

14 March 2015

LWVAF, Report from the Capitol, Week 9

This week the legislature met for three days, completing Day 30, CrossOver Day. The legislature will take a four day weekend, returning next Wednesday for a three day week.

If legislation were snowflakes, there has been a blizzard at the state Capitol. Every author was pushing to get his/her bill out of committee and on the calendar for chamber consideration. There is a rumor that those that voted FOR the transportation bill in the House the previous week were given preference. Some very visible folk like the House Majority Leader were left wanting.

This report is lengthy and contains many bills not previously reported. Some bills have a committee assignment in the second chamber and that is shown here. Others which passed on Day 30 have not yet been introduced into the second chamber.

Bills which have passed the chamber of origin are eligible for consideration and passage this year. All others can be considered only next year, unless they have FAILED on a floor vote. However, failure to win chamber consideration does not mean it automatically dies; the language therein may be amended to another bill which has better chances of passage.

BOLD Bill Number indicates final passage
CA = constitutional amendment. Requires a 2/3s vote in each chamber and a majority vote in the next general election, next scheduled for November 2016.
DV = Differing Versions
TGFS = To Governor for Signature

In CHAMBERS

BUDGET

SR 155 Hill – 32 **PASSED** Senate H.Appropriations

A joint resolution to encourage Congress to adopt and submit for ratification a constitutional amendment to balance the current budget and those that come thereafter. Exceptions to spending only the revenue that is received is declared war or a national emergency. *The Senate vote was strictly along party lines.*

CHILDREN

HB 17 Spencer – 180 **PASSED** House

Children who have been sexually abused will have until age 23 to bring civil claims against the abuser or within two years after the victim has reason to know of such abuse which resulted in documented injury. Anyone may file until 1-1-17 if they had previously been barred because of the statute of limitations.

SB 35 James – 35 **PASSED** Senate

A person who leaves a child age 6 or younger in a vehicle unattended or supervised by one under age 13 which poses a substantial risk of harm to the child's health or safety are guilty of cruelty to children in the 3rd degree.

SB 64 Hufstetler – 52 **PASSED** Senate

Repeals voluntary acknowledgment of legitimation which is an administrative process and makes it a judicial one in juvenile court which can order DNA testing and other evidence.

HB 103 Belton – 112 **PASSED** House

Prohibits identifying a minor in a nude picture or other obscene depiction by name, address, phone number, or e-mail address. Exceptions are for law enforcement and prosecution agencies in the investigation and prosecution of criminal offenses.

HB 268 Ballinger – 23 **PASSED** House

When a mandated report has been made to a designated person in an entity required to report suspected child abuse, the designated person cannot change the report made by the individual. Allows oral and electronic reporting. *Mandated reporting by employees and volunteers is done in schools, health care facilities, sports leagues, community groups and other places where children congregate.*

HB 366 Strickland – 111 **PASSED** House S.Insurance & Labor

Minors age 12 and over must have a work permit to be employed, which is evidenced by a written document or ID card provided by the issuing entity. Minor must produce proof of age with a birth certificate or birth registration card, and an employer provided job description. Information provided to qualify for the work permit is to remain confidential, unless the minor is an actor or performer. Schools are often the issuing entity. Home schools are added as issuing entities.

DRIVERS LAWS, TRANSPORTATION

HB 48 Coleman – 97 **PASSED** House

Any peace officer, firefighter, or emergency medical personnel who sustain a major injury while performing job-related duties is eligible for a special license plate. A disabled veteran honorably discharged may have a free vehicle license. In the event of death, such free plates go to the unmarried spouse or minor child. Veterans licensing a motorcycle are entitled to a distinctive plate. Special license plates honoring family members of military personnel killed in action may be extended to the surviving spouse of such service member's sibling.

