
Georgia Legislative Session Ended March 29th with Mixed Results

Passed: Georgia Gender Dysphoria Law

S.B. 140 Gender Dysphoria Act prohibits using the following medical procedures on minors:
“Section 2: Sex reassignment surgeries, or any other surgical procedures, that are performed for the purpose of altering primary or secondary sexual characteristics; or
“hormone-replacement therapies.”

Section 3 Lists Exceptions “Deemed Medically Necessary”

“Section 3(b) (1) Treatments for medical conditions other than gender dysphoria or for the purpose of sex reassignment where such treatments are deemed medically necessary;
“(2) Treatments for individuals born with a medically verifiable disorder of sex development, including individuals born with a medically verifiable disorder of sex development, including individuals born with ambiguous genitalia or chromosomal abnormalities resulting in ambiguity regarding the individual’s biological sex;
“(3) Treatment for individuals with partial androgen insensitivity syndrome; and
“(4) continued treatment of minors who are, prior to July 1, 2023, being treated with irreversible hormone replacement therapies.”

The Georgia Composite Medical Board will issue rules/regulations to govern the above.

Question: Will doctors and institutions be held liable for damages caused by such treatment?

Question: Will parents of minors be arrested/fined/lose custody for opposing such treatment?

Passed: Vaccination Passport Prohibited

S.B. 1 Proof of COVID Vaccination for Government Service, Not Required by Senator Greg Dolezal and 25 co-sponsors, protects Georgians against vaccine passports this way:

“(1) *No agency* shall require proof of COVID-19 vaccination of any person as a condition of providing any *service* or *access* to any facility, issuing any *license*, *permit*, or *other* type of authorization, or performing any duty of such agency.

“(2) *No agency*, through any rule, regulation, ordinance, resolution, or other action shall require that any person or private entity require proof of COVID-19 vaccination of any person as a condition of providing any *service* or *access* to any facility, or as a *condition* of such person or *private* entity’s performance of any regular activity by such person or private entity.”

Passed: Street Gang Terrorism Act

S.B. 44 Street Gang Terrorism and Prevention Act, of five pages when introduced, is nine pages as passed. If members are charged, so will (a) a gang leader/director/organizer/guide of gang-related offenses be criminally liable. (b) Such crimes become felonies, punishable by 5-20 years in prison, plus any added charges. (c) A first crime against a person disabled or under age 17 mandates 10-20 years prison; second and added offenses mandate 15 to 25 years. (d) A district attorney or judge may change sentencing and release if circumstances so indicate. (e) Judges who change mandatory sentencing must record reasons and (f) the State could appeal.

Unexpected Drama: Sports Gambling and the Soapbox Derby

S.R. 140 Constitutional Amendment to Provide for Sports Gambling by Senator Bill

Cowsert is his latest attempt to authorize more gambling in Georgia. His original language was changed a little in the Regulated Industries Committee Senator Cowsert chairs, but it didn't change the meaning or its intent. As a proposed constitutional amendment, S.R. 140 needed 2/3 vote to pass and lost 30-26, six or so votes shy of the constitutional required. Incidentally, S.R. 140 was defeated this year, but it's still alive for 2024. However, those "never say die" senators hi-jacked a popular, down-home, bill and made it into something else. As Paul Harvey would say, "This is the rest of the story!" I say. Read on for the drama some senators had the unmitigated gall to create by hi-jacking H.B. 237.

A Soapbox Derby Bill Transformed into a Sports Gambling Bill

H.B. 237 Southeast Georgia Soapbox Derby by Representative Leesa Hagan would have made the Soapbox Derby in Lyons, Georgia the state's official derby and the House, eagerly, passed it 168-0. But, its hi-jacking means it must be re-introduced in the 2024 session.

The drama began when the Senate Economic Development & Tourism Committee collaborated with itself and decided to strip the language honoring the derby and insert language legalizing sports gambling in Georgia. That's what they did and sent it back to the Senate floor for a vote. Obviously, the committee didn't count on the back-lash for beatin' up on a little ole soapbox derby bill and makin' it into sumthin' it ain't. The gamblin' folks must'a been plumb surprised when the Senate voted four times afore that bill was tabled and squashed. It was some fight! That ole hi-jacked bill got all them four Senate floor votes March 20th and jus' wouldn't pass. But, ya'll, the fightin' ain't over, yet. Yeah, the fourth vote tabled that gamblin' bill for this session, but it's still alive to be taken off that table in the 2024 session. Shucks!

