



February 21, 2025

Welcome to GHLA @ the Capitol, your weekly update about news you need to know related to Georgia's lodging industry and the 2025 General Assembly.

GHLA's legislative team will be your eyes and ears under the Gold Dome

Legislative Schedule

This week, the legislature convened for legislative days 18 through 21, engaging in a flurry of activity and debate. Legislators focused their efforts on tackling crucial matters, including insurance reform legislation. The legislature will reconvene on Tuesday, February 24, for legislative day 22. Click [here](#) to view the complete legislative calendar.

House Economic Development and Tourism Committee



On Thursday of this week, the House Economic Development and Tourism Committee met to hear from Georgia's tourism sector. Chris Hardman, the Director of Government

Relations for GHILA, provided an update on the state's hotel industry as it prepares for major events, including the World Cup, in the coming years.



Tort Reform Passes the Senate

[SB 68](#) by Sen. John Kennedy (R-Macon) provides a substantive and comprehensive revision of provisions regarding civil practice, evidentiary matters, damages, and liability in tort actions. The bill proposes comprehensive changes to civil litigation, including limits on pain and suffering testimony, modifications to discovery and trial procedures, caps on certain damages, and reforms to negligent security liability. It also impacts the admissibility of seat belt evidence in civil cases and apportionment of damages in negligent security lawsuits, aiming to protect businesses and property owners from excessive liability.

[SB 68](#) hit the Senate floor this morning for a vote. Sen. Kennedy, the bill's sponsor, highlighted key existing issues in Georgia, such as excessive litigation, harm to small businesses, and insurance costs that SB 68 aims to address. Sen. Hatchett introduced

Amendment 1, which has the support of the Governor and the bill's sponsor, seeking to reach a compromise on key issues. Sen. Islam Parkes introduced two amendments, Amendment 2 and Amendment 2a. Senators Mallow, Esteves, Jones, Islam Parkes, and McLaurin expressed concerns regarding premises liability, arguing that SB 68 will not reduce premium costs but will instead benefit insurance companies. They also raised concerns about the minority party being excluded from this legislative process. Senators Hickman, Walker, Strickland, Dolezal, and Harbin emphasized the critical need for this legislation, showing support for Amendment 1 while addressing concerns from the minority. Amendment 1 passed without objection, while Amendments 2 and 2a failed. SB 68 was passed with a vote of 33-21.

Support Tort Reform to Protect Georgia's Hospitality Industry – Act Today!

Georgia's hospitality industry is the backbone of our state's economy, welcoming millions of visitors every year and creating countless jobs. But rising costs, fueled by a broken civil litigation system, are making it harder for hotels to thrive. Governor Kemp has made tort reform a top legislative priority, and now is the time to act to ensure our industry's future success. Here are some more ways you can help secure a better legal system for Georgia's hotels:

1. **Take the Impact Survey** - Let us know how tort laws are impacting your business by taking the "**GHLA Tort Reform Impact Survey**"
2. **Email Your Legislators** – Visit www.JusticeNotJackpots.com to urge your State Senator and Representative to support comprehensive tort reform.
3. **Contact Your Lawmakers Directly** – If you have relationships with your local legislators, call or text them and explain how vital tort reform is for Georgia's hospitality sector.
4. **Share This Message** – Forward this email to fellow hoteliers, industry partners, and colleagues. Encourage them to join the fight for meaningful reform that will protect our businesses.

Red Tape Rollback Passes Out of Committee

[SB 28](#) by Sen. Greg Dolezal (R-Cumming) establishes the process for requesting a small business report on a bill. This legislation requires state agencies to evaluate their existing regulations and assess the potential economic impact of these rules on small businesses. Additionally, the bill requires that constitutional officers review their regulations to ensure they support the goal of fostering a favorable business environment in Georgia. SB 28 passed the Senate Economic Development Committee on Wednesday, indicating strong legislative support for initiatives promoting economic growth and streamlining regulations affecting small enterprises.

Blue Law Modernization Update

[SB 86](#) by Sen. Jason Anavitarte (R-Dallas) was heard and voted on by the Senate Regulated Industries Committee on Tuesday, February 18. This legislation allows retail dealers to discount consumers through premiums, coupons, or rebates on alcoholic beverages purchased for off-premises consumption. During the committee meeting, an amendment was added on lines 20-30 to clarify the language and specify that the coupon is not being sourced from the manufacturer regarding the premium. This

amendment passed with one no vote, and the bill, as amended, passed unanimously out of committee despite opposition from the Georgia Alcohol Prevention Alliance.