SB 76 Jackson – 24 **PASSED** Senate H.Public Safety & Homeland Security

Motorcycle Mobility Safety Act. If a traffic control device or signal is inoperative because of the lightweight design of a motorcycle or bicycle, and the driver has been stopped for awhile and there is no vehicle within 500 feet moving toward this intersection, the signal may be treated as a stop sign.

HB 123 Yates – 73 **PASSED** House

Every motor vehicle pulling a trailer shall attach it securely to prevent dropping or shifting it onto the roadway and creating a safety hazard. Failure to do so is a misdemeanor.

HB 174 Jones – 62 **PASSED** House

Surface transportation is an allowable project in urban redevelopment areas. Projects may include streets, transit, facilities and improvements, sidewalks, streetscapes, trails, bicycle facilities, utilities, playgrounds, parks, and other facilities and improvements necessary for carrying out the urban development plan. Renames 'slum' to 'pockets of blight'.

HB 225 Powell – 32 **PASSED** House S.Science & Technology

Drivers of taxis and all other for-hire vehicles must have for-hire license endorsements. Cities and counties cannot impose further licensing requirements. May get a master license or pay sales taxes on fares which are distributed to local governing authorities as a LOST or SPLOST.

HB 303 Hightower – 68 **PASSED** House S.Insurance & Labor

If an insurance company refuses to pay the claim for damages caused by an uninsured motorist, the court can require that the insured get the greater of 100% of the damages or the full amount of the judgment against the uninsured plus all attorney fees.

HB 338 Lumsden – 12 **FAILED** in House

Authorizes the collection of an additional fee of \$5 for those ticketed for traffic offenses to be deposited into the Electronic Citation Fund, the proceeds to be used to implement the use of electronic citations. Repealed at end of FY24.

HB 393 Martin – 49 **PASSED** House

Tesla may sell unlimited number of vehicles directly to consumers from five locations in GA, as can any other manufacturer who sells electric cars and has never sold through dealerships.

HB 477 Jones – 47 **PASSED** House S.SLGO

Property formerly acquired for public road purposes which is to be abandoned and is now within a subdivision may allow for notification to the subdivision property owners' association rather than the individual adjoining property owners. Any city formed after April 2005 shall assume ownership of county rights of way located therein unless otherwise agreed to by a joint resolution between the county and the new city.

EDUCATION

SR 80 Ligon – 3 **PASSED** Senate H.Education

Demands the College Board revise the Advanced Placement U.S. History course to be in line with Georgia's Performance Standards in Social Studies particularly the emphasis on America's founding principles and the uniqueness of America's role in the world.

SB 116 Ligon – 3 **PASSED** Senate H.Education

Celebrate Freedom Week is encouraged to be the full week of Sept 17. Every K-12 social studies classroom is encouraged to have a 3 hour unit on the birth of our nation, the Founding Fathers, the documents of our founding, the first 6 presidents with an emphasis on George Washington. Religious references of the founding fathers or the documents are not to be censored. Local boards of education are strongly encouraged to have grade 3 through 12 students read one book during the year on the era or its leaders. DOE is strongly encouraged to create an on line resource. Effective fall 2015.

HB 131 Dickerson – 113 **PASSED** House

Requires local boards of education to include cyberbullying in their local policies prohibiting bullying. Local schools will have oversight of student cyberbullying originating from non-school equipment if directed at other students or school personnel and it has a 'high likelihood' of disrupting the school or threatening their safety.

SB 132 Dugan – 30 **PASSED** Senate H.Education

The dual enrollment program called 'Move On When Ready' will now accept student in grades 9 and 10 if all criteria for college admission are met. Information must be given to grade 8 public students when the Individual Graduation Plan is being developed. There shall be no tuition fee, book fee, or other fees for these students. Course work earns both high school credit and post-secondary credit.

SB 156 Tippins – 37 **PASSED** Senate H.Education

Authorizes the State Charter School Commission to form the State Charter School Foundation.

