

2021 Georgia General Assembly Legislative Days 8-12 Overview



Housekeeping

The Georgia General Assembly convened for the fourth week (Legislative Days 8-12). A flood of bills were introduced by legislators with a highlight on election reform and education. Governor Brian Kemp also gave two press conferences this week, detailing Georgia’s COVID-19 vaccination process and unveiling his “Teacher Pipeline” legislative package. The legislators adjourned Thursday, February 4th, without passing an adjournment resolution positioning the legislature to pass an adjournment resolution on Monday, February 8th, the 13th Legislative Day.

General Bills

HB 80 (Speaker David Ralston) - This bill is the Supplemental “Baby” Budget Bill. This bill was passed by the Georgia House of Representatives on January 28th, and passed the Senate Appropriations Committee on Thursday, February 4th.

HB 112 (Rep. Trey Kelley) - This bill extends the applicability of the COVID-19 liability protections enacted last year for one year beginning on July 14, 2021. This bill was passed out of the Special Committee on Access to the Civil Justice System.

HB 270 (Rep. Barry Fleming) - This bill stops the issuing of absentee ballots within ten days of primary or election day, pushing it seven days earlier than the current deadline. This bill was passed by the Georgia House Special Committee on Election Integrity on Thursday, February 4th.

HB 86 (Rep. Ron Stephens) - This bill would create the Georgia Lottery Mobile Sports Wagering Integrity Act. This Act would allow for Georgians to participate in mobile sports betting regulated by the Georgia Lottery Commission.



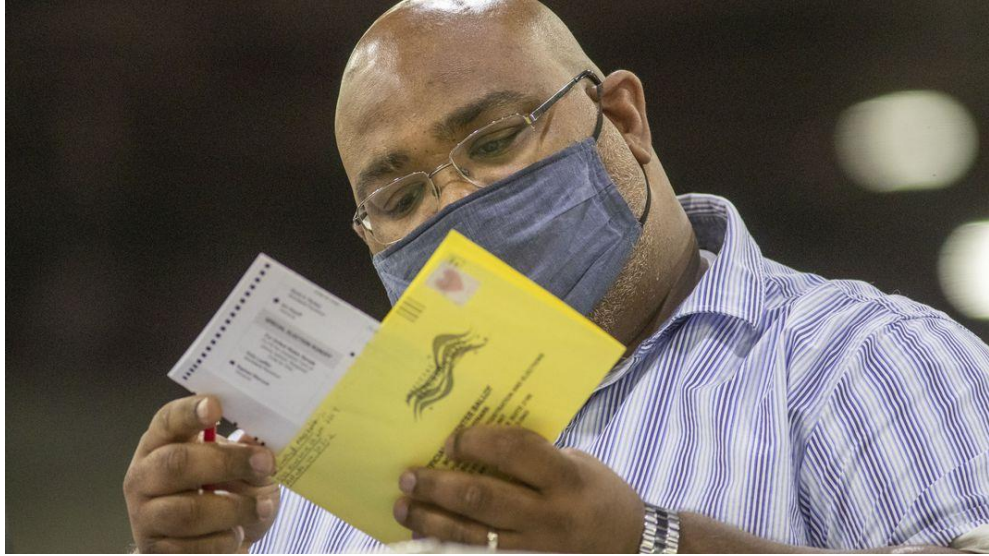
Governor Kemp's Vaccine Press Conference

On February 3rd, Governor Kemp and Dr. Kathleen Toomey gave a COVID-19 vaccine update. Georgia receives roughly 120,000 vaccines per week. Over 250,000 vaccines have been administered between January 11th and February 3rd. As of February 3rd, CVS and Walgreens have completed their vaccine programs in 99.5% of Georgia's nursing homes and long-term care facilities. There are 40,000 vaccines that have been transferred from the nursing home program back into the general allotment. Through executive order, the Governor has expanded the list of people who can administer the vaccine to include dentists and pharmacists. The CDC has given new guidance that says the second dose of the vaccine can be administered up to 4 days early from the 3 or 4 week mark or up to 6 weeks for the second dose from the date of the first dose. Governor Kemp mentioned that it may be April before the Biden Administration will allocate more than 120,000 doses per week. With the possibility of a new vaccine from Johnson & Johnson, Governor Kemp and Dr. Toomey are hopeful that more doses may become available earlier than April. You can view Governor Kemp's press conference [here](#).



Governor Kemp’s “Teacher Pipeline” Legislation

On Tuesday, February 2nd Governor Brian Kemp unveiled his “Teacher Pipeline” legislative package. With a focus on retaining Georgia educators, Governor Kemp is working to create a more focused curriculum for teacher cohorts focusing in Reading and English-Language Arts, creating a non-traditional teacher certification pathway for veterans, mentoring program for new teachers, and increased enrollment for teacher cohorts at historically black colleges and universities. Additionally, Governor Kemp also laid out policy encouraging the rehiring of retired teachers. On February 4th, the Senate assigned SB 88 (Sen. Russ Goodman) to the Senate Education and Youth Committee.



Multiple Election Bills Filed

A flurry of election bills were introduced by legislators this week focused on election security and reform. Both Democratic and Republican legislators have dropped bills that seek to make sweeping changes on Georgia's election system. While success of the Democratic sponsored bills looks grim, top leaders in the Republican Party have made election security reform a priority. Republican sponsors of the election bills dropped so far include Rules Chairman Senator Jeff Mullis (R-Chickamauga and Majority Caucus Vice-Chairman-Senator Larry Walker III (R-Perry),

Legislation

HB 90 (Rep. Bruce Williamson) - This bill will allow for persons or businesses who are buyers of land for conversion of timber to be exempt from certain liabilities relating to damages.

HB 112 (Rep. Trey Kelley) - This bill extends the applicability of the COVID-19 liability protections enacted last year for one year beginning on July 14, 2021.

HB 147 (Rep. Heath Clark) - This bill would create a licensure by endorsement where a licensed professional establishes residency in Georgia and (1) holds a current license to practice such occupation or profession issued by another state that was acquired prior to moving from another state and establishing residency in this state for which the training, experience, and testing are substantially similar in qualifications and scope to the requirements under this state to obtain a license; (2) is in good standing in such other state; and (3) passes any examination that may only be required to demonstrate knowledge of the laws and rules and regulations of this state specific to the practice of the profession, business, or trade for which such license by endorsement is being sought.

SB 6 (Sen. John Albers) - This bill would allow for an independent economic analysis to be requested on fiscal bills by the chairpersons of the House Committee on Ways and Means and the Senate Finance Committee.

SB 49 (Sen. Clint Dixon) - This bill focuses on standards for construction and will provide for procedures for alternative plan review, permitting and inspection by a private provider and allow for the applicant to keep the private provider at their own expense.