Legislative Tracking Update

House Bills:

[HB 343](#) - Georgia Living Wage Act; enact
[HB 345](#) - Insurance; prohibit raises in liability insurance rates for five years

[HB 347](#) - Georgia Pro-Birth Accountability Act; enact

[HB 353](#) - Georgia Music Office and Music Ready Communities Act; enact

[HB 360](#) - Revenue and taxation; rehabilitation of historic structures; revise tax credit

[HB 367](#) - Georgia Equity and Fairness Commission Act; enact

[HB 369](#) - Motor vehicles; sale of food or beverages; provide vehicle equipment standards

[HB 374](#) - Local government; residential rental property; establish housing management databases

[HB 375](#) - Income tax; exclude overtime compensation

[HB 376](#) - Income tax; rehabilitation of certified structures; increase amount of tax credits

[HB 377](#) - Buildings and housing; manufactured homes; provisions

[HB 383](#) - Georgia High School NIL Protection Act; enact

[HB 392](#) - Georgia Tax Court; certain events; revise dates

[HB 393](#) - Safer Cycling in Georgia Act; enact

[HB 395](#) - Labor and industrial relations; minimum wage; provide for an increase

[HB 398](#) - Food, drugs, and cosmetics; authorize production and sale of cottage food items with certain exemptions, requirements, and disclosures

[HB 399](#) - Property; require certain residential landlords to have in-state staff to manage tenant communications

[HB 400](#) - Community Housing Options Increase Cost Efficiency (CHOICE) Act; enact

[HB 401](#) - Insurance; prohibit insurers from considering advertising costs when making or using insurance rates

[HB 403](#) - Property; enhance protections for homeowners and tenants by revising or repealing certain provisions inhibiting housing stability

[HB 410](#) - Insurance, Department of; efficiency in the practices; provide

[HB 415](#) - Homeowners Protection Act; enact

[HB 416](#) - Local government; enterprise zones; revise class of retailer from which fees may be collected

[HB 423](#) - Emergency telephone number 9-1-1 system; Next Generation 9-1-1 systems and services; provide

[HB 425](#) - Revenue and taxation; purchase of an emergency power generator to convenience stores and grocery stores; provide tax credit

[HB 431](#) - Consumer Inflation Reduction and Tax Fairness Act; enact

[HB 447](#) - Crimes and offenses; crimes of gift card theft, gift card forgery, and gift card fraud; provide

[HB 453](#) - Georgia Red Flag Protective Order Act; enact

[HB 454](#) - Vince Dooley Battlefield Trust Fund Act; enact

[HB 455](#) - Bingo; properties used for games; limit number of sessions; provisions

[HB 456](#) - Ad valorem tax; additional period to appeal certain property assessments; provide

[HB 466](#) - State symbols; marsh tacky horse as official Georgia heritage horse breed; designate

[HB 467](#) - State flag, seal, and other symbols; protection of government statues and monuments; revise provisions

[HB 470](#) - Crimes and offenses; prohibit activities related to immigration enforcement in certain locations

[HB 472](#) - Crimes and offenses; add certain facilities of the Geo. L. Smith II Georgia World Congress Center Authority to the locations in which the carrying of weapons or long guns is prohibited

[HB 474](#) - Revenue and taxation; repeal an exemption for charges paid for continuous use of rooms, lodgings, or accommodations after the first 30 days of continuous occupancy

[HB 475](#) - Income tax credit; film, gaming, or digital production; revise a definition

[HB 477](#) - Insurance; prohibit insurers from raising private passenger motor vehicle insurance rates more often than once every calendar year

[HB 479](#) - Income tax; allow for tax credits in excess of the amount that can be claimed in a given year to be carried forward to subsequent years

[HB 489](#) - End Public Funding of Misinformation Act; enact

[HB 490](#) - Crimes and offenses; required human trafficking training program for hotels; provide

[HB 492](#) - Revenue and taxation; repeal an exemption for charges paid for continuous use of rooms, lodgings, or accommodations after the first 30 days of continuous occupancy

[HB 498](#) - Garden City Charm and Tourism Act; enact

[HB 505](#) - Career Readiness and Economic Development Act; enact

[HB 512](#) - Property owners' associations; revise provisions

[HB 514](#) - Kennesaw, City of; corporate limits; change provisions

[HB 519](#) - Revenue and taxation; amount of federal work opportunity credit claimed by a taxpayer shall also be allowed as a tax credit; provide