SB 164 Jones – 10 **PASSED** Senate H.Education

In high need schools, urges the implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support, PBIS, and Response To Intervention, RTI. *This program is research based and funded in the budget, \$500,000.*

SB 176 James – 35 **PASSED** Senate

Students participating in contact football are strongly encouraged to be equipped with and wear a helmet which has at least a four-star rating. *Sponsor claims there are 300,000 injuries annually in sports football.*

HB 209 Cantrell - 22 **PASSED** House

LBOE shall provide notification to each parent of a special needs student at the initial IEP meeting and annually regarding availability of the special needs voucher. Inclusion of the information in the required printed handbook is not sufficient. ***Eligibility for this voucher requires an Individual Education Plan (IEP) which takes much effort to develop.***

HB 296 Nix – 69 **PASSED** House S.Education & Youth

Special Needs scholarship eligibility without being in a school for one full year would be for lawful refugees or for limited-English proficient students. Parent must provide proof of refugee status and residency within the school district.

HB 313 Dickey – 140 **PASSED** House S.Education & Youth

Every state employee could apply for 8 hours of paid leave to promote education in the state. ***This is not restricted to public education. Could it also mean that public employees would be allowed to advocate for the governor's Opportunity School District constitutional amendment?***

HB 369 Nix – 69 **PASSED** House

When ESPLOST revenues are shared with an independent school system within the county, the split of funds collected shall be by agreement between the school systems to remain in force for the duration of the ESPLOST. If no agreement can be reached, the split will be by FTE count. Enabling legislation for HR 394. ***Currently, an act of the legislature is required for an agreement to split funds other than by FTE count.***

HR 394 Nix – 69 **PASSED** House

CA to change the provisions of how to split ESPLOST funds when there are two or more school systems in the county. Enabling legislation is HB 369. ***All funds available to school districts must be stated in the constitution. Thus, any changes to that tax law must be done by constitutional amendment.***

HB 401 Efstoration – 104 **PASSED** House

Department of Early Care And Learning, DECAL, may solicit and accept donations, grants, contributions. Defines a support center as one which solicits and provides personnel, curriculum, etc., to early care providers but does not care directly for children. Support Centers must be annually renewed by DECAL. May provide background checks on personnel provided to potential employers. Support center employees must be background checked every 5 years. Post-secondary students working at any child care facility as part of their education must also pass a criminal background check. ***Bill is extensive, 36 pages.***

HB 474 Kaiser – 59 **PASSED** House

Charter Schools shall give enrollment priority to educationally disadvantaged students and military students. ***Educationally disadvantaged students are those with special education needs, from poor families, English is not their first language.***

HB 502 Dudgeon – 25 **PASSED** House S.Education & Youth

Education law cleanup. Repeals outdated sections and updates other sections to comply with current practice.

HB 551 Brockway – 102 **PASSED** House

Local boards of education may provide for payroll deductions for purchases of consumer products and offerings through an employee purchase program facilitated by and through the Department of Administrative Services. ***The purchase of computers through DOAS already in law. This bill allows payment from future earnings.***

ELECTIONS/ETHICS

SB 127 Jeffares – 17 **PASSED** Senate

Local candidates who received notice from the GA Government Transparency & Campaign Finance Commission, previously State Ethics Commission, required between 1-1-10 and 1-10-14 who had in fact filed on time, the commission is authorized to waive late fees, fines, and civil penalties for such late, incomplete or non-filing of campaign disclosure reports and personal finance disclosure reports. Such fines will be refunded if application is made by the candidates. This provision is automatically repealed on 1-31-19. ***Department of Audits and Accounts found software problems caused the incorrect fines to be assessed. This may be a blank check for fine forgiveness.***

