
General Assembly Convened January 9, Scheduled to End March 29

In the first week of the General Assembly legislators passed S.R. 6 to set the 40-day legislative schedule, which is set to end Wednesday, March 29th, but that could change. Interestingly, S.R. 6, also, contains a four-paragraph Part II directing the General Assembly to move from the Capitol if an emergency or disaster makes it impossible to work there. Part II, also, directs the re-convening of the General Assembly in the Capitol after the emergency ends.

Officials Overseeing the Legislative Process

- I. Secretary of the Senate:** David A. Cook is a former senator, whose career as Secretary of the Senate began on July 2, 2013 when his peers first elected him. He has been continually re-elected since, and was re-elected this year. In 1789 the office was created to provide a Secretary to serve concurrently with the senators. He (a) manages and oversees the Office of the Secretary of the Senate and (b) all data¹ and subsequent information published therein. In addition, he (c) assists in producing and updating the Senate Rules (d) while serving on the Senate Administrative Affairs Commission and the Legislative Services Committee.
- II. Lieutenant Governor Presides as President of the Senate.** Burt Jones, elected as the 13th Lieutenant Governor of Georgia in the 2022 election, presides over the Senate and participates in other actions. (a) On January 12th, he and other members of the Assignments Committee (SAC) announced committee chairs for this first year of the current two-year term. (b) Before the session convenes every morning, he and other SAC members meet to decide committee assignments for bills and resolutions being introduced that day. Members of SAC are the Lieutenant Governor, President Pro Tem, Majority Leader and two members appointed by the Lieutenant Governor, who, also, determines the duties of the SAC.
- III. Clerk of the House.** William A. Reilly, the current Clerk of the House, was appointed to that position when Clerk Robbie Rivers retired in 2013 and was, subsequently, elected to that position by the Georgia House of Representatives on January 13, 2014. Previously, he was a juvenile court judge and a 36-year member of the Georgia State Bar. House bills and resolutions, plus multiple documents² originate and are available in the Clerk's Office. The O.C.G.A. and House Rules, which are accessible Online, explain the Clerk's duties.
- IV. Speaker of the House.** On January 9, 2023 – the first day of the session – Jon G. Burns was elected by his peers to preside over the House of Representatives for this two-year term. As Speaker, he (a) appoints committee leaders and members, (b) decides where members sit in the House, (c) assigns office space, (d) upholds House decorum, (e) assigns legislation to committees, (f) calls bills for votes, (g) recognizes speakers on the House floor and (h) enforces House Rules. He (i) does not vote on legislation unless his vote is required.

¹ Senate data: Proposed First Readers, General Calendar, First Readers, Daily Status, Local Calendar, Rules Calendar, Composite Status and Journal. The phone number for the Secretary of the Senate is 404 656-5040.

Governor's Senate Floor Leaders: Senator Bo Hatchett and Senator Mike Hodges

² House documents: Proposed First Readers, General, Local & Rules Calendars, Votes, Daily Status Sheets, Composite, Journal, House Rules, “A Scene from the Gallery,” House video archives & resources. Call the Clerk's Office at 404 656-5015. Governor's House Floor Leaders: Representatives Lauren McDonald, Matthew Gambill, Soo Hong and Will Wade.

General Assembly's House Post Office

House Post Office: House Postal Director Cory Mulkey and his staff will receive and put in legislators' "in-boxes" messages intended for all 180 representatives and/or 56 senators. Also, the House Post Office will receive messages addressed to specific legislators and deliver them, as addressed, to each legislator's Capitol or CLOB office. For other available services, call Postal Director Mulkey at 404 656-0445.

Slow Start This Session

Office assignments, committee assignments and contact numbers for representatives and senators have been slowly published and will be adjusted to accommodate those elected in the January 31st Special Election in House Districts 7, 119 and 172, as well as Senate District 11.

What happens if S.B. 15 or H.B. 75 Passes?

- (a) *Physicians would decide, without parental consent, health care for sexually active minors.*
- (b) *Parents would be stripped of authority over medical care for their sexually active minors.*
- (c) *Medicaid would pay to abort unborn babies of sexually active minors.*
- (d) *Employee insurance and benefits would be required to cover abortion.*

S.B. 15 Production Freedom Act was introduced January 25, 2023 by five Democrats.

H.B. 75 Production Freedom Act, introduced by five Democrats a day later, is S.B. 15's twin.

Details: S.B. 15 and H.B. 75 were introduced to (a) promote, fund, and authorize abortion for any person at any age or stage of pregnancy; (b) exclude unborn babies from the definition of "natural persons;" (c) repeal language in the Parental Notification Act that pertains to abortion; (d) repeal criminal abortion law; (e) remove all references to abortion in O.C.G.A. Title IX; (f) remove every reference to abortion in the education law, O.C.G.A. Title 20, Chapter 1; (g) repeal the Woman's Right to Know Act concerning physicians' obligation to perform abortions; (h) provide fundamental reproductive health rights; (i) prohibit state interference in abortion; (j) provide injunctive relief and damages; (k) repeal insurance coverage that restricts abortion; (l) empower certain nurses and physician assistants to perform abortions; (m) require employee insurance and benefits to cover abortion; (n) remove "dependent minor" status from an unborn child that has a detectable heartbeat; and (o) require Medicaid to fund abortion.