ACTION – Encourage Representative Hagan to re-introduce her bill in 2024. Contact her at 404 656-0325.

Thankfully! S.B. 233 "Promise Scholarships" Failed to Pass!

S.B. 233 Georgia Promise Scholarship Act introduced by Senator Greg Dolezal passed the Senate by substitute after being tabled and taken off the table on March 6th, but it wasn't easy. Senators had to vote four times to get it passed. When it went to the House, the Education Committee changed it again and passed its own substitute, which was tabled and taken off the table *twice*. Then, on the last day of the session the House voted four times, and returned it to House Rules committee, where it remains alive for 2024.

What's wrong with S.B. 233?

1. U.S. citizenship is not required for student accounts to get \$6,000 yearly for private school.
2. Constitutional authority of *elected* state and local boards of education is superseded.
3. *Unelected entities* would control new and old private schools that choose to participate.
4. The *appointed* Georgia Student Finance Commission (GSFC) would write rules/regulations.
5. GSFC would *appoint* legal or illegal alien parents of students to a parent review committee.
6. *Unelected* GSFC would regulate such schools with policies/rules not mentioned in S.B. 233.
7. Private schools, existing and not-yet built schools could participate in the plan.
8. Schools that have operated for *only one year* could qualify and participate,
9. *If* the owner of the school has *enough money to operate for the upcoming year*.
10. Private school means a nonpublic school that's *accredited or in the accreditation process*.

ACTION – Oppose. Ask Rules Committee Chairman Representative Richard Smith to hold it in committee through 2024.

Congratulations! These are the bills you stopped!

As pages one and two of the March *Georgia Insight* suggested, you opposed and stopped six resolutions and five bills that would have decimated Georgia culture. However, that legislation is still alive for the 2024 session. Meanwhile, it would be nice to (a) thank each chairman for holding the bills and (b) ask them to keep holding them until the 2024 session ends next year.

These are the changes that were stopped:

S.R. 109 would redefine marriage as “between two adult persons,” instead of “the union of man and woman,” which is the current definition in the *Constitution of the State of Georgia*.

ACTION – Thank Judiciary Committee Chairman Senator Strickland, 404 463-6598, **for holding the bill.**

S.R. 144 would create a committee to focus on putting 3-year-olds in pre-K.

ACTION – Thank Rules Committee Chairman Senator Brass, 656-0057, **for holding the bill.**

H.B. 172 authorizes schools to screen and commit for mental illness a child 12 or older without parental knowledge.

ACTION – Thank Juvenile Justice Committee Chairman Representative Ballinger, 656-7153, **for holding the bill.**

H.B. 141 requires school systems to begin suicide screening during the 2023-2024 school term and commit students for mental health services without notifying parents.

ACTION – Thank Education Committee Chairman Representative Erwin, 656-0188, **for holding the bill.**

H.B. 173 (a) mandates age 4 pre-K, (b) age 5 full-day K, (c) pre-K *and* K *before* first grade, (d) lowers to 5 the compulsory school age (e) and interferes with local school board authority.

ACTION – Thank Education Committee Chairman Representative Erwin, 656-0188, **for holding the bill.**

H.B. 356 would (a) prohibit corporal punishment (spanking) in public schools and (b) interferes with local school board authority.

ACTION – Thank Education Committee Chairman Representative Erwin, 656-0188, **for holding the bill.**

H.B. 388 would authorize anyone “to possess, manufacture, deliver, distribute, dispense, administer, purchase, sell, or possess with intent to distribute” over an ounce of marijuana.”

ACTION – Thank Non-Civil Judiciary Chairman Representative Tyler Smith, 463-7853, **for holding the bill.**

H.R. 210 would authorize raffles by nonprofit organizations, betting, sports betting and casino gambling by amending the State Constitution alongside lotteries and bingo.

ACTION – Thank Regulated Industries Committee Chairman Representative Powell, 463-3793, **for holding the bill.**

S.R. 55 urging amending the U.S. Constitution with the Equal Rights Amendment would delete every law, rule, regulation, policy or program that applies to females but not to males.

ACTION – Thank Judiciary Committee Chairman Senator Strickland, 404 463-6598, **for holding the bill.**

S.R. 136 would put in the State Constitution a freedom to choose abortion, prenatal and postpartum care, childbirth, contraception, sterilization, miscarriage and infertility care.

