

Georgia insight

Sue Ella Deadwyler
www.georgiainsight.org
“She hath done what she could.”
Mark 14:8a
“...and having done all ... stand.”
Ephesians 6:13c

Proposed: Major Changes in Current Law

Death Penalty Origin

In the year 2348 BC, when Noah and his family exited the ark just after the flood, God created capital punishment in Genesis 9:6¹: “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man.” Later, other crimes were so designated.

Georgia’s first execution was in 1735 AD². Since that time, 1,022 executions have occurred in Georgia. That’s the fifth highest total in the U.S. Treason, aircraft hijacking and murder are death penalty offenses in Georgia. However, murder must be accompanied by aggravating circumstances before the death penalty can be sought. If treason and aircraft hijacking were to be deemed a crime against the state, capital punishment may be an option.

The electric chair was used in Georgia in 1924 and, primarily, until October 5, 2001. After the Supreme Court declared electrocution cruel and unusual punishment, Georgia converted to lethal injection, which remains, currently.

From March 2014 – March 2019, Georgia imposed no death sentence. From 1983 through January 30, 2020, a total of 76 people were executed in Georgia. As of February 3, 2020, 43 men and one woman were/are on death row. The death penalty cannot be imposed without a unanimous jury decision. If a single juror rejects the death penalty, a life sentence is issued.

Clemency power is vested in the Georgia State Board of Pardons and Paroles, whose governor-appointed five members serve with advice and consent of the State Senate.

H.B. 916 Repeal Death Penalty introduced February 19th by Representative Sharon Beasley-Teague would (a) prohibit capital punishment in Georgia and (b) commute the sentence of death to life without parole for inmates currently on death row. Regardless of outrageous or wantonly vile, horrible, or inhuman torture, depravity of mind or aggravated battery to the victim, a death penalty could not be imposed or sought, if H.B. 916 passes as written.

ACTION – Oppose. Contact Judiciary Non-Civil Committee Representatives Efstration, Ch., 404 656-5105; Reeves, V-Ch., 651-7737; Gravley, Sec., 463-8143; Ballinger, 656-7153; Boddie, 656-0109; Cooper, 656-5069; Dickerson, 656-0314; Fleming, 656-5125; Kendrick, 656-0109; McLaurin, 656-0202; Momtahan, 656-0177; Sainz, 656-0177; Setzler, 656-7857; Silcox, 656-3949; Trammell, 656-5058.

Porch Piracy

H.B. 954 Porch Piracy introduced February 20th by Representative Bonnie Rich defines porch privacy as taking, removing, or otherwise appropriating any envelope, bag, package, or other sealed article of another person without the other person’s permission if the act occurs on the porch, steps, or immediate vicinity of any entrance or exit of a dwelling. Violators would be guilty of a felony punishable to one to five years in prison for the first offense. Each set of ten separate pieces of stolen mail addressed to three or more different mailboxes or addresses constitutes a separate and distinct crime, to be punished accordingly.

ACTION – Support. Contact House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee Representatives listed above under H.B. 916.

¹ *The Holy Bible*, King James Version

² Source: Death Penalty Information Center, State and Federal Information

Citizens and Illegal Aliens

The “politically correct” crowd continues the crusade against truth. This time they’re asking citizens of Georgia to replace truth with government-prescribed language by abandoning the term “illegal alien.” Such superficial change would not alter the facts, but may make the designation more palatable to some, although illegal alien remains the accurate term.

H.B. 960 Non-Citizens without Official Documentation Representative Shelly Hutchinson introduced February 20th would have law enforcement officers/agencies and jail personnel to revise their terminology when dealing with illegal aliens during searches and seizures. Current state law is filled with this definition, “Illegal alien means a person who is verified by the federal government to be present in the United States in violation of federal immigration law.” But in its eight pages H.B. 960 deletes from state law the words “illegal alien” wherever they are used and inserts “undocumented person.” Although there is no “punishment” mentioned in H.B. 960, pressure would be certain for violators of Georgia Sheriffs Association guidelines and procedures that would be produced and must be followed if this bill passes.