Minors could consent to abortion without parental notification or consent. Both bills allow a physician to declare a pregnant minor "mature and capable of giving informed consent for an abortion." These bills go far beyond Georgia's Family Planning law which provides services to anyone, regardless of status and age. Call and ask the following representatives and senators to (a) oppose these bills and (b) close loop-holes in the decades-old Georgia Family Planning Act.

ACTION – OPPOSE S.B. 15. Contact Judiciary Committee Senators Strickland, Ch., 404 463-6598; Cowsert, V-Ch., 463-1366; Hodges, Sec., mike.hodges@Senate.ga.gov; Gooch, Ex-Officio, 757-9221; Hatchett, 656-7454; Jones II, 656-0036; Kennedy, 656-6578; Parent, 656-5109; Rhett, 656-0054; Setzler, ed.setzler@senate.ga.gov; Watson, 656-7880. All senators are emailed by name as follows: firstname.lastname@senate.ga.gov. (See Senator Setzler.)

ACTION – OPPOSE H.B. 74. Call several members of the Public Health Committee as follows: Representatives Cooper, Ch., 404 656-5069; Washburn, V-Ch., 656-0152; Oliver, Sec., 656-00265; Hawkins, Ex-Officio, 656-7855; Anulewicz, 656-0116; Au, 656-0314; Bennett, 656-0202; Cheokas, 463-7853; Dempsey, 463-2248; Drenner, 656-0202; Fleming, 656-0254; Frye, 636-0265; Gaines, 656-5025; Hilton, 656-0188; Houston, 463-2248; Howard, 656-6372; Hutchinson, 656-0287; LaHood, 656-5105; Lott, 657-1803; Parrish, 463-2246; Pirkle, 656-5912; Reese, 656-0109; Seabaugh, 656-0152; Silcox, 657-1803; Stoner, 656-0220; Taylor, 463-2248.

All representatives may be emailed by name as follows: firstname.lastname@house.ga.gov. (See Senator Setzler above.)

H.B. 1 would Nullify Georgia Heartbeat Law

Review: In November 2022, a Fulton County Superior Court Judge invalidated two abortion restriction sections of Georgia's Heartbeat Law, but they were re-enacted by the Georgia Supreme Court November 23, 2022. Previously pre-filed, H.B. 1 was, officially, introduced on January 13, 2023 to counteract Georgia's re-enacted Heartbeat Law. So, what does H.B. 1 do?

H.B. 1 in a Nutshell

- (a) *H.B. 1 holds Georgia accountable for denying abortions to pregnant women.*
- (b) *Requires Georgia to pay all expenses for carrying the baby to term.*
- (c) *Requires Georgia to fully support mother and child until the baby is age 18.*

H.B. 1 Georgia Pro-Birth Accountability Act, by Representative Dar'shun Kendrick (D-93), shifts responsibility of pregnancy from the woman to the State. It opens with this statement: "A pregnant woman who would be legally allowed to choose to terminate her pregnancy, but for a [Georgia] law prohibiting an abortion upon a detectable human heartbeat of an embryo or fetus, and who is accordingly compelled by the state to carry the pregnancy to term and give birth to a child is entitled to be compensated by the state as provided in Code Section 31-9C-2."

Details: The Department of Human Services (DHS) would process a compensation claim for carrying and delivering an unwanted pregnancy. The General Assembly would establish a separate fund to provide compensation and pay DHS for departmental operational costs. H.B. 1 was assigned to the House Public Health Committee.

ACTION – OPPOSE H.B. 1. Call several Public Health Committee members. Representatives Cooper, Ch., 404 656-5069; Washburn, V-Ch., 656-0152; Oliver, Sec., 656-0265; Hawkins, Ex-Officio, 656-7855; Anulewicz, 656-0116; Au, 656-0314; Bennett, 656-0202; Cheokas, 463-7853; Dempsey, 463-2248; Drenner, 656-0202; Fleming, 656-0254; Frye, 636-0265; Gaines, 656-5025; Hilton, 656-0188; Houston, 463-2248; Howard, 656-6372; Hutchinson, 656-0287; LaHood, 656-5105; Lott, 657-1803; Parrish, 463-2246; Pirkle, 656-5912; Reese, 656-0109; Seabaugh, 656-0152; Silcox, 657-1803; Stoner, 656-0220; Taylor, 463-2248. Email representatives by name as follows: firstname.lastname@house.ga.gov.