HB 370 Fleming – 121 **PASSED** House

Eligibility to file for a party nomination shall be prohibited if there are any outstanding fines owed to the state ethics commission unless an appeal has been filed. Local candidates who received notice from the GA Government Transparency & Campaign Finance Commission, previously State Ethics Commission, required between 1-1-10 and 1-10-14 who had in fact filed on time, the commission is authorized to waive late fees, fines, and civil penalties for such late, incomplete or non-filing of campaign disclosure reports and personal finance disclosure reports. Such fines will be refunded if application is made by the candidates. ***Department of Audits and Accounts found software problems caused the incorrect fines to be assessed. This may be a blank check for fine forgiveness.***

GOVERNMENT - GENERAL

SB 63 Hill – 6 **PASSED** Senate sub

Licensed brewpubs and licensed malt beverage manufacturers may sell malt beverages for either on or off-premise consumption. Quantities for off-premises consumption limited to 64 ounces. On-premise consumption limited to 32 ounces. Prices shall be consistent with those in the same county and purchases shall be taxable. ***Currently, brewpubs can sell only on-premises and malt beverage brewers can only sell for off-premise consumption.***

SB 91 Harper – 7 **FAILED** in Senate

Grocery stores who earn 85% of their revenue with non-alcoholic products may sell wine and beer within 100 yards of a school at local governing authority option. ***Currently, they may sell wine and beer near a college campus if permitted.***

SB 95 Williams – 27 **PASSED** Senate H.Banks & Banking

Real estate brokers may deposit funds into a federally insured account. ***Current law requires it to be a checking account.***

SB 103 Jackson – 2 **PASSED** Senate **PASSED** House **SIGNED**

Allows local governments to decide if alcohol may be served on one Sunday during the year at their annual festival, such as a St. Patrick's Day celebration, Cherry Blossom Festival, Big Pig Jig, Oktoberfest, etc. ***This was on a really fast track to allow Savannah to sell alcohol this Sunday.***

SB 148 Kennedy – 18 **PASSED** Senate H.Agriculture & Consumer Affairs

The Attorney General will assume all the oversight and responsibility for the Office of Consumer Affairs regarding agriculture, crimes and offenses, debtors and creditors, health, insurance, law enforcement officers and agencies, local government, professions and businesses, and public utilities and public transportation. ***Office of Consumer Affairs is being transferred from the governor's office to the Attorney General, like 47 other states. Since the Office does so many investigations which require notices and sometimes court time, it was thought it should be supervised by the legal eagles. Governor's bill. This is a 139 page bill.***

SB 168 Jones – 25 **PASSED** Senate H.Judiciary

The Old Governor's Mansion is to be designated the official state historic house. *It is located on the campus of GA Georgia College and State University in Milledgeville.*

HB 180 Kidd – 145 **PASSED** House

The eligibility for admission to the GA War Veterans Nursing Home shall be a resident for the last 2 years or a current resident for 5 years in the last 15 years. *Currently, applicants must be a GA resident for the most recent 5 years.*

SB 184 Black – 8 **PASSED** Senate

State general law shall determine any dog breed specific requirements. *Local governments may still have ordinances about vicious dogs, dogs on leashes, vaccinations, etc., but it cannot be breed specific.*

HB 201 Parsons – 44 **PASSED** House

Telephone systems for the physically impaired may install wireless. Eligibility for such service raised to 300% of poverty level.

SB 203 Hill – 6 **PASSED** Senate

Establishes the 6 member World War I Centennial Commission the purpose of which is to plan, develop and execute programs, projects, and activities to commemorate the centennial of WWI and Georgia's role in it, to encourage private organizations and local governments to organize and participate, and to serve as a clearing house for the collection and dissemination of information about events and plans in GA for the WWI centennial. No state moneys are to be spent.

HB 245 Dollar – 45 **PASSED** House

Condominium special assessments are limited to 1/6 of the annual common expense assessment for that unit. *Currently, the maximum is \$200 per year.*

HB 278 Clark – 98 **PASSED** House S.Public Safety

The administration and oversight of the Public Employee Hazardous Chemical Protection and Right to Know Act of 1988 is transferred to the State Fire Commissioner, currently under the Department of Labor.

