



AIA

PGR | PEACHTREE
GOVERNMENT
RELATIONS

Jan. 29 - Feb. 1, 2018

Week 4

WEEKLY REPORT

The Legislature convened Monday – Thursday of this week, completing through Day 14. We are seeing much more action under the Gold Dome. Committees are delving into legislation and the calendars are getting longer in each Chamber. On Thursday, the legislature took a lunch break and reconvened. This was the first of many longer days to come!

STATE OF THE UNION

On Tuesday of this week, President Donald Trump gave his first State of the Union speech. In spite of the controversy that often follows our President, the speech painted the nation in a positive light.

The President hit on 7 key components – the Economy, Law, Immigration, Defense and Foreign Policy, Energy and Infrastructure, Healthcare, and Education. The highlights are below.

He indicated the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is providing tremendous relief for the American people. Within less than a month of the bill signing, new investments are benefiting over 3 million Americans. The President said most Americans will receive a tax cut and the Act will result in higher paychecks for the overwhelming majority of American workers.

The first year of the Trump administration has seen movement toward economic freedom. The President called for new trade deals that are “fair and reciprocal.”

The President spoke about his desire to remake the federal judiciary and the successful appointees he has already made. To date, the Senate has confirmed an unprecedented 13 court of appeals judges.

President Trump called for an end to chain migration and the diversity lottery. He reiterated that we need a value-merit and economic-based immigration policy.

One of the highlights of the speech was his celebration of progress made by the US Coalition against Isis in Syria and Iraq. He singled out Iran as one of a number of nations that needs the support of the US in order to challenge heavy-handed repression and corruption.

President Trump repeated his call for a major initiative to repair the nation's infrastructure including roads, bridges, and rails. He indicated the details are forthcoming in the next couple weeks.

In the healthcare department, the President did not call for a repeal of Obamacare but did recognize that Congress repealed the individual mandate.

You can find the full speech here: <http://cnn.it/2rYUepR>

Opioid Legislation

Senator Renee Unterman's opioid bill is on the move. The bill was one of the first bills to pass out of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. The bill is now in the Rules Committee.

The bill, SB 352, has three parts:

It prohibits "patient brokering." This is the practice of preying on addicts recruiting them to healthcare facilities for a fee, kickback, etc. where, at these facilities, they are not receiving the appropriate treatment. The proposal outlines fines and imprisonment.



It also creates a director of Substance Abuse, Addiction, and Related Disorders. This director would serve at the pleasure of the Governor and would lead a newly established Commission on Substance Abuse and Recovery.

Lastly, the proposal would create a prohibition against billing a patient or insurer for excessive, high-tech or fraudulent drug testing in the treatment of the elderly, the disabled, or any individual affected by pain, substance abuse, addiction or any related disorder. Again, the bill outlines penalties including fines and imprisonment.

Rural Development Council

Since the beginning of the Session we have been awaiting bills that address the recommendations of the Rural Development Council. Representative Rick Jasperse dropped HB 769 this week. The bill has a number of provisions designed to assist the ailing rural healthcare system:

- Helps hospitals in Georgia work together to provide remote drug orders for patients
- Requires DCH to streamline the billing and credentialing process for new physicians
- Establishes a Rural Center for Healthcare Innovation and Sustainability
- Allows for the easier creation of micro-hospitals
- Creates a grant program to provide insurance premium assistance to physicians practicing in underserved areas

This bill is in the Health and Human Services Committee.

Adoption Legislation

As previously reported, this bill was lost in a political battle in 2017 after it was amended with controversial religious liberty language. We all thought Thursday's negotiations on the language may lift the political backlog but we were wrong. The Senate sent a substitute over to the House and Representative Bert Reeves presented what was considered to be a compromise. The version presented by Reeves addresses three provisions that the Senate amended from the original House bill:

- A revised version of HB 359 that addressed private guardianship and was vetoed by Governor Deal – the revisions are thought to satisfy the Governor
- An extension of the lockout for a mother to waive her rights to a child to four days – she currently has 10
- Allowance for the payment of the birth mother's living expenses in private adoptions

The House adopted the compromise unanimously and sent it back to the Senate for an agreement. The Senate reconvened to discuss the compromise and no agreement came. Senators indicated concerns over the payment of living expenses – citing the term “baby selling.” In the end, the Senate adjourned for the weekend and the backlog continues.

