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### **AIA- Week 5**

The Legislature may have been in recess this week but there was still action under the Gold Dome. Legislators on the Appropriations Committees met throughout the week to work towards a solution to budget disagreements. As reported by the AJC, Governor Kemp is pleased with how negotiations went this week and he feels like the budget process will move forward at this point. (<https://www.ajc.com/news/politics-blog/>)

#### **Calendar:**

Below is the updated legislative calendar that will resume on February 18th.

Day 13 - February 18th  
Day 14 - February 19th  
Day 15 - February 20th  
Day 16 - February 21st  
Day 17 - February 24th  
Day 18 - February 25th  
Day 19 - February 26th  
Day 20 - February 27th  
Day 21 - February 28th  
Day 22 - March 2nd  
Day 23 - March 2rd  
Day 24 - March 4th  
Day 25 - March 5th  
Day 26 - March 9th  
Day 27 - March 10th  
Day 28 - March 12th (Crossover Day) .

#### **Budget**

As we have previously mentioned, the is the **only** bill that is required to pass each year within the forty days of the legislative session. You can find the budget documents below

reflecting the Governor's proposed budget as well as a power point released by the Governor's fiscal team that sought to clear up questions raised by legislators following their initial presentation three weeks ago.

<https://opb.georgia.gov/budget-information/budget-documents/governors-budget-reports>  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VQh42loUV1X3A8EPnYCdZ97XjtgygZ00/view>

### ***Hot Topics:***

#### **Vaping**

**HB 864** - (Rep. Bonnie Rich) This bill allows for an excise tax on any vaping products. The tax amount would be 7%. It also requires any manufacturer or distributor to obtain a vapor license.

**SB 298** - (Renee Unterman) This bill would prohibit the sales or purchasing of vaping and tobacco products for anyone under the age of 21. It would also make it mandatory for school systems to include education on vaping products in their curriculum. This is mandatory each year for students in Kindergarten through 12th grade. It also prohibits distribution within 500 feet of a school or playground.

#### **Hands-Free driving update**

**HB 113** - (Representative John Carson) This bill is an update on the 2018 "Hands-Free" law. This bill seeks to increase the current fines as well as double the fines in school and work zones. It will also eliminate the current amendment that allows a judge to dismiss a fine if the driver showed proof that they have purchased a hands-free device for his or her car.

### **Relevant Legislation**

**HB 777** - (Representative John Corbett) This bill deals with changing the standards for wood construction. The bill mandates that the State of Georgia review and update standards to the 2021 building codes as adopted by the International Code and Council.

*The bill was referred to the Agriculture and Consumer Affairs Committee*

**HB 773** - (Representative Scot Turner) - The bill would provide for reciprocal licensing of professions, occupations and trades for individuals who are licensed outside of Georgia if the individual is currently licensed in at least one other state, country or province or other subdivision and is in good standing in all licensed entities. The licensee must have been licensed for one year, be verified by the regulating entity, have previously passed an exam regulating the license if required, have not had their license revoked, has not voluntarily surrendered their license for unprofessional conduct and has not had disciplinary action or a complaint filed against them.

*Referred to House Regulated Industries*

**Tort reform bill info**

We are expecting an omnibus tort reform package to drop next week when legislators return. This bill will include items such as premises liability, medical malpractice, phantom damages, contractual protection, nuisance laws and more. There is a coalition of over forty organizations pushing the bill which will most definitely be met with harsh opposition by trial lawyers. This issue is always a battle at the Legislature and we will continue to keep you updated as the bill progresses.

**SB 292** - (Senator Harrell) This bill requires local governments to adopt state-wide standard codes. It also requires local governments to have more stringent codes where state-wide codes do not exist. It allows for some exemptions in farm buildings and structures.

**SB 302** – (Senator John Albers) This bill provides for independent economic analyses to be procured by the Office of Planning and Budget for certain tax benefits upon request by the chairpersons of the House Committee on Ways and Means and the Senate Finance Committee.

**SB 315** - (Representative Lindsay Tippins) The bill addresses decisions involving waivers of liens and notices of nonpayment in contractor/subcontractor relationships. If the bill is passed, contractors may bring a breach of contract action even if they do not perfect their lien rights. The bill also adds an additional 30 days for the contractor to perfect their lien to bring the time to 90 days.

*Passed Senate Judiciary Committee*