HR 395 Greene – 151 **PASSED** House DO PASS in S.Interstate Cooperation

Creates the Joint Georgia-Alabama Study Committee to study with counterparts in Alabama issues of joint interest. Members are all legislators whose districts touch the Georgia-Alabama border.

GOVERNMENT – COURTS AND CRIMES

HB 71 Tanner – 9 **PASSED** House S.Judiciary Non Civil

Provisions of the State Board of Pardons and Paroles are modified to provide input and transparency to granting a pardon or commutation of a death sentence. Victims, prosecuting attorneys, family members to receive additional notification and consideration.

HB 72 Willard – 51 **PASSED** House S.Health & Human Services

Expands and clarifies the protections of disabled adults and older persons, over age 65.

SB 99 Kennedy – 18 **PASSED** Senate H.Judiciary Non Civil

In a criminal case, if a judge expresses an opinion during the trial, an objection must be made immediately and either the judge can make a curative statement to the jury or declare a mistrial. Else the verdict may be reversed upon appeal or a new trial granted by the appellate court. *Information stated that judicial resources may be saved by not having trials overturned and/or defendants set free because the trial judge was not aware of a remark that might be cause for same.*

HB 153 Weldon – 3 **PASSED** House sub

Any person damaged by the unlicensed practice of law is entitled to file a civil action to recover damages, reasonable attorney fees, and expenses of litigation.

HB 154 Weldon – 3 **FAILED** in House

Contempt of court fine in magistrate courts is increased to \$500, up from \$200.

HB 230 Hugley – 136 **PASSED** House

Creates the Claims Advisory Board, chaired by the Secretary of State, to consider and determine payment of compensation to anyone who has been convicted of and imprisoned for crimes s/he did not commit. Compensation granted to be \$50,000/year imprisoned if not serving a term concurrently for another crime. If over 4 years, the award will be \$50,000 in cash and the rest in an annuity which cannot be sold, transferred, assigned, discounted or used as security for a loan. The victim may, if requested, get a voucher for 120 credit hours and ancillary student fees to any GA public post-secondary institution. Entitled to reasonable attorney fees. Award shall not be income taxable.

HB 279 Powell – 171 **PASSED** House

The state supported salaries of judges of the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, superior courts, and district attorneys are increased. The Supreme Court justices will receive nearly \$180,000 per year, Court of Appeal judges to get \$178,000/yr.

HB 310 Powell – 32 **PASSED** House

Creates the Department of Community Supervision and its board and Governor's Office of Transition, Support and Reentry. Transfers powers, duties, and functions for those on parole and probation from the Department of Corrections, State Board of Pardons and Paroles, Department of Juvenile Justice, County and Municipal Probation Advisory Council. *Governor's proposal.*

HB 418 Reeves – 34 **PASSED** House

Grand jury members are not to be in a pretrial release program of any kind, must have completed his or her sentence, cannot be serving a sentence for another state, or be participating in a drug court division, mental health court, veteran's court, or similar federal court program. Ineligibility of a serving member of the grand jury shall not quash any indictment.

GOVERNMENT – COUNTIES AND CITIES

HB 89 Bruce – 61 **PASSED** House

Extends until 7-1-15 for city or county ordinances to be adopted and reported to Department of Community Affairs relating to manufacturing, distributing, dispensing, or possessing with intent to distribute controlled substances or marijuana in, on, or within drug-free commercial zones.

HB 110 Roberts – 155 **PASSED** House S.Public Safety

Permits consumer fireworks to be used and sold in GA to those 18 and over. Consumer fireworks are any small fireworks devices containing restricted amounts of pyrotechnic composition designed primarily to produce visible or audible effects of combustion and manufactured to the standards defined in the National Fire Protection Association Standard 1124, 2006 edition. Two fireworks outlets per county permitted.

