

Lawmakers ended the 40th day of the legislative session on Friday, adjourning Sine Die just after midnight. Bill amendments and substitutions flew from one Chamber to the next, making it a very exciting (and exhausting) evening under the Gold Dome. Under the Constitution, the Governor now has 40 days to sign or veto any piece of legislation that passed through both Chambers. Below are the bills we have been tracking this year that successfully made it through the legislative process:

Bill	Status	Analysis
<u>HB1</u>	<p>The bill passed through the House by substitute with a vote of 158-2. It passed out of the Senate with an amendment, 48-6. The House agreed to the Senate substitute 160-1. This legislation has been sent to the Governor for signature.</p>	<p>Rep. Allen Peake (R – Macon) proposes an amendment to O.C.G.A. Chapter 34-43 to encourage the use of medical marijuana for specified treatment conditions, his “Haleigh’s Hope Act” for 2015. The discussion around this proposal has been to add epilepsy to the set of conditions, such as glaucoma and cancer, for which medical marijuana in liquid, pill or injection form may be used. The initial version of the bill is stated in the form of legislative intent to permit use of cannabis of controlled strength to qualified patients. The bill prohibits recreational use of cannabis. The bill would provide immunity to individuals who have legally obtained the medicine by decriminalizing possession of cannabis oil that contains less than 5% THC (3% for individuals under the age of 18), and holds a minimum of 1:1 CBD-THC ratio. Additionally, patients obtaining this oil would have to register with the Department of Public Health and obtain a medical marijuana registration card; and that resources would be allocated through the budget to allow GBI to test the product should law enforcement officers wish to do so.</p> <p>http://www.georgiahealthnews.com/2015/03/medical-cannabis-bill-scores-key-victory/</p>
<u>HB117</u>	<p>This bill has passed through the House with a vote of 159-1. The Senate passed the bill by substitute 54-0.</p>	<p>Rep. Mark Hamilton (R-Cumming) offered this initiative relating to "employment security." It adds language to current law at O.C.G.A. § 34-8-43 concerning the most recent employer (the last employer for whom an individual worked in claiming benefits with years that begin on or after July 1, 2015). It further proposes deleting and adding new language at O.C.G.A. § 34-8-157 concerning the charging of regular benefits paid against experience rating account.</p>
<u>HB211</u>	<p>This bill has passed through the House 159-2. It has also passed through the Senate Floor with a vote of 52-0.</p>	<p>Rep. Bruce Broadrick (R-Dalton) proposes to amend Chapter 13 of Title 16 relating to controlled substances. This bill changes provisions relating to Schedules I, III, and IV controlled substances. This is the dangerous drug update. Additionally, under O.C.G.A. § 16-13-73, language has been amended to require the name of the 'practitioner' instead of 'physician' to appear on the container of the prescribing drug from the pharmacy.</p>

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<u>HB237</u>	It has passed in the House, 170-0, by Committee Substitute. It passed through the Senate with a vote of 48-3.	Rep. Bruce Williamson (R-Monroe) seeks to amend O.C.G.A. §48-7-40.30 and the imposition, rate and computation of and exemptions from State income tax so as to extend Georgia's angel investor tax credit. Current law permits the qualified investments through 2015 and this change would allow those to be made in years 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 with a tax credit of 35 percent of the amount invested against the tax imposed. There are limits posed for qualified investors or pass-through entities for such investments in the proposal (not to exceed \$5 million in each such year).
HB 362	This language was added to SB 126, which passed.	This piece of legislation allows school systems to stock asthma medication. Any school employee trained in recognizing symptoms of respiratory distress may provide the medication or administer it to a student. This bill also allows schools to purchase asthma medication directly from manufacturers and allows physicians to prescribe the medication to schools.
HB 394	This bill has passed through the House 154-0. It also passed through the Senate, 47-0.	This bill authorizes the Georgia Board of Nursing to investigate disciplinary orders issued by the former Georgia Board of Examiners of Licensed Practical Nurses. Additionally, this bill allows those individuals who have graduated from a nursing education program located outside of the United States to be eligible for licensure as a registered professional nurse.
HB 416	It has passed through the House, 151-21. The bill passed through the Senate, unchanged, 44-7.	This bill is known as the Patient Information and Awareness Act and requires healthcare practitioners to wear name badges with identifying qualifications – such as if they are registered nurses, physician's assistants, lab technicians, physicians, etc. There are some exceptions where these badges are not required to be worn including in the operating rooms, mental health settings, or by a health administrator who does not have direct contact with patients.
<u>HB429</u>	This bill passed through the House with a vote of 170-0. The Senate agreed to its final version, 54-0.	Rep. Rep. Ron Stephens (R-Savannah) proposes to amend Chapter 24 of Title 33, to provide that no health benefit plan shall restrict coverage for treatment of a terminal condition. Terminal condition is defined as a disease, illness, or health condition that a physician has diagnosed as expected to result in death in 24 months or less, when such treatment has been prescribed by a physician as 'medically appropriate' and such treatment has been agreed to by an insured patient or someone who has been delegated authority to consent on behalf of the insured patient. If a health benefit plan refuses to pay for prescribed treatment, they would be in violation of this code section. In the Senate, the "compromise" on SB 1 , the autism spectrum disorder mandate, was added to HB 429 so that it will now require that health insurance plans sold to entities with more than ten employees and would cover children for applied behavioral analysis therapy up to age six when those children are diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder. Therapies would be capped at \$30,000 annually. Further, Chairman Richard Smith (R-Columbus) added that if a sales tax increase of 2/10 percent is passed and ratified by the voters then the law would be repealed as the tax increase would be used to cover children up to age 18.

