | [General Virus](#)

Legislative Tracking Update

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