HB 432 Raffensperger – 50 **PASSED** House

Local acts which deannex property from one city and annex it to another does not create a prohibited unincorporated island.

GOVERNMENT - EMPLOYMENT

HB 443 Dempsey – 13 **PASSED** House
Allows preferential hiring, promoting, or retention to veterans.

GOVERNMENT – ENVIRONMENT

SB 36 Ligon – 3 **PASSED** Senate
The Water Supply Protection Act of 2015. Department of Natural Resources shall adopt regulations by 7-1-16 providing for protection of high-quality drinking water in the Floridan aquifer to preserve the water quality. *The injection of water into aquifers is done to store the surface water for later recovery, but if the surface water is contaminated for some reason, it can cause the entire aquifer to lose its purity.*

HEALTH

SB 109 Orrock – 36 **PASSED** Senate
When a patient has an incurable or irreversible condition, health care providers may act as directed in a Physician Order for Life-Sustaining Treatment, POLST, personally executed by the patient and the attending physician which directs providers regarding end of life care. No liability shall occur if death ensues and health care personnel act in good faith and according to the patient’s stated wishes.

SB 111 Stone – 23 **PASSED** Senate H.Insurance
‘Continuing Care at Home’ is furnishing service at home according to an agreement which includes nursing care, assisted living care or personal care, home services, and may also include an obligation of lodging or food. *Currently, care had to be provided in a non-home facility.*

SB 126 Hufstetler – 52 **PASSED** Senate
Recreational camps, colleges and universities, day care facilities, youth sports leagues, amusement parks, restaurants, places of employment, sports arenas may each get a prescription for auto-injectable epinephrine, an epy pen, to have on hand if a client or customer needs it to combat an allergic response. *This is the same provision K-12 schools currently have.*

SB 143 Hufstetler – 52 **PASSED** Senate
Insurers which provide health benefits to the state health benefit plan must also include all Level 1 trauma centers located within its defined service area. Failure to agree between a hospital and the state health benefit plan shall cause a 5-member arbitration panel to be formed. The decision of the arbitration panel is binding on all parties for up to 3 years. Appeal may be filed in Superior Court of Fulton County. *An attempt to resolve the dispute between Blue Cross, which administers the state health benefit plan, and Grady Hospital.*

SB 145 McKoon – 29 **PASSED** Senate
At least one member of the Board of Community Health shall also be a member of the state health benefit plan.

SB 185 Tippins – 37 **PASSED** Senate
Marijuana, cannabis, use is permitted if medically prescribed for childhood epileptic seizures by a neurologist. Allowable forms shall include liquid, pills, injections or other delivery systems but not smoking. Patients must be enrolled in a study at a Regent’s designated institution to determine the efficacy and dosage of this drug.

HB 212 Weldon – 3 **PASSED** House S.Health & Human Services
No controlled substance may be prescribed or dispensed in a pain management clinic unless a doctor, physician assistance, or advanced practice registered nurse is on-site. Administration of anesthesia under doctor’s orders shall not be ‘dispensing’.

HB 232 Carter – 175 **PASSED** House S.Regulated Industries & Utilities

State Board of Hearing Aid Dealers and Dispensers shall have one member not in the business. The chair and vice chair shall be licensed hearing aid specialists. Dispenser license applicants must have a criminal records check and after 1-1-16, 20 hours of continuing education. *Now, 14 hours of continuing education is required.*

SR 282 Albers – 56 **PASSED** Senate

Creates the 9 member Joint Peace Officer and Firefighter Occupational Disease Study Committee. Diseases acquired within the scope of these professions should be taken into account as occupational diseases when workmen's compensation applications are being deliberated. Report to be filed on Dec. 1, 2015.