O.C.G.A. Definitions

"16-6-9. Prostitution. *A person, 18 years of age or older, commits the offense of prostitution when he or she performs or offers or consents to perform a sexual act, including, but not limited to, sexual intercourse or sodomy, for money or other items of value.*"

"16-6-12. Pandering. *A person commits the offense of pandering when he or she solicits a person to perform an act of prostitution in his or her own behalf or in behalf of a third person or when he or she knowingly assembles persons at a fixed place for the purpose of being solicited by others to perform an act of prostitution.*"

S.B. 36 Penalty for Pimping and Pandering, introduced January 30, 2023 by Senator Randy Robertson of District 29, increases penalties for **pimping** and **pandering** as follows:

(a) A first offense would become a felony punishable by one-to- ten years in prison. (b) The second offense would be punished as a felony and would make *mandatory* year in prison, which could not be suspended, stayed, or probated without agreement of the prosecuting attorney and defendant. Currently, a first offense for **pimping or pandering anyone under age 18** is 10-to-30 years in prison and a fine of \$100,000. Note that the more severe punishment of S.B. 36 for the second offense of prostituting or pimping minors is the *mandatory* year in prison, which is not included in the penalty for the first offense.

ACTION – SUPPORT. Call Public Safety Committee Senators Albers, Ch., 404 463-8055; Robertson, V-Ch., 656-0045; Williams, Sec., 656-0082; Dugan, 656-7872; Goodman, 463-1318; Jackson, 656-6882; Jones II, 656-0036; Payne, 463-5402; Seay, 656-5095.

Doubles Legal Amount of Marijuana

S.B. 30 Possession of Marijuana, introduced January 30, 2023 by Senator Harold Jones II, would legalize the possession of two ounces of this controlled substance. Current Georgia law deems illegal one ounce or less, punishable as a misdemeanor, imprisonment up to 12 months or a \$1,000.00 fine or both. This bill doubles the amount of marijuana that may be purchased, possessed, manufactured, distributed or sold, repeals the phrase, “one ounce or less,” and dilutes the penalty based on the amount of marijuana involved.

ACTION – OPPOSE. Contact Judiciary Committee Senators Strickland, Ch., 404 463-6598; Cowser, V-Ch., 463-1366; Hodges, Sec., mike.hodges@Senate.ga.gov; Gooch, Ex-Officio, 656-9221; Hatchett, 656-7454; Jones II, 656-0036; Kennedy, 656-6578; Parent, 656-5109; Rhett, 656-0054; Setzler, ed.setzler@senate.ga.gov; Watson, 656-7880. All senators are emailed by name as follows: firstname.lastname@senate.ga.gov. (See Senator Setzler.)

Again! ERA Surfaces in Georgia

1975 Georgia Senate defeated ERA 33-22.

1982 Georgia House of Representatives defeated ERA 116-57.

2018 Georgia House Judiciary Committee’s lack of action on H.R. 969 allowed ERA to die.

H.R. 8 Equal Rights Amendment, introduced January 13th by Representative Billy Mitchell urges President Biden to “publish without delay” the following language as the 28th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.”

“Section 1. Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

“Section 2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

“Section 3. This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.”

ERA Repeals Restrictions on Abortion¹

Georgia Heartbeat Law would be repealed.

New Mexico State ERA overturned abortion restrictions, as sex discrimination against women.

State ERA in New Mexico mandated taxpayer funding of elective Medicaid abortions.

Connecticut State ERA overturned abortion restrictions, as sex discrimination against women.

State ERA in Connecticut mandated taxpayer funding of elective Medicaid abortions.

ERA Harms Women

Workplace laws that provide special accommodations for pregnant women would be repealed.

Social Security benefits for stay-at-home mothers based on spousal income would be gone.

Women’s exemption from the military draft and front-line combat would be overturned.

Support for women for alimony, child support, payment of medical bills would be overturned.

Any law providing preferential treatment for women would be deemed discriminatory.

ERA Ignores Biological ID

ERA would remove gender distinctions for bathrooms, locker rooms, jails, hospitals, etc.

ERA won’t erase gender wage gaps. The Equal Pay Act already guarantees women equal pay.

ERA Section 2 transfers large amounts of legislative power from states to Congress.

ACTION – OPPOSE. Call House Judiciary Committee Representatives Gunter, Ch., 404 656-5125; Reeves, V-Ch., 656-0325; Leverett, Sec., 656-0213; DeLoach, Ex-Officio, 656-0178; Smith, Tyler, Ex-Officio, 463-7853; Bruce, 656-7859; Burchett, 656-5024; Crawford, 656-0314; Efration, 656-5052; Evans, 656-0116; Holcomb, 656-6372; Hong, 651-7737; Jones, Todd, 656-9210; Kelley, 656-0188; Oliver, 656-0265; Scoggins, 656-0254; Silcox, 657-1803; Stoner, 656-0221.

¹ Note: ERA supporters rejected the following amendment that would have made ERA abortion-neutral:

“Nothing in this Article shall be construed to grant or secure any right relating to abortion or the funding thereof.”

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