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HB 436	This bill has passed through the House by Committee Substitute with a vote of 161-7. It passed through the Senate with an amendment and the House agreed with a vote of 156-10.	Rep. Valerie Clark (R-Lawrenceville) amends O.C.G.A. § 31-17-4.2, to require that physicians and health care providers offer HIV and Syphilis testing to pregnant women in their third trimester of pregnancy. During the time of delivery, if there is no written evidence of a test being administered in the third trimester, the physician shall order an HIV test be administered. If the woman has already received the test in her third trimester and does not disclose any activities posing a potential risk, the physician is not required to order an additional test. It does require counseling be provided to the woman if she tests positive for HIV and it further requires if the woman is not tested for HIV and Syphilis then that be recorded in her patient record and that such testing was refused. An amendment was added to the legislation, taking language from SB 114 . It adds Community Service Boards to O.C.G.A. § 43-34-25 to the listing of exemptions, relating to the numbers of nurses which a physician may have under a nurse protocol agreement at any one time. The current limit is four - except for an advanced practice nurse who is practicing in an a birthing center, any free health clinic, the Department of Community Health, the Community Service Boards, and others.
<u>HB439</u>	This bill passed the House with a vote of 151-18, by Committee Substitute. It passed through the Senate with a vote of 41-9.	Rep. Jason Shaw (R-Lakeland) proposes a new Code Section at O.C.G.A. § 33-1-23 to establish qualified low-income community investment and how certain entities may earn credit against the State premium tax liability. It also provides for certification of qualified equity investments and for recapture of credit claimed under certain circumstances. It would be known as the "Georgia New Markets Jobs Act."
HB 504	The bill passed the House by Committee Substitute with a vote of 168 to 1. The Senate passed the bill 47-0.	Rep. Sharon Cooper (R-Marietta) authored this bill. This initiative is an expansion of the permission of who may administer vaccines. In this bill, it allows pharmacists under protocol agreements with physicians the authority to administer influenza, pneumococcal, shingles, and meningococcal vaccines under certain conditions. The legislation also addresses the requirements of individuals 18 years of age and older who are living in college campus housing or fraternity or sorority housing so as to require that they have the meningococcal vaccine within five years of living in campus housing.
<u>SB51</u>	This bill passed through the Senate by Committee Substitute, 47-1. It has passed through the House with a vote of 162-0. Our bill has been sent to the Governor for signature.	<u>Sen. Dean Burke (R – Bainbridge) has proposed to amend O.C.G.A. Chapter 4 of Title 26 to define “biological products” and “interchangeable biological products” in a new O.C.G.A. § 26-4-5. These terms flow from approved products from the United States Food and Drug Administration and the goal is to encourage prescription of such biological medicines and then permit substitution of bio similar meds for the brand name, patented “biological products” approved by the FDA. The bill adds these products and their interchangeable bio similar ones to the substitution permissions in O.C.G.A. § 26-4-81, tracking the language for the substitution of generic drugs for brand name ones. It requires that a dispensing pharmacist notify the prescribing physician of any substitution in a reasonable time and by various electronic, fax, or telephonic means, unless the substitution is for a refill or there is no approved bio similar product. The bill permits a prescribing physician or patient to instruct the pharmacist that substitution is not permitted on a</u>

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		<u>scrip and this limitation may be done on a form prescription pad by a physician. If a substitution is made, it must be shown on the label for the bio similar product.</u>
<u>SB53</u>	It passed through the Senate on February 9 th , and through the House on February 25 th . It was signed by the Governor on March 10 th .	<u>Sen. Greg Kirk (R-Americus) offered this proposal to remove the sunset provision included in Act Number 546 (SB 65 by Sen. Renee Unterman (R-Buford)) passed in 2014. That legislation, as passed last year and signed into law, permitted licensed professional counselors to perform emergency examinations of persons who are mentally ill or alcoholic or drug dependent in O.C.G.A. § 37-3-41 and O.C.G.A. § 37-7-41(d) but that such permission was only granted through March 15, 2015 when the Act would be repealed. This legislation would extend that sunset from March 15, 2015 to June 30, 2018.</u>
<u>SB 89</u>	Passed the Senate 45-8. It passed through the House, as amended, 165-0.	Sen. John Albers (R-Roswell) creates the "Digital Classroom Act" in proposed changes to Article 19 of Chapter 2 of Title 20. It seeks to require instructional materials and content to be in digital or electronic format and to require local boards of education to provide wireless electronic devices for students in order to access instructional materials and content. At O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1015(a), it adds that "on and after July 1, 2020, all instructional materials and content purchased by a local board of education pursuant to this article shall be in digital or electronic format." At (b) of this Code Section, it adds that "on and after July 1, 2020, each local board of education shall provide a laptop, tablet, or other wireless electronic device to each of its students for use as the principal source of reading or accessing instructional materials and content." The bill now contains language from HB 414, the Student Data Privacy, Accessibility and Transparency Act.
<u>SR69</u>	Senate adopted.	<u>Sen. John Albers (R – Roswell) proposed this resolution that recognizes May 8, 2015 as Georgia STEM Day at the state capitol. STEM education is recognized as being fundamental to the success of our future workforce. Nearly 211,000 technology jobs are projected to exist in Georgia by 2018, so fostering student interest in STEM careers is very important.</u>
<u>SR72</u>	Senate adopted.	<u>Sen. Burt Jones (R – Jackson). This resolution's purpose is to encourage the development of minority owned plasma centers. The resolution claims there are no plasma collection centers in the United States owned by an African American. The hope is that this will encourage the US plasma industry to open its markets and allow equal opportunity for minorities to participate.</u>
<u>SR104</u>	Senate adopted.	<u>Sen. Lindsey Tippins (R–Marietta) authored this Resolution commending Georgia Bio for the advancements it has made to the life sciences industry and for the impact it has on this state's economy.</u>