HB 385 Nimmer – 178 **PASSED** House S.Government Oversight

The annual cost adjustment for copying and mailing medical records would be transferred to the Department of Community Health. *Currently, it is calculated by the Office of Planning and Budget.*

HB 409 Taylor – 173 **PASSED** House

Coverage for treatment of burns for skin substitutes utilizing cryopreserved cadaver derived skin tissue shall not be limited or excluded because it is experimental or investigational medical treatment.

HB 429 Stephens – 164 **PASSED** House

Health benefit plans shall not restrict prescribed treatment for terminal conditions, defined as expectation of death within 24 months.

HB 436 Clark – 101 **PASSED** House

Pregnant women shall be offered HIV and syphilis tests in the third trimester. She may refuse. *Testing before birth can allow treatment before delivery and possibly prevent the HIV or syphilis from infecting the baby.*

HB 504 Cooper – 43 **PASSED** House S.Health & Human Services

Vaccinations against meningococcal disease of college students residing in campus housing are required within the last 5 years of admittance. The contract between physicians and pharmacies and licensed registered nurses to provide influenza vaccinations is updated to include pneumococcal disease, shingles, and meningitis.

HIGHER EDUCATION

HB 3 Fleming – 121 **PASSED** House

Persons who entice college athletes to violate the terms of their participation in college sports by entering into or soliciting a transaction therefrom shall be subject to fines and/or jail consequences. *The Todd Gurley bill, named for the UGA football player sanctioned for getting money for signing memorabilia, while the person who paid him was not.*

HB 353 Rogers – 29 **PASSED** House S.Higher Education

Updates the law for non-public postsecondary institutions bringing the law into line with practice. *An agency bill. Code for this agency has not been updated since 1991. There are some 350 schools in GA that this agency oversees.*

REVENUE/TAXATION

HB 20 Carson – 46 **PASSED** House S.Finance

An income tax credit for low-income building can be distributed to all parties in a partnership regardless of the individual's federal personal income tax treatment.

HB 94 Williams – 119 **PASSED** House

GA residents who voluntarily cancel the registration of a motor vehicle will not be liable for any late fees for payment of taxes due on a motor vehicle. The tax remains payable.

HB 122 Martin – 49 **PASSED** House
Repeals the income tax credit for low emissions vehicles.

SB 122 Mullis – 53 **PASSED** Senate
County SPLOST funding may pay for repairs of capital projects damaged or destroyed by a natural disaster. This category must be on the project list to be voted upon, although without a dollar amount as natural disasters cannot be predicted and the amount of damages even less certain. ***Another source of funding for providing governmental services in a time of great need. Cited were the tornadoes in north GA four years ago.***

HB 215 Jacobs – 80 **PASSED** House S.Finance
Allows a second HOST tax in a county to pay for infrastructure throughout the county. The sales tax in the county rises to 8%. Modifies the existing HOST to be dedicated 100% to property tax relief. Each measure needs a local referendum and both must pass to become effective, else the existing HOST stays as it is, 80% property tax relief and 20% infrastructure. ***DeKalb County. The second HOST will act like a SPLOST, except that it will not sunset. Only Atlanta City and Clayton County currently have an 8% sales tax rate.***

HB 237 Williamson – 115 **PASSED** House S.Finance
Extends the angel tax credit to 2018. Credit is 35% of the amount invested in a qualified company. State aggregate amount is \$5 million/year.

HB 238 Harbin – 122 **PASSED** House S.Finance
A sales tax exemption until June 2017 for materials and furnishings in the expansion of an aquarium owned or operated by a charitable organization. ***GA Aquarium in Atlanta?***

HB 275 Strickland – 111 **PASSED** House S.Finance
Adds the GA Lottery Corporation as an agency which may settle debts from lottery winnings. ***There are 9 state entities which may collect from taxpayers by claiming part of the winnings or income tax refund.***

HB 277 Broadrick – 4 **PASSED** House S.Finance
The value of carpet samples for tax purposes now inclusive of all flooring samples.