ACTION – Thank Rules Committee Chairman Senator Brass, 656-0057, **for holding the bill.**

S.R. 140 would have *authorized raffles by nonprofit organizations and sports betting* in the Georgia Constitution that currently legalizes only lotteries, and nonprofit bingo games. The public affairs representative from the Georgia Baptist Mission Board remarked, “We’ve been able to stop it now for about ten straight years.” But the bill carries over into the 2024 session.

ACTION – No thanks for committee chairmen on this one. It passed the Regulated Industries Committee, as well as, the Rules Committee and went to the Senate floor for a vote. There, it failed to get the 2/3 vote required for proposed constitutional amendments and died on the Senate floor. The sports gambling language was attached to another bill that would’ve passed, but died after being hi-jacked. See page 2 for details.

“Common Sense” Bills Kept in Committee

Why didn't this pass to affirm and protect our God-given and historical freedom of religion?

S.B. 180 Religious Freedom would have preserved the right to freedom of religion and allowed lawsuits for violations, with government paying appropriate relief and attorney fees.

ACTION – Ask Judiciary Committee Senator Strickland, Ch., 404 463-6598, why this was not voted out of his committee.

Are Georgia legislators uncertain about our constitutional right to keep and bear arms?

H.B. 293 Right to Keep and Bear Arms (a) prohibits interfering with the right to keep/bear arms, (b) prohibits federal encroachment (c) allows civil action, attorney fees/costs.

ACTION – Ask Judiciary Non-Civil Committee Representative Tyler Smith, Ch., 463-7853, why this didn't pass committee.

Why didn't legislators pass this to protect us against intrusive, unacceptable medical control?

H.B. 266 Medical Freedom Act would cancel mandates for vaccination, wearing face masks, COVID passports, or similar requirements.

ACTION – Ask Public Health Committee Representative Cooper, Ch., 404 656-5069, why this didn't pass her committee.

Why didn't legislators see the value of providing MORE safe places for at-risk newborns?

S.B. 187 Safe Place for Newborns adds (a) child-placing agencies and churches as havens for newborns, (b) authorizes DHS to take custody, have a training program and a 24-hour hotline.

ACTION – Ask Children and Families Committee Senator Kirkpatrick, Ch., 656-3932, why this didn't pass out of committee.

Why didn't legislators affirm parental rights to shield children from life-changing procedures?

S.B. 88 Parents and Child Protection Act of 2023 would protect parental authority to choose whether a child is indoctrinated toward sexual re-orientation, sex reassignment and transition.

ACTION – Ask Education and Youth Committee Senator Dixon, Ch., 656-6446, why this didn't pass out of committee

Why didn't legislators value the U.S. Constitution enough to pass this out of committee?

H.B. 443 U.S. Constitution directs the State school board to, yearly, give public school students, in a specified grade, a printed U.S. Constitution during Celebrate Freedom Week.

ACTION – Ask Education Committee Representative Erwin, Ch., 656-0188, why this didn't pass that committee.

Are legislators aware that transitional medical services and sex reassignment are irreversible?

S.B. 140 Surgical Treatment for Gender Dysphoria in Minors would prohibit any surgical procedure on a minor to alter sexual characteristics, including sex reassignment.

S.B. 141 Altering Gender Appearance of Minor prohibit medical services or surgery or medical treatment to affirm a minor's perceived gender or sex and defy natural ID.

ACTION – .S.B. 140 & S.B. 141. Ask Health and Human Services Com, Senator Watson, Ch., 656-7880, why they didn't pass.

Why didn't legislators protect our constitutional right to freedom of speech without censorship?

H.B. 250 Prohibit Social Media Platform Censorship protects the right to receive/express uncensored comments on social media, interactive computer service or other media.

ACTION – Ask Judiciary Committee Representative Gunter, Ch., 404 656-5125, why this didn't pass his committee.

Don't legislators understand the value of keeping Georgia land for domestic use/ownership?

H.B. 246 China, Iran, N. Korea, Russia & Citizens could not have/buy land that may be used for telecommunication, pharmaceuticals, homes, water/fuel, or in 50 miles of a military facility.

ACTION – Ask House Judiciary Committee Representative Gunter, Ch., 404 656-5125, why this didn't pass out of committee.

S.B. 132 Prohibit Nonresident Aliens from Buying or Possessing Certain Land within a 25-mile radius of a military facility, and agricultural land for crops, livestock, poultry, milk or fruit.

ACTION – Ask Veterans, Military, and Homeland Security Committee Senator Dugan, Ch., 656-7872, why this didn't pass.

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