



**Georgia Bio Legislative Report  
January 19, 2018  
Days 5-6 of 40 Day Session**

**General Info:**

- Weather events impacted state government this week as Governor Deal closed all state agencies except for essential personnel for Wednesday and Thursday. The General Assembly did convene for legislative days 5-6 on Thursday and Friday.
  
- The proposed calendar for January is:
  - 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:**

This week also marked budget week. Governor Deal released his budget recommendations to the General Assembly on January 11 for both the amended current and upcoming fiscal years (amended FY18 and FY19).

Each year, the General Assembly authorizes funding for all agencies and programs of state government, and no money can be spent unless authorized by the annual appropriations act.

Georgia's constitution gives the governor the exclusive power to set the revenue estimate for the coming fiscal year, which determines how much money can be spent. Further, the governor has the exclusive power to propose the state budget, designating how much money will be appropriated to each agency.

The General Assembly's power over the state budget is limited by the fact that most of the state budget goes to state and federal entitlement and other formula-based programs that must be funded. However, the ultimate power to approve or not approve the state budget rests in the hands of the General Assembly.

Note: Georgia's fiscal year runs from July 1-June 30. Typically the General Assembly handles 2 budgets each session: (1) the "big" budget for the next fiscal year as well as (2) the "little" budget, or the amended budget for the current fiscal year, to ensure revenues are appropriately accounted for prior to the end of the fiscal year (given that GA has a balanced budget requirement).

Governor Deal's Budget Recommendations -- Amended FY18 and FY19 -- prioritize building an educated workforce capable of meeting future job demands, expanding and improving services for Georgia's most vulnerable citizens, and continuing to invest in transportation infrastructure and economic development. Additionally, his budget request shores up the pension system for Georgia's teachers, provides additional early access to higher education for promising K-12 students, and expands mental health services for children.

**Amended FY18 Budget Highlights:**

\$102.1 million for a midterm adjustment for K-12 enrollment growth

\$10.7 million for growth in the Dual Enrollment program

\$43.6 million for the Indigent Care Trust Fund and Medicaid

**FY19 Budget Highlights:**

\$361.7 million for the Teachers Retirement System

\$127.6 million for the K-12 enrollment growth, training, and experience

\$30 million to assist low-wealth school systems

\$54.3 million for resident instruction at University System institutions

\$5.9 million for operations for the Georgia Cyber Innovation and Training Center

\$34.4 million for growth in the Dual Enrollment program

\$255.9 million for Medicaid to fund growth and offset the loss of federal and other funds

\$28.8 million for child welfare services to fund out-of-home care growth and foster care per diem increases

\$5.9 million for autism crisis services for children under 21

\$22.9 million to implement recommendations from the Commission on Children's Mental Health

\$5 million for accountability courts to implement new courts and expand existing courts

\$31.7 million in new motor fuel funds for transportation

\$100 million in bond funds to repair and replace bridges throughout the state

The General Assembly will use the governor's recommendations as a starting point to develop and pass the state's budget, which the governor will then sign or veto. The governor can also veto line items within the as-passed version.

**Floor Leaders**

Governor Deal announced this week his floor leaders for this session. Floor leaders carry the governor's bills in each chamber.

Rep. Church Efstration (R-Dacula)

Rep. Trey Rhodes (R-Greensboro)

Rep. Terry Rogers (R-Clarkesville)

Sen. Brian Strickland (R-McDonough)

Sen. P.K. Martin (R-Lawrenceville)

Sen. Larry Walker (R-Kathleen)

## **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**

#### **[SB 328 – Income Tax; expiration of certain income tax credits](#)**

**Bill Author:** Sen. John Albers (R-Roswell)

**Bill Status:** Senate Hopper

**Summary:** This legislation is a result of Sen. Albers’ study committee examining the current tax credits in Georgia. This study committee met numerous times in 2017 and issued its final report in December ’17.

The report suggested that the General Assembly repeal three tax credits for Federal Qualified Transportation Fringe benefits, private driver education, and diesel particulate emission reduction technology equipment. SB 328 aims to repeal all three of these credits. Revenue related bills have to originate in the House but we anticipate the Senate attaching the repeal of these tax credits to another tax bill.

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

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).