[HB 526](#) - Ad valorem tax; extension of preferential assessment period for certain historic properties; provide

[HB 529](#) - Georgia Online Automatic Renewal Transparency Act; enact

[HB 534](#) - Fairburn, City of; levy an excise tax

[HB 537](#) - Revenue and taxation; maximum amount of local sales and use taxes that may be imposed; provide

[HB 547](#) - Revenue and taxation; bona fide conservation use property; permit combination of multiple covenants into a single, new, ten-year covenant

[HB 548](#) - Albany-Dougherty Inner City Authority Act; enact

[HB 555](#) - Georgians First Residential Property Protection Act; enact

[HB 560](#) - Joint county and municipal sales and use tax (LOST); negotiations for distribution of tax proceeds; revise provisions

[HB 561](#) - Okefenokee Protection Act; enact

House Resolutions:

[HR 208](#) - General Assembly; prohibit use of racially derogatory or discriminatory school mascots, logos, or team names in Georgia public schools

[HR 209](#) - General Assembly; Workplace Safety and Heat Protection Act; urge passage

[HR 250](#) - Local government; adopt an alternative method of appraisal and assessment of real property located within the county for taxation; provide - CA

[HR 257](#) - House Special Committee on Oversight of Federal Funds; create

Senate Bills:

[SB 127](#) - Contracts with Small Businesses; automatic renewal provisions; definitions; provide and revise

[SB 135](#) - "Coastal Island Preservation Act"; enact

[SB 141](#) - Revenue and Taxation; the appeal and protest period from 30 days to 45 days for tax assessments; extend

[SB 144](#) - Fertilizers or Pesticides; a manufacturer cannot be held liable for failing to warn consumers of health risks above those required by the United States

Environmental Protection Agency; clarify

[SB 151](#) - "Joint Development Authority of North Fulton Municipalities Act"; enact

[SB 155](#) - "Georgia Insurance Premium Reduction Act"; enact

[SB 156](#) - "Georgia Insurance Premium Reduction Act"; enact

[SB 164](#) - Trade Practices; surveillance based price discrimination and surveillance based wage discrimination; prohibit

[SB 167](#) - Commerce and Trade; private entities that employ certain AI systems to guard against discrimination caused by such systems; provide

[SB 168](#) - Individual Tax Rates; reduction of the state income tax over time; revise provisions

[SB 170](#) - Georgia Interagency Council for the Homeless; create

[SB 172](#) - Speed Detection Devices; all laws relative to enforcement of speeding violations in school zones through the use of automated traffic enforcement safety devices; repeal

[SB 180](#) - High Demand Apprenticeship Program; opportunities for apprenticeship sponsors to enter into apprenticeship program contracts with State Board of the Technical College System of Georgia; provide

[SB 182](#) - "Georgia Music Office and Music Ready Communities Act"; enact

[SB 184](#) - "Georgia Anti-Squatting Act of 2025"; enact

[SB 187](#) - State Income Tax; amount of tax credits available for qualified caregiving expenses; increase

[SB 191](#) - Employment Security; certain notice provisions relating to benefits and appeals; revise

[SB 194](#) - Alcoholic Beverages and Motor Vehicles and Traffic; production of distilled spirits by a person in his or her private residence; authorize

[SB 197](#) - "End Public Funding of Misinformation Act" enact

[SB 200](#) - Persons and Their Rights; that life is valued and protected from the moment of conception; provide

[SB 208](#) - State Government; regulation and taxation of sports betting in this state; authorize and provide

[SB 219](#) - "Restroom Access Act"; enact

[SB 223](#) - "Pro People, Pro Business Act"; enact

[SB 227](#) - Labor and Industrial Relations; protections for freelance workers; provide

[SB 229](#) - Alcoholic Beverages; the issuance of wholesale consumable hemp licenses to wholesale dealers of alcoholic beverages; prohibit

Senate Resolutions:

[SR 167](#) - Recognition of Marriage; only the union of man and woman; repeal - CA

[SR 202](#) - Equal Rights Amendment; proposed Amendment to the United States Constitution; ratify

[SR 216](#) - Senate Study Committee on Vulnerable Roadway Users; create

GHLA Full Legislative Tracking Update

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