



February 24, 2023

Welcome to GHLA @ the Capitol, your weekly update about news you need to know related to Georgia's lodging industry and the 2023 General Assembly.

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

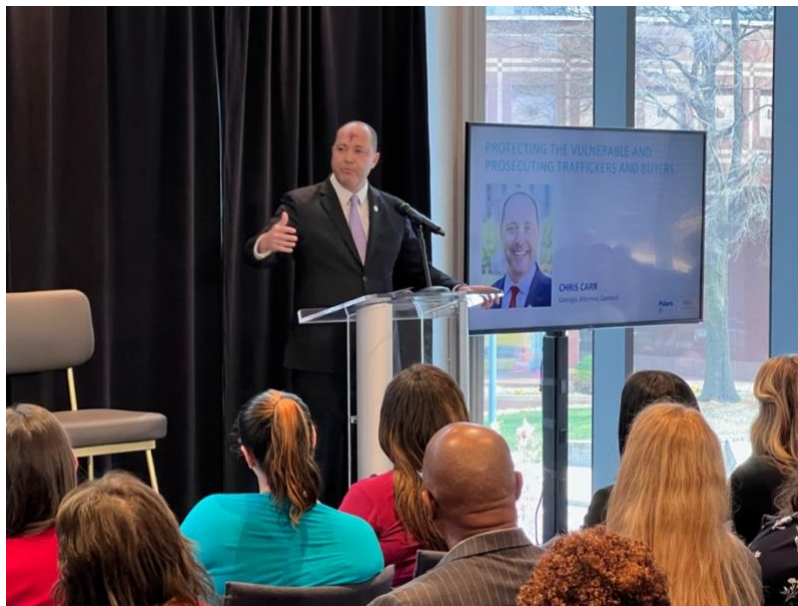
Legislative Schedule

This week the General Assembly was in session Tuesday through Thursday for legislative days 21-23.

The legislature will convene again on Monday, February 27 for Day 24 and be in session through Thursday, March 2. Friday, March 3 is a scheduled committee workday leading up to Crossover Day, scheduled for Monday, March 6.

For the full legislative schedule, view the [adjournment resolution](#).

Fighting Human Trafficking



This week GHLA participated in IHG's event to raise awareness to the ongoing fight against human trafficking. Our thanks to First Lady Marty Kemp for her continued focus on combatting human trafficking; we are proud to have our industry partnering on this

important issue.



Destination Marketing Organization Legislation

This week Sen. Billy Hickman (R-Statesboro) presented [SB 127](#) to the Senate Economic Development and Tourism Committee. Sen. Hickman, alongside GHLA's Chris Hardman, explained to the committee the importance of this legislation to place guardrails on hotel/motel tax usages and the associated authorities. Additionally, Lee Hughes, representing the Georgia Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus, joined in expressing the important role CVBs have in their communities. This bill would require a local government, prior to altering their local Convention and Visitors Bureau, to first go to the hotel/motel performance review board under the Dept. of Community Affairs for review.

The committee unanimously approved the legislation and it will move on in the process.

This bill mirrors [HB 223](#) previously introduced and sponsored by Rep. Ron Stephens (R-Savannah).

Tourism Funding in Budget

The Governor's budget reflects increased funding for important state partners in the tourism industry, such as the Georgia Historical Society, the Georgia Humanities Council, the World Congress Center, the Savannah Convention Center, and most notably a line item for Southeast Tourism Society (STS) to guarantee the state's tourism department, Explore Georgia, continues its 40 year partnership with STS. This is a necessity for the continued success of tourism in every community in Georgia. Southeast Tourism Society was created by Georgia's first state tourism director and

has since become the pinnacle resource for our state's DMOs. GHLA will continue to monitor these funds and other associated items as the budget moves through the process.

HB 18 (FY 2023A)	Governor	House	SAC
<i>The purpose of this appropriation is to provide information to visitors about tourism opportunities throughout the state, operate and maintain state welcome centers, fund the Georgia Historical Society and Georgia Humanities Council, and work with communities to develop and market tourism products in order to attract more tourism to the state.</i>			
TOTAL STATE FUNDS	\$21,531,880	\$22,609,490	\$31,898,067
State General Funds	\$21,531,880	\$22,609,490	\$31,898,067
TOTAL PUBLIC FUNDS	\$21,531,880	\$22,609,490	\$31,898,067
 137.101 Special Project - Tourism: The purpose of this appropriation is to provide funds for dues membership for southeastern tourism society for area convention and visitor centers bureaus.			
State General Funds			\$8,700

Watchlist Items

This week the Senate State and Local Governmental Operations Committee held another hearing on the two Buckhead City bills, [SB113](#) and [SB114](#). The committee heard testimony from cityhood proponents, as well as opposition from the City of Atlanta and others.

[SB180](#) - by Sen. Setzler (R-Acworth) - the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), awaits a hearing in the Senate Judiciary Committee, scheduled to meet next week.

GHLA will continue to monitor these proposals, as well as others of concern to our industry.

Legislative Tracking Update

House Bills

[HB514](#) – Representative Dale Washburn (R-Macon) - Housing Regulation Transparency Act; enact

[HB517](#) – Representative Dale Washburn (R-Macon) - Georgia Homeowner Opportunity Act; enact

[HB518](#) – Representative Mike Cameron (R-Rosville) - Labor and industrial relations; employment security; change certain provisions

[HB520](#) – Representative Todd Jones (R-South Forsyth) - Buildings and housing; tenant

[HB536](#) - Representative Mandisha Thomas (D-South Fulton) - Income tax; certain expenses for installing solar energy systems at warehouses or residential dwellings; provide tax credit

[HB548](#) – Representative Kim Schofield (D-Atlanta) - Georgia Entertainment Industry

Investment Act; certain sales and transfers of tax credits; impose a fee
[HB549](#) – Representative Tyler Smith (R-Bremen) - Georgia State-wide Music Office Ac

[HB555](#) – Representative Sandra Scott (D-Rex) - Georgia Firearms and Weapons Act; enact

[HB556](#) – Representative Tyler Smith (R-Bremen) - Pregnancy Protection Act; enact

[HB563](#) – Representative Rob Leverett (R-Elberton) - Fair Employment Practices Act of 1978; hearing before an administrative law judge; provide

House Resolutions

[HR278](#) – Representative Don Parsons (R-Marietta) - House Study Committee on Civics Education in Georgia; create

[HR281](#) – Representative Phil Alaleye (D-Atlanta) - House Study Committee on Lottery Revenues, Reserves, and Educational Programs; create

Senate Bills

[SB213](#) – Senator Max Burns (R-Sylvania) - Zoning Procedures; local governments from preventing the continuance of lawful nonconforming use of property; prohibit

[SB214](#) – Senator Shawn Still (R-Norcross) - Alcoholic Beverages; number of retail dealer licenses that a person may hold or have a beneficial interest in; change

[SB228](#) – Senator Sheikh Rahman (D-Lawrenceville) - Department of Natural Resources; position of director of outdoor recreation; establish

[SB234](#) – Senator Sonya Halpern (D-Atlanta) - Motor Vehicles; the enforcement of laws with equipment which produces excessive noise levels using recorded images; provide

Senate Resolutions

[SR140](#) – Senator Bill Cowsert (R-Athens) - Georgia General Assembly; general law for sports betting in this state; provide - CA

[SR147](#) – Senator Derek Mallow (D-Savannah) - Senate Local Option Sales Tax Study Committee; 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.
