



February 7, 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

The legislature convened Monday through Thursday for legislative days 10-13. Throughout the week, lawmakers reviewed bills, held committee meetings, and discussed key issues. Below are some of the highlights from the week. The legislature will reconvene on Monday, February 10, for legislative day 14.

Click [here](#) to view the complete legislative calendar.

Representative Matthew Gambill Receives Tourism Award



"GACVB Chair Sam McDuffie (left), Representative Matthew Gambill (middle), GHLA's Chris Hardman (Right)"

Earlier this week at the Georgia Association of Convention and Visitors Bureau's Awards GALA, GHLA's Chris Hardman presented Representative Matthew Gambill of Cartersville with the Bill Hardman Sr. Tourism Champion Award for his extraordinary support for tourism. This esteemed award recognizes individuals or groups who have demonstrated exceptional support of tourism through their legislative or organizational efforts. It is a testament to Representative Gambill's dedication to advancing Georgia's tourism industry, as his tireless advocacy has played a pivotal role in supporting legislation that promotes tourism, strengthens the state's economy, and bolsters its status as a premier destination for visitors. Expressing his gratitude, Gambill stated, "I am deeply honored to receive this recognition. Tourism is a vital part of Georgia's economy, and I'm proud to work alongside so many passionate individuals and organizations to ensure the continued growth and success of this industry." The Georgia Tourism Awards celebrate the outstanding achievements of those who contribute to the state's tourism industry, serving as a significant occasion for tourism professionals, community leaders, and elected officials to come together in support of Georgia's tourism economy. Representative Gambill's dedication to the tourism sector and his leadership in supporting the industry's legislative needs have made a lasting impact, and this award highlights his ongoing commitment to Georgia's tourism future.

Sports Betting is Back on The Table

For the seventh consecutive year, Georgia lawmakers will consider sports betting. [SR 131](#) by Sen. Carden Summers (R-Cordele) would allow voters to approve or deny a constitutional amendment on the 2026 ballot to legalize sports betting and casino gaming in Georgia. This legislation requires a two-thirds vote in both the House and Senate to pass.

The legislation would permit up to eight casino licenses in Georgia. It would also establish the Georgia Gaming Commission to regulate and license sports betting and casino gaming. Gross revenue will be taxed at 20%, with the first \$2 billion in revenue allocated to the "Georgia Gaming Proceeds Fund." After reaching \$2 billion, the General Assembly will designate \$500 million in additional funding to distribute evenly among counties until at least \$5 billion has been appropriated. Additionally, 5% of surplus revenue will be dedicated to programs and services to prevent and treat individuals with problematic gaming habits.

Craft Beer is Back on Tap

The Craft Beer and Local Economy Revitalization Act (SB122) was placed in the hopper this week. [SB122](#), by Senator John Albers from Roswell, proposes amendments to Georgia's alcohol regulations, particularly concerning malt beverage manufacturers. Key provisions include:

Expanded Brewer Rights:

- Brewers can sell malt beverages without a daily limit on off-premises sales.
- Small brewers (defined as those with sales below 15% of a wholesaler's total sales)

can sell up to 3,000 barrels per year at wholesale to retailers within a 100-mile radius.

Charitable Donations:

- Brewers and brewpubs can donate malt beverages to nonprofit events, with conditions on transportation and returns.

Three-Tier System Adjustments:

- A limited exception allows small brewers to sell and distribute directly to other licensed brewers, brewpubs, and retailers.

Taxation Adjustments:

- Brewers selling directly to consumers or donating beer must handle excise tax payments.

Repeal of Conflicting Laws:

- The bill replaces prior restrictions conflicting with these new provisions.

Overall, SB122 seeks to support local breweries by easing distribution and sales restrictions, fostering economic growth, and promoting community engagement through charitable contributions.

Tort Reform

Last Thursday, Governor Brian Kemp held a press conference at the Georgia State Capitol to unveil his litigation reform package for the current legislative session, which includes Senate Bill 68 and Senate Bill 69. This package aims to reduce excessive litigation costs, curb lawsuit abuse, and promote a more business-friendly legal environment in Georgia.

[SB 68](#) 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. A high-level section by section summary can be found here – [SB68 Summary](#)

[SB 69](#) focuses on regulating third-party litigation financing, requiring litigation financiers to register with the state, prohibiting foreign-controlled financing, and enforcing strict disclosure requirements. It seeks to increase transparency and prevent abusive legal funding practices that could inflate settlements and judgments. A high-level section by section summary can be found here – [SB69 Summary](#)

"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

Lt. Governor Burt Jones announced a state-level deregulation initiative, the "Red Tape Rollback Act of 2025." The act aims to reduce government regulation, boost small businesses, and expand economic opportunities in Georgia. It builds on similar work done in 2024 and complements President Trump's DOGE plan.

[SB 28](#), by Sen. Greg Dolezal (R-Cumming), brings the LG's priority to life by establishing the ability to request a small business report on a bill. It also requires agencies to review their rules and consider their economic impact and constitutional officers to review their rules.