Upcoming Schedule

Monday, February 5 – Legislative Day 15
Tuesday, February 6 – Legislative Day 16
Wednesday, February 7 – Legislative Day 17
Thursday, February 8 – Legislative Day 18
Monday, February 12 – Legislative Day 19
Tuesday, February 13 – Legislative Day 20
Wednesday, February 14 – Legislative Day 21
Thursday, February 15 – Legislative Day 22
Tuesday, February 20 – Legislative Day 23
Wednesday, February 21 – Legislative Day 24
Thursday, February 22 – Legislative Day 25
Friday, February 23 – Legislative Day 26
Monday, February 26 – Legislative Day 27
Wednesday, February 28 – Legislative Day 28 – CROSSOVER DAY
Thursday, March 1 – Legislative Day 29
Monday, March 5 – Legislative Day 30
Wednesday, March 7 – Legislative Day 31
Friday, March 9 – Legislative Day 32
Monday, March 12 – Legislative Day 33
Wednesday, March 14 – Legislative Day 34
Thursday, March 15 – Legislative Day 35
Monday, March 19 – Legislative Day 36
Wednesday, March 21 – Legislative Day 37
Friday, March 23 – Legislative Day 38
Tuesday, March 27 – Legislative Day 39
Thursday, March 29 – Legislative Day 40 – SINE DIE

AIA – Specific Issues and Legislation of Interest

Below are the bills we are watching closely. You can also find an attached spreadsheet with a comprehensive list of bills we are following.

Transportation Chairmen Kevin Tanner and Brandon Beach each have a transit bill they will be dropping. They have both been meeting with interest groups and leaders to ensure comprehensive and balanced bills.

We met with GMA this week to discuss SB 2 and get their thoughts on the legislation. While we are still unsure as to whether the bill will gain momentum, GMA indicated that they would rather work on the issue by publishing a document of best practices involving permitting. They believe that legislation would be an umbrella approach to an issue that is not one size fits all. We are reviewing their best practice guide and will be providing any input.

SB 319: By Senator John Albers. The legislation provides for the creation of the Department of Fire Safety and transfers the State Fire Marshall's Office, the Firefighter's Standards and Training Council and all other activities related to fire service to the newly created department. The bill was heard in The bill is now in the Senate Public Safety Committee. The bill was heard on 1/22 and no vote was taken. DOI Commissioner, Ralph Hudgens, testified against the bill. You can find the full bill here: <http://bit.ly/2Fiwq1C>

SB 328: By Senator John Albers. This bill sunsets three tax credits. 1. Relating to transit benefits. 2. Relating to private driver education courses. 3. Relating to diesel particulate emission reduction technology. This bill passed the Senate Finance Committee and is currently in the Rules Committee. You can find the bill here: <http://bit.ly/2Ef2AvC>

SB 378: By Senator John Albers. This bill is entitled the "Georgia Measuring Success Act." The bill outlines the process for a new tax credit in Georgia. It requires an economic analysis prior to introduction or amendment of legislation containing tax incentives. SB 378 is a direct result of the study committee Senator Albers held over the summer having to do with measuring the impact of tax incentives. This bill is now in the Senate Finance Committee. You can find the full bill here: <http://bit.ly/2s3wVuN>

HB 741: By Representative John Corbett. This bill amends the definition of "fair market value" for ad valorem tax purposes. Currently, the law says that the income approach should be considered. The bill would change it to being only one component of the fair market value determination. This bill is currently in the House Ways and Means Committee. You can find the whole bill here: <http://bit.ly/2DRmJdw>

We will keep you updated as legislation is dropped or moved that will affect AIA.

Day at the Capitol

Thank you to everyone who came to the Day at the Capitol on Thursday. We had a great turnout of AIA members and an interesting panel of Speakers. We even had some surprise speakers in two candidates for Secretary of State – Brad Raffensberger and Buzz Brockway. Your conversations and relationships with elected officials are the best way to help them understand AIA's issues and we thank you for taking the time to join us!

Contact Us

Please contact your lobbying team if you have any questions or concerns.

Don Bolia:
404-314-4484
Don.Bolia@peachgr.com

Laura Norton:
678-699-6426
Laura.Norton@peachgr.com

Tess Hammock:
478-972-7546
Tess@peachgr.com