HB 308 Stephens – 164 **PASSED** House S.Finance
The income tax credit for rehabilitation of historic structures is revised extensively. It caps the credit at \$60 million/year statewide and \$5 million/year per structure. Structure must be in service by 1-1-17. If abandoned within 5 years, the credit must be repealed. ***Extensive bill. Has some job creation requirements.***

SR 350 Hill – 32 **PASSED** Senate
Urges Congress to enact the Fair Tax which is 23% federal sales tax and a repeal of all other federal taxes and the sixteenth amendment to the constitution which empowers the income tax. ***Party line vote.***

HB 374 Nix – 69 **PASSED** House S.Finance
Adds 'forestry' equipment in the definition of the agriculture property for tax exemption purposes.

HB 426 Taylor – 173 **PASSED** House
A sales tax exemption for non-profit health centers for 3 years.

HB 428 Stephens – 164 **PASSED** House S.Finance
A sales tax exemption for zoological construction projects to be extended until June 30, 2018.

HB 457 Hawkins – 27 **PASSED** House S.Finance

Watercraft which is self-propelled or capable of being self-propelled and held for sale in inventory is exempt from property tax until June 2016.

HB 464 Williamson – 115 **PASSED** House S.Finance

An income tax credit for water conservation facilities and a shift from ground-water usage is repealed effective Dec. 31, 2016.

HB 496 Hatchett – 150 **PASSED** House

Property taxes are to be paid for land which hosts solar generation even if it is on land previously covenanted.

LOCAL

HB 476 Fludd – 64 **PASSED** House

CA to repeal the constitutional amendment which created the Fulton County Industrial District. Requires a state wide vote. *This would remove the current restriction that the area cannot be annexed by any city. The proposed City of South Fulton will include this area if the bill passes and a local referendum passes. Local constitutional amendments were permitted prior to the adoption of the 1983 Constitution. Any in force at that time were continued.*

HB 514 Bruce – 61 **PASSED** House

Creates the City of South Fulton which will include all unincorporated areas of Fulton County including the Fulton County Industrial Park if the local constitutional amendment which created it is repealed. Local referendum is required. *Local constitutional amendments were allowed before the 1983 constitution was adopted. Any local referendum in force at that time is still valid, but no more can be adopted. If this city is formed, Fulton County will be 100% incorporated, the first in the state.*

HB 521 Raffensperger – 50 **PASSED** House S.State & Local Government

Fulton County, not city or school district, homestead exemption for property tax on owner occupied dwellings to increase to \$60,000 in a two-year phase in. In tax year 2017, the exemption will be \$45,000; in 2018, it will be \$60,000. Local referendum required. *Current exemption is \$30,000.*

HB 522 Raffensperger – 50 **PASSED** House S.State & Local Government

Fulton County, not city or school district, homestead exemption for property tax on owner occupied dwellings for age 70 or older who have lived in a home for the previous 10 years to increase to \$30,000 in a two-year phase in. Tax year 2017, the exemption will be \$15,000; in 2018 it will be \$30,000. This exemption is **in addition** to any other applicable exemption. Local referendum required. *Current exemption is \$30,000.*

SR 441 James – 35 **PASSED** Senate

Gladys Knight Highway shall be state route 9 in Fulton County from Peachtree Street to 14th street.

In COMMITTEE

GOVERNMENT – ENVIRONMENT

HB 57 Dudgeon – 25 **PASSED** House DO PASS in S.Regulated Industries & Utilities

Solar Power Free Market Financing Act of 2015. Solar technology on residences and businesses may be financed by private sources. Installation of solar technology on private property and the excess generated is sold to the power company are not to be treated as an electricity service provider. *This bill is extensive and should be consulted by those considering solar installations.*

REVENUE/TAXATION

HB 227 Duncan – 26 **PASSED** House DO PASS in S.Finance

Programmable thermostats are no longer eligible for sales tax exemption during sales tax holidays.

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League of Women Voters – Atlanta/Fulton

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