ACTION – Oppose. Contact Public Safety & Homeland Security Committee Representatives Hitchens, Ch., 404 463-7855; Collins, V-Ch., 656-1803; Lott, Sec., 651-7737; Cooke, 656-0188; Evans, 656-0109; Frazier, 656-0265; Glanton, 657-1803; Gravley, 463-8143; Greene, 656-5105; Holcomb, 656-372; Jackson, 656-0314; Jasperse, 656-5943; Lumsden, 656-5087; Mathis, 656-0152; Petrea, 657-1803; Powell, 463-3793; Taylor, 656-0109; Werkheiser, 463-7857; Williams, 656-0287.

S.R. 818 Only Citizens of the U.S. Have a Right to Vote in Georgia introduced February 25th by Representative Greg Dolezal is a proposed constitutional amendment that clarifies who is eligible to vote in Georgia. If S.R. 818 passes, the following would be on the November ballot:

Shall the Constitution of Georgia be amended so as to clarify that only citizens of the United States shall have a right to vote in elections in the State of Georgia?

ACTION – Support. Contact Senate Government Oversight Committee Senators Bill Heath, Ch., 404 656-3943; Harbin, V-Ch., 656-6484; Parent, Sec., 656-5109; Dolezal, 656-7127; Gooch, 656-9221; Harper, 463-5263; Jordan, 656-6446; Miller, 656-6578; Rahman, 463-1318; Robertson, 463-1318; Seay, 656-5095.

S.B. 409 Permanent Absentee Voter List introduced February 21st by Senator Elena Parent authorizes voters to request absentee ballots for all future regularly scheduled primaries, elections, and runoffs. If this passes, each absentee ballot application prepared by the Secretary of State would contain a place for the voter to choose whether to be on that permanent list or continue asking for an absentee ballot before each election. This may cause more voter fraud.

ACTION – Oppose. Contact Senate Government Oversight Committee Senators listed above under S.R. 818.

S.B. 434 Waste Management; Plastic Bags and Disposable Polystyrene Foam Items by Senator Sally Harrell, was introduced February 25th. By July 1, 2022, “single-use carryout bags” would not be provided or sold at grocery, food service or retail stores. Customers could bring bags, buy paper bags at ten cents per \$25.00 purchase, or take the purchase without a bag. *Plastic bags could continue in use* for certain foods, dry-cleaning, newspapers, trash, meat, seafood, and egg cartons. The Department of Agriculture and county boards of health would enforce compliance. DNR would warn violators the first time and fine them \$50.00 to \$250.00 the second time. Third and subsequent fines would be \$250.00 to \$500.00. Each point-of-sale instance is a separate violation. Violators could be reported on a hotline.

ACTION – Ask legislators to require businesses to furnish paper bags as they did before plastic was adopted. Contact Agriculture and Consumer Affairs Senators Wilkinson, Ch., 404 463-5257; Anderson, V-Ch., 656-5114; Black, 463-6597; Burke, 656-0040; Harper, 463-5263; Heath, 656-3943; Karinshak, 656-0048; Rahman, 463-1318; Sims, 463-5259; Walker, 656-7454.

Protecting Minds and Bodies of Children and Youth

H.B. 1041 Make School Libraries Obscenity Free introduced by Representative Karen Mathiak February 27th closes a gap in Georgia law that forbids dissemination of obscenity to minors in various places, but does not prohibit obscenity in K – 12 school libraries. H.B. 1041 would require the (a) State Board of Education to adopt rules and regulations that prevent access to obscene material from school-provided sources. (b) Local school boards would appoint a committee to review instructional material, including new material and supplemental information in the school library. (c) Upon request, local school boards would provide parental access to written and digital indexes or catalogs about school district curriculum, library materials, electronic data bases and media materials. (d) Filtering standards would be established for school-owned technology used by students at home and in school.

