



January 17, 2025

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.

The 2025 Georgia General Assembly Convenes Under the Gold Dome

On Monday, January 13, the Georgia General Assembly convened for its 158th legislative session. During these 40 days, we will watch closely as legislators work to pass a balanced budget and debate the merits of hot topics like tort reform, public safety, and sports betting.

Legislative Schedule

Arguably, one of the most coveted pieces of “legislation” each year is the General Assembly’s approved legislative schedule, known as the adjournment resolution.

As dictated by the schedule, the General Assembly was in for five legislative days this week. They will break the week of January 20 to recognize the MLK holiday and begin the work of the budget review. The General Assembly is set to reconvene on Monday, January 27, for Legislative Day 6. Other notable dates include March 6 as Crossover Day and April 4 to adjourn Sine Die.

[The full legislative calendar can be found here.](#)

Eggs & Issues

At the annual Eggs and Issues event hosted by the Georgia Chamber, Speaker Jon Burns, Lt. Governor Burt Jones, and Governor Brian Kemp shared their visions for the state's future, addressing both successes and challenges as they look ahead to 2025.

Speaker Burns opened the event by highlighting Georgia’s successful year while acknowledging the hurdles the state faces, such as the aftermath of Hurricane Helene. He emphasized that distributing disaster relief funds to those affected will be a top priority. Burns also stressed the focus on education, safety, and mental health, particularly referencing the Apalachee school shooting. He also discussed improving literacy rates in public schools, protecting girls sports, and expanding access to healthcare, with a special focus on maternal care and codifying protections for IVF. Other priorities included supporting law enforcement, improving public safety, and returning \$1 billion to Georgia taxpayers. Burns also touched on reforms to lawsuits, job licensing, and resource management.

Lt. Governor Jones echoed many of Burns' priorities, notably around budget, education, healthcare, and transportation. Jones emphasized the need for child care and the push for child

care tax credit. Additionally, he stated there was a need to continue advancing workforce development to support Georgia's economic growth. Jones discussed continuing investments in transportation and infrastructure. The issue of housing affordability was discussed as being primarily a local issue. However, lowering the cost of living across Georgia was of importance.

Governor Kemp framed Georgia as being the top state for business but also stressed there is room for improvement regarding talent. He introduced his plan to align education with high-demand career opportunities. He noted that the Georgia MATCH program has led to a 9% increase in enrollment growth for the Technical School System. He also discussed investments in infrastructure, including roads, freight, water, and wastewater. Kemp labeled his top priority as tort reform, aiming to fix the legal climate that is imbalanced with our neighbors. He hinted at an upcoming robust legislative package.

State of the State Highlights

This week, Governor Brian P. Kemp revealed his focus for this year at the 2025 State of the State Address. Governor Kemp began by highlighting Georgia's resilience in the face of adversity, primarily highlighting Hurricane Helene, which left a \$5.5 billion toll on agriculture and timber industries. Governor Kemp discussed his efforts to ensure every Georgian can recover from Hurricane Helene.

Governor Kemp also promoted Georgia's achievements, announcing that \$7.6 billion had been saved through tax rebates, gas tax suspensions, the homeowner tax relief grant, and the most significant tax income grant in history. He doubled down on this, promoting that Georgians will save another \$7.5 billion over the next ten years by lowering the income tax rate by 20 basis points to 5.19%. He stressed that it is important to ease the burdens on Georgia's families.

The Governor's budget includes just over \$1.2 million to expand the gang and human trafficking prosecution units in the Attorney General's Office. The GRACE Commission, alongside law enforcement and prosecutors, has examined over 330 human trafficking cases, leading to the conviction of 49 traffickers and the rescue of nearly 200 victims. The First Lady will introduce her tenth human trafficking bill, reinforcing the GRACE Commission's hard work.

Healthcare was another focal point, with Governor Kemp emphasizing the importance of Medicaid expansion and mental health services, including the Georgia Pathways Program.

Most notably, Governor Kemp echoed his priority to bring meaningful litigation and insurance reform legislation to the state. The governor highlighted the 2024 passage of House Bill 1114 (supported by GHLA) which allowed the Insurance Commissioner to gather data and information on Georgia's insurance industry, identify reforms that could be made to stabilize insurance costs, expand choices for consumers when they need coverage, and prevent more insurance carriers from leaving Georgia altogether. He then outlined the need for such reforms and the overwhelming burden and costs associated with tort laws in our state. We expect comprehensive legislation to be introduced in the coming weeks.

You can [WATCH](#) the Governors State of The State here, and you can find a written copy of his address [HERE](#). Additionally, the Office of Planning and Budget has posted Governor Kemp's Amended Fiscal Year 2025 and Fiscal Year 2026 budget proposals [HERE](#).

[GHLA Press Release on Tort Reform](#)

Immediately following the Governors State of The State, your Georgia Hotel and Lodging Association issued the following press release:

Press Release Jan. 16, 2025

GHLA Backs Governor Kemp's Litigation and Insurance Reform Proposals

Reforms critical to reducing business costs and boosting Georgia's economy

Atlanta, GA – The Georgia Hotel & Lodging Association (GHLA) and Georgia's hotel industry fully support Governor Brian Kemp's efforts for litigation and insurance reforms. Reforms are needed to address rising insurance premiums, unpredictable jury verdicts, and limited coverage options, which are straining businesses statewide.

"Unchecked jury verdicts, soaring insurance costs, and limited coverage are creating an unsustainable environment for businesses," said Chris Hardman, GHLA's Director of Governmental Affairs. "We are grateful for Governor Kemp's efforts to restore fairness and stability, ensuring Georgia remains a top destination for business and tourism."

The hospitality and tourism industry is a cornerstone of Georgia's economy, contributing \$79.7 billion annually and supporting 463,0483 jobs. GHLA urges lawmakers to support these reforms to protect jobs and reduce costs for Georgia's businesses.

"Enacting reforms is essential for fostering economic growth, reducing business costs, and strengthening communities," Hardman added.

For more information, visit www.GHLA.net or contact Chris Hardman at c.hardman@ghla.net.

Legislative Tracking Update

House Bills:

[HB7](#) Income tax; workforce-ready graduates employed in high-tech full-time jobs in rural counties; provide tax credit

[HB8](#) Income tax credit; certain investments in qualified businesses; renew and revise

[HB9](#) Safer States Act;

[HB14](#) State symbols; cornbread as official state bread; designate

[HB62](#) Georgia HOA Accountability and Community Empowerment Act (HACEA); enact

Senate Bills:

[SB1](#) 'Fair and Safe Athletic Opportunities Act'; enact

[SB2](#) State Income Tax; exclude tips from taxation

[GHLA Full 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.](#)

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