Legislative Tracking Update

House Bills:

[HB 221](#) - Education; equal athletic opportunities for public school students; provide

[HB 223](#) - Revenue and taxation; exclude from the calculation of taxable net income certain disaster relief or assistance grant program payments for agricultural losses suffered due to Hurricane Helene

[HB 230](#) - Income tax; tax credit for certain expenses incurred by taxpayers that sell new construction homes to certain individuals for up to a certain price; provide

[HB 233](#) - State symbols; Brunswick stew as the official state stew; designate

[HB 237](#) - Evidence; admissibility of creative or artistic expression evidence at trial; provide

[HB 240](#) - Mortgage lenders and brokers; prohibit unfair or deceptive practices in consumer transactions related to mortgage trigger leads

[HB 241](#) - Contracts; convenience fees for payment by electronic means; revise provisions

[HB 243](#) - Stone Mountain Memorial Association; revise purpose

[HB 250](#) - Better Small Business Employee Benefits Act; enact

[HB 260](#) - Ad valorem tax; increase amount of a state-wide homestead exemption from certain ad valorem taxes

[HB 267](#) - Riley Gaines Act; enact

[HB 270](#) - Eviction Service and Airplane Evictions Act; enact

[HB 271](#) - Revenue and taxation; definitions; change certain provisions

[HB 272](#) - Revenue and taxation; definitions; change certain provisions

[HB 275](#) - Income tax; change certain definitions

[HB 276](#) - Income tax; change certain definitions

[HB 277](#) - Excise tax; rooms, lodgings, and accommodations; change certain definitions
[HB 278](#) - Excise tax; rooms, lodgings, and accommodations; change certain definitions
[HB 279](#) - Sales and use tax; change certain definitions
[HB 280](#) - Sales and use tax; change certain definitions
[HB 281](#) - Ad valorem tax; property; change certain definitions
[HB 282](#) - Ad valorem tax; property; change certain definitions
[HB 290](#) - Revenue and taxation; Internal Revenue Code and Internal Revenue Code of 1986; revise terms and incorporate certain provisions of federal law into Georgia law
[HB 292](#) - Income tax; certification of certain employers as living wage employers; provide
[HB 295](#) - Local government; procedures for real property owners to make claims for compensation for loss of property value or expenses incurred; provisions
[HB 299](#) - Property; landlord and tenant; repeal Code Section 44-7-19, relating to restrictions on rent regulation by local governments
[HB 306](#) - Labor and industrial relations; cause of action for workplace harassment and retaliation; provide
[HB 311](#) - Advancing Fair Employment for All Ages Act; enact
[HB 312](#) - Employee Empowerment and Transparency Act; enact
[HB 315](#) - Law Enforcement Partners Act; enact
[HB 316](#) - Income tax; credit equal to 20 percent of the federal earned income tax credit; provide
[HB 317](#) - Workforce and Residential Infrastructure District for Georgia Act; enact
[HB 321](#) - Vincent Fort Living Wage Act; enact
[HB 327](#) - Official Code of Georgia Annotated; amend various titles
[HB 330](#) - Income tax; credits for contributions to law enforcement foundations; revise provisions
[HB 341](#) - Income tax; certain employers that offer individual coverage health reimbursement arrangements to employees; create tax credit

House Resolutions:

[HR 132](#) - Joint Georgia-North Carolina and Georgia-Tennessee Boundary Line Commission; create
[HR 191](#) - House Study Committee on the Use of Local Fees to Support Affordable Housing; create
[HR 192](#) - General Assembly; creation and comprehensive regulation of community development districts; provide - CA
[HR 207](#) - House Study Committee on the Eradication of Homelessness; create

Senate Bills:

[SB 78](#) - "City of Tybee Island Buildings and Public Facilities Authority Act"; enact
[SB 86](#) - Alcoholic Beverages; retail dealers to offer discounts to consumers through premiums, coupons, or rebates on alcoholic beverages purchased for consumption off the premises; authorize
[SB 87](#) - Levy and Sale of Property; exemption of the full value of a debtor's primary residence from levy and sale; provide
[SB 94](#) - Public Utilities and Public Transportation; a consumer utility counsel to

represent consumers in matters before the Public Service Commission or other agencies concerning public utilities; reestablish
[SB 99](#) - Crimes and Offenses; definition of law enforcement officer; provide
[SB 106](#) - Landlord and Tenant; Code Section 44-7-19; repeal
[SB 107](#) - Specialized Land Transactions; protections of homeowners in community associations; provide
[SB 108](#) - Property Owners' Associations; certificates of good standing for payment of annual assessments; provide
[SB 111](#) - "Georgia Consumer Privacy Protection Act"; enact
[SB 115](#) - Sales and Use Taxes; clothing and school related supplies during the second week of August each year; exempt sales
[SB 119](#) - Manufactured or Mobile Homes; limited exceptions to circumstances under which a manufactured home shall become real property; provide
[SB 120](#) - Education; public schools, local education agencies, and public postsecondary institutions shall not promote, support, or maintain any programs or activities that advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion
[SB 122](#) - "Craft Beer and Local Economy Revitalization Act"; enact

Senate Resolutions:

[SR 123](#) - Birthright Citizenship; a constitutional right; affirm
[SR 131](#) - Sports Betting and Casino Gambling Activities; operation and regulation; authorize the Georgia General Assembly - CA