ACTION – Support. Contact Judiciary Non-Civil Committee Representatives Efstration, Ch., 404 656-5105; Reeves, V-Ch., 651-7737; Gravley, Sec., 463-8143; Ballinger, 656-7153; Boddie, 656-0109; Cooper, 656-5069; Dickerson, 656-0314; Fleming, 656-5125; Kendrick, 656-0109; McLaurin, 656-0202; Momtahan, 656-0177; Sainz, 656-0177; Setzler, 656-7857; Silcox, 656-3949; Trammell, 656-5058.

H.B. 1060 Vulnerable Child Protection Act introduced by Representative Ginny Ehrhart February 28th would prohibit health care professionals from performing any practice upon a minor that would be inconsistent with the biological fact that the child is female or male. H.B. 1060 (a) prohibits ten surgical procedures, (b) medication to block puberty or (c) greater than normal doses of testosterone to females or estrogen to males. Violators would be guilty of a felony and could be imprisoned for one to ten years. However, no health care professional would be liable for refusing to perform the prohibited practices. Any individual suffering harm from such practices would be authorized to file a lawsuit against the violator.

ACTION – Support. Call Health & Human Services Committee Representatives Cooper, Ch., 404 656-5069; Newton, V-Ch., 656-0254; Rynders, Sec., 656-6801; Barr, 656-0298; Bennett, 656-0202; Cheokas, 656-0152; Dempsey, 463-2248; Douglas, 656-7859; Drenner, 656-0202; Frye, 656-0265; Gaines, 656-0325; Gordon, 656-0287; Hatchett, 656-5025; Hawkins, 656-7855; Henson, 656-7859; Hogan, 656-0177; Howard, 656-6372; Hutchinson, 656-0287; Jasperse, 656-5943; Jones, 656-0126; Kelley, 656-5024; LaHood, 656-0177; Lott, 651-7737; Mathiak, 656-0298; Mitchell, 656-0126; Parsons, 656-7853; Petrea, 657-1803; Pruett, 656-5143; Schofield, 656-0020; Sharper, 656-0126; Silcox, 656-3949; Stephens, 656-0265; Stephenson, 656-0126; and Tankersley, 656-7855.

H.B. 995 Forming Open and Robust University Minds (FORUM) Act introduced February 24th by Representative Josh Bonner prohibits restricting free speech in campus common areas – outdoor spaces, grassy areas, and walkways. Protected expressive activity includes, but is not limited to, peaceful gatherings for lawful verbal, written, electronic and audio-visual expressive ideas, signage, literature and petition distribution, as well as in-school or invited speakers. No religious, political, or ideological student organization could be denied benefits or privileges available to other student organizations and could not be discriminated against based on their actual or anticipated expressive acts, such as requiring members to affirm and adhere to certain beliefs, standards of conduct or mission purpose.

Lawsuits against violators may provide the aggrieved with injunctive relief, monetary damages, attorneys' fees, court costs and \$5,000 or more. Because the state waives immunity herein, institutions and staff would not be immune from suit or liability.

ACTION – Support. Contact Higher Education Committee Representatives Martin, Ch., 656-5064; Reeves, V-Ch., 651-7737; Kelley, 656-5024; Bentley, 656-0287; Burnough, 656-0116; Clark, 656-0287; Dempsey, 463-2248; Dickey, 463-2246; Dreyer, 656-0265; Dubnik, 656-0213; Ehrhart, 656-0152; Gardner, 656-0265; Holcomb, 656-6372; Holland, 656-0116; Jasperse, 656-5943; Kausche, 656-0116; Knight, 463-2248; Mathiak, 656-0298; Metz, 656-6372; Park, 656-0314; Pirkle, 656-0188; Smyre, 656-0109; Washburn, 656-0152; Wiedower, 656-0325; and Williams 656-0287.

