



**Georgia Bio Legislative Watch  
January 12, 2018  
Days 1-4 of 40 Day Session**

**General Info:**

- The Georgia Legislature convened the 2018 Legislative Session on Monday, January 8. There was little activity on legislation this week except for organizational committee meetings.
- The proposed calendar for January is:
  - Tues, Jan. 9                      convene for legislative day 2
  - Weds, Jan. 10                    convene for legislative day 3
  - Thurs, Jan 11                    convene for legislative day 4
  - Thurs, Jan 18                    convene for legislative day 5
  - Fri, Jan 19                        convene for legislative day 6
  - Mon, Jan 22                        convene for legislative day 7
  - Tues, Jan 23                        convene for legislative day 8
  - Weds, Jan 24                        convene for legislative day 9
  - Thurs, Jan 25                        convene for legislative day 10
  - Mon, Jan 29                        convene for legislative day 11
- Budget Week is scheduled for the week of January 15 with joint House and Senate appropriations meetings convening on the mornings of the 16 and 17. Those budget hearings will be devoted to the FY2018 continuation budget and the FY2019 General Appropriations Act.
- Governor Deal presented his final State of the State address to members of the General Assembly, constitutional officers, members of the judiciary, and state administrators on Thursday, January 11, 2018. Much of his speech was a reflection on his legacy as a two-term Governor and the many accomplishments of his administration. He also highlighted his final legislative agenda which includes civil and criminal justice reform, infrastructure spending, cyber security and his proposed \$26 billion budget.

**Chairman and Leadership Changes:**

This session brings new changes in leadership in the Senate and new chairman positions in both chambers.

**Senate**

- President Pro Tempore: Sen. Butch Miller (R-Gainesville)
- Majority Vice Caucus Chair: Sen. Lindsey Tippins (R-Marietta)
- Senate Natural Resources and the Environment: Sen. Tyler Harper (R- Ocilla)

- Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities: Sen. Frank Ginn (R- Danielsville)
- Senate Public Safety: Sen. John Albers (R-Roswell)
- Senate State and Local Governmental Operations: Sen. Greg Kirk (R-Americas)
- Senate Reapportionment and Redistricting: Sen. Matt Brass (R-Newnan)

### **House Chairman Positions**

- House Code Revision Committee: Rep. Timothy Barr (R-Lawrenceville)
- House Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government: Rep. Chad Nimmer (R-Blackshear)
- House Industry & Labor Committee: Rep. Bill Werkheiser (R-Glennville)
- House Small Business Development Committee: Rep. Sam Watson (R-Moultrie)

### **GEORGIA BIO LEGISLATIVE TRACKING SHEET**

Georgia Bio will provide updates on specific legislation of interest to the Georgia Bio membership. If you have bills that you would like included in the weekly bill update, please email [mthacker@gabio.org](mailto:mthacker@gabio.org).

### **BILLS**

#### **[HB 61- Sales and use tax; certain retailers to either collect and remit or notify purchaser and state](#)**

**Bill Author:** Rep. Jay Powell (R-Camilla)

**Bill Status:** Senate Finance

**Summary:** HB 61 is a bill that would require delivery retailers that have a gross revenue in excess of \$250K or conducts 200 or more retail sales in the state to collect and remit Sales and use taxes. This bill passed the House and is in Senate Finance. The language was also amended into another tax bill HB 329 which did pass committee and is currently still alive this session in conference committee.

**Importance: Monitoring**

#### **[HB 65 - Low THC Oil Patient Registry](#)**

**Bill Author:** Rep. Allen Peake (R-Macon)

**Bill Status:** Senate Health and Human Services

**Summary:** HB 65 would amend the Low TCH Oil Patient Registry created in 2015 by adding additional medical conditions for which cannabis oil can be legally used. This bill passed the House and is in Senate Health and Human Services.

**Importance: Monitoring**

#### **[HB 213- Crimes and offenses; sale, manufacture, delivery, or possession of fentanyl within the prohibition of trafficking certain drugs](#)**

**Bill Author:** Rep. Rich Golick (R-Smyrna)

**Bill Status:** Senate Tabled; Senate Judiciary

**Summary:** HB 213 strengthens the penalties for fentanyl by adding it to the list of punishable trafficked substances. HB 213 passed the House last session and but was tabled in Senate Judiciary.

**Importance: Monitoring**

#### **[HB 71 - Insurance; consumer protections regarding health insurance](#)**

**Bill Author:** Rep. Richard Smith (R-Columbus)

**Bill Status:** House Tabled; House Insurance

**Summary:** HB 71 aims to provide consumer protections from unexpected out-of-network medical costs during an emergency or a planned procedure otherwise known as “surprise billing”. HB 71 passed House Insurance but was tabled on the House floor and has been recommitted to House Insurance.

**Importance: Monitoring**

#### **[SB 8 - Surprise Billing and Consumer Protection Act](#)**

**Bill Author:** Sen. Renee Unterman (R-Buford)

**Bill Status:** House Insurance

**Summary:** While SB 8 differs from HB 71, it also aims to provide consumer protections from unexpected out-of-network medical costs. Both HB 71 and SB 8 would require providers, hospitals and insurers to take certain actions and provide certain information to patients. SB 8 passed the Senate and is currently in House Insurance. With no movement on HB 71 or SB 8, the House and Senate pass HR 745 which created a study committee to examine surprise billing gaps. We anticipate possibly seeing a compromise on future bill proposals for the 2018 legislative session.

**Importance: Monitoring**

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **R&D Tax Credit**

The Income Tax Division of the Department of Revenue will consider the adoption of a proposed amendment entitled "Tax Credit for Qualified Research Expenses" which would extend the timeframe to claim the R&D tax credit. The meeting will be held on Thursday, January 18 at 10 AM at the DOR headquarters. [Click Here](#) for more information on the proposed amendment and meeting details.

## **GABIO POLICY & ADVOCACY COMM. MEETINGS/CALL SCHEDULE FOR 2018 GA LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

Mon. Jan. 8th at 12pm  
Mon. Jan. 22nd at 12pm  
Mon. Feb. 5 at 12pm  
Mon. Feb. 19 at 12pm  
Mon. Mar. 5 at 12pm  
Mon. Mar. 19 at 12pm  
Mon. April 2 at 12pm

If you would like to participate on a call, please contact [mthacker@gabio.org](mailto:mthacker@gabio.org).