



**The American
Institute
of Architects**



AIA- Week 7

We have officially crossed the half-way point of the 40-day legislative session. This week legislators picked up the pace - there were many committee meetings and legislation is moving quickly. Both Chambers are passing bills in anticipation of Crossover Day on March 12th. Crossover Day marks the day that a bill must have passed one Chamber in order to remain alive for the 2020 session. Some of the more controversial legislation that emerged this week includes bills addressing an expansion of the special needs scholarship, tort reform, surprise billing, taxes on Uber/Lyft services and more.

We still do not have confirmation but the talk in the hall is that the House and Senate are getting closer to finalizing their budget documents for FY21. Appropriations Committee members are working around the clock to complete this task but it is possible we may have to endure another “budget break.”

The State of the Judiciary was held on Wednesday of this week. Chief Justice Harold Melton addressed the Legislature and the Governor. He spoke about revamping law libraries that are rarely used to serve as a resource for Georgians wanting to serve as their own lawyer in civil cases. He spoke about creating a more robust cybersecurity system to protect the state from ransomware attacks and protect critical documents from being lost. Melton pledged to continue to work with the Legislature on addressing mental health and how those affected with mental health issues can become entangled in the criminal justice system. In conclusion, Melton thanked Governor Deal for spearheading the construction of the new judicial center in Georgia which is the first state building in Georgia history dedicated solely to the judiciary.

Calendar:

Below is the updated legislative calendar that will resume on February 21st.

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) .

Hot Topics:

Daylight Savings

HB 709 - (Representative Wes Cantrell) This would give voters the chance to decide whether or not Georgia observes Daylight Savings Time.

It was heard in the House State Planning and Community Affairs committee, but no vote was taken.

E-Scooters

SB 159 - (Senator Steve Gooch) This bill gives cities the ability to decide how they regulate the use of E-Scooters.

It passed committee and now heads to rules.

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.

This bill is in the House Ways and Means.

SB 298 - (Senator 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.

This bill passed the Senate Regulated Industries.

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.

This bill was heard again in the House Public Safety Committee. A substitute, proposed by Representative Alan Powell, was passed by a vote from 5-4. The substitute eliminates the

staggered fines and lowers them, making the fines between \$25 and \$100. The sub also creates a complete ban of any type of cell phone use for anyone under the age of 18.

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 passed the House on Thursday and now moves onto the Senate.

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.

This bill is in House Regulated Industries.

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.

This bill is in the Senate Agriculture Committee

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.

This bill passed the Senate and is in the House Second Readers

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

SB 309- (Senator Jesse Stone) This bill is known as The Georgia Municipal and Local Government Infrastructure Finance Authority Act. It provides a way for local governments to finance infrastructure at a lower cost and creates The Georgia Municipal & Local Government Infrastructure Finance Authority and The Georgia County and Local Government Infrastructure Finance Authority. The bill outlines the guidelines for members and duties of these authorities.

This bill passed the Senate State and Local Government Operations.

HB 970- (Representative Vance Smith)

This bill provides an income tax credit for historic housing.

This bill is in the House Ways and Means Committee.

HB 937 - (Representative Vance Smith)- This bill would prohibit cities and counties from regulating any building material, product or construction practice for single-family homes if approved in the state minimum standard codes.

As a result this legislation would preempt local government regulations and ordinances on the following:

- Exterior building color
- Type or style of exterior cladding material
- Style or materials of roof structures or porches
- Exterior nonstructural architectural ornamentation
- Location or architectural styling of windows and doors, including garage doors
- The number and types of rooms
- The interior layout of rooms
- Types of foundation structures approved under state minimum standard codes.

This bill passed the House Agriculture Committee.