More Legalized Gambling

S.B. 403 Lottery Game of Sports Wagering introduced February 21st by Senator Burt Jones would authorize the creation of a Georgia Mobile Sports Wagering Integrity Commission to operate and manage betting on sports and e-sports, college sporting events, Olympic sports or athletic events, but not for horse racing. Although such gambling would not be available to minors, by age 21 they will have been desensitized to betting's adverse effects. Consider this: *December 18, 2013* Cornell University Professor David Just opined on *CNN*, "The big swindle: In lotteries, the poor are the biggest losers."

April 18, 2014 *The Baltimore Sun* article: "Disadvantaged urban youth may be more likely to be problem gamblers: Link found between gambling, other abuses among Baltimore's youth." A Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health found that gambling often leads to depression, crime, homelessness and joblessness in young adulthood.

April 12, 2016 Lucy Dadayan, Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government, reported: "State Revenues from Gambling: Short-Term Relief, Long-Term Disappointment."

ACTION – Oppose. Call Regulated Industries & Utilities Com. Senators Cowser, Ch., 463-1366; Brass, V-Ch., 463-1376; Kennedy, Sec., 656-0045; Albers, 463-8055; Ginn, 656-4700; Gooch, 656-9221; Harbison, 656 -0074; Henson, 656-0085; Hill, 656-5038; Lucas, 656-0150; Martin, 463-6598; Miller, 656-6578; Mullis, 656-0057; Tippins, 657-0406.

S.R. 821 Sports Betting in Georgia introduced by Senator Burt Jones February 26th would amend *The Constitution of the State of Georgia* Article I, Section 2, Paragraph 8 to authorize operating and regulating sports betting in conjunction with Georgia lotteries. If this passes, a bill such as S.B. 403, outlined on page 3, would be needed for the regulation of sports betting in Georgia. S.R. 821 would make sports betting constitutional, but S.B. 403 would be necessary for its implementation. If S.R. 821 passes by two-thirds vote in both House and Senate, the following question would be on the November ballot:

Shall the Constitution of Georgia be amended so as to authorize sports betting in the state under certain circumstances?

ACTION – Oppose. Call Regulated Industries & Utilities Com. Senators Cowser, Ch., 463-1366; Brass, V-Ch., 463-1376; Kennedy, Sec., 656-0045; Albers, 463-8055; Ginn, 656-4700; Gooch, 656-9221; Harbison, 656 -0074; Henson, 656-0085; Hill, 656-5038; Lucas, 656-0150; Martin, 463-6598; Miller, 656-6578; Mullis, 656-0057; Tippins, 657-0406.

H.B. 997 In-State Tuition for Illegal Aliens introduced February 25th by Representative Kasey Carpenter classifies illegal aliens for in-state tuition if they (a) have a GED or graduated from a Georgia high school, (b) were domiciled in Georgia four years before enrollment, (c) were in the U.S. since or before their 12th birthday, and (d) are not 30 years old when applying to enroll.

ACTION – Oppose. Contact House Higher Education Committee Representatives under H.B. 995 on page 3.

H.R. 1240 Switch to Permanent Daylight Saving Time introduced by Representative Wes Cantrell February 21st urges the federal government to allow state and local governments to release themselves from time zone uniformity. The *Georgia Insight* February Extra included S.B. 351 concerning time-scheduling, as well. However, S.B. 351 cannot be implemented without congressional agreement, even if a majority of Georgians pass it on referendum.

ACTION – Comment to Interstate Cooperation Committee Representatives Clark, Ch., 656-0298; Cooke, V-Ch., 656-0188; Belton, Sec., 656-3947; Bonner, 656-0254; Caldwell, 656-0152; Clark, 656-0287; Davis, 656-0109; Dollar, 463-7853; Dubnik, 656-0213; Dunahoo, 656-0152; Gilliard, 656-7859; Gurtler, 656-0188; Hill, 656-0325; Jones, 656-0178; Kendrick, 656-0109; McClain, 656-0220; McLeod, 656-0220; Metze, 656-6372; Morris, 656-5115; Schofield, 656-0020; Smith, 656-0265; Stovall, 656-0314.

Georgia Insight is a conservative publication financed entirely by its recipients.