

Update from the State Capitol

The Georgia General Assembly reconvened at the State Capitol on Tuesday, March 31, 2026, for the 12th and final week of the 2026 legislative session. We convened in the House Chamber on both Tuesday and Thursday to finish our final legislative session. Notably, we gave final passage to House Bill 974, the state's Fiscal Year 2027 (FY 2027) budget, and by week's end, the House sent a number of additional bills and resolutions to Governor Brian Kemp's desk for his signature or veto, and I will discuss several measures that received final passage during our final week under the Gold Dome.

The General Assembly fulfilled its sole constitutional obligation of the session with the adoption of the conference committee report on HB 974, the FY 2027 budget. The FY 2027 budget is set by a revenue estimate of \$38.5 billion, an increase of \$738 million or 1.95 percent over the FY 2026 budget. Reflected in the budget, the Georgia General Assembly prioritizes early childhood literacy efforts, supports children in the state's foster care system, expands services to Georgians with intellectual or developmental disabilities, bolsters funding to the state's health insurance plan and improves the state's ability to provide regular cost-of-living adjustments to retired state employees.

Another notable action taken this week was the final passage of House Bill 1193, the Georgia Early Literacy Act of 2026, a landmark measure aimed at promoting

and advancing comprehensive early literacy and reading education aligned with the science of reading throughout the state. The Georgia Early Literacy Act of 2026 has now been sent to the governor's desk for consideration and, if signed in to law, would build a comprehensive statewide framework to ensure all Georgia students develop strong reading skills from the earliest grades.

The House also gave final passage to several additional measures aimed at strengthening Georgia's education system and supporting students, families, and educators across the state.

Senate Bill 556 also received final passage and would make several significant updates to Georgia's higher education, student aid, and campus safety policies. The bill would establish the Dedicated Resources to Educationally Advance More Students (DREAMS) Scholarship, a need-based financial aid program for eligible students attending postsecondary institutions in Georgia. Overall, SB 556 aims to expand access to higher education, enhance student safety, and strengthen Georgia's long-term workforce and financial planning systems.

A major priority of the Georgia House this year was addressing insurance affordability by passing House Bill 1344. Drafted based on the findings and recommendations of the House Blue-Ribbon Study Committee on Insurance Rates, HB 1344 would establish the Georgia Insurance Affordability and Claims Integrity Act to

strengthen consumer protections, enhance transparency, and accountability in insurance practices and help stabilize costs for policyholders.

My colleagues and I took an important step during the final week of session to better serve children in Georgia's foster care system with the unanimous passage of Senate Bill 402. SB 402 mirrors House Bill 943, which also received final passage and would establish similar measures to improve support services and outcomes for children in foster care across the state. The program would be rolled out in phases, beginning in select regions and expanding statewide, with a focus on children who may be at higher risk or who are already receiving behavioral health treatment. By prioritizing early identification and support, both SB 402 and HB 943 aim to improve outcomes for children in foster care and ensure that they receive the specialized care and resources they need to thrive.

We also gave final passage to House Bill 1283, the Family Justice Center Act. The measure would authorize the creation of Family Justice Centers—multiagency facilities that provide coordinated services to victims of family violence, sexual assault, child abuse, elder abuse, human trafficking, and related crimes. These centers could be established by a county or municipal government, a district attorney's office or a designated nonprofit, with governance structures based on whether they would be operated by a government entity or a

nonprofit corporation. Importantly, the bill would allow participating law enforcement officers to respond to emergency calls anywhere within a center's service area during emergency circumstances, regardless of jurisdiction. HB 1283 would significantly reduce the burden on victims and ultimately provide a more coordinated, efficient and victim-centered path to support and justice.

Senate Bill 406, or the Georgia Property Owners' Bill of Rights Act, also received final passage this week to improve transparency and accountability for homeowner associations. SB 406 would guarantee homeowners the right to inspect association records and accounting records, require notice before attorney's fees are collected and clarify covenant voting rules. Overall, the bill would improve oversight, preserve the role of homeowners' associations and provide Georgians with greater protections and clearer recourse when disputes arise—ensuring that homeownership remains accessible to everyone.

Senate Bill 587 would help reunite vulnerable individuals with their trusted caregivers in a timely manner. Furthermore, the legislation would create a publicly searchable animal cruelty database to assist animal shelters, protection agencies and other organizations in screening prospective owners and preventing animals from being placed in unsafe environments. SB 587 would ensure that we are taking proactive steps to protect animals from potential harm, while

John Corbett
STATE REPRESENTATIVE



also helping to protect vulnerable Georgians from child and elder abuse.

Recognizing the critical need to protect survivors of childhood sexual abuse, the General Assembly gave final passage to House Bill 1187, also known as Trey's Law, to prohibit the enforcement of any nondisclosure agreements (NDAs) or confidentiality agreements that seek to silence victims of childhood sexual abuse.

On Sine Die, several other notable pieces of legislation also received final passage, including House Bill 334, also known as the Sickle Cell Disease Protection Act. This bill would require the Department of Community Health (DCH) to conduct an annual review of medications, treatments and services for sickle cell disease that are eligible for Medicaid coverage. The bill would also ensure that public input, particularly from those with lived experience, would be solicited and considered during each review.

As a part of a long-standing priority of the House, we adopted

a resolution aimed at improving mental health across our state. House Resolution 713 encourages healthcare providers to help raise awareness of the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, a nationwide resource that connects individuals to mental health and suicide prevention support.

Now that the 2026 legislative session has come to an end, Gov. Kemp will have 40 days to sign or veto legislation that received final passage by the House and Senate this year. Some measures will become state law upon his signature, though some may include a later effective date as specified in the legislation. Any legislation not signed or vetoed within 40 days of Sine Die will automatically become state law. To keep up with which bills the governor signs into law this spring, please click here.

John Corbett of Echols County represents Clinch County in the Georgia House of Representatives.

Advance voting

(Continued from Page 1)

- Governor - Keisha Lance Bottoms, Olu Brown, Amanda Duffy, Geoff Duncan, Jason Esteves, Derrick Jackson, Michael 'Mike' Thurmond.

- Lt. Governor - Josh McLaurin, Nabilah Parkes, Richard Wright.

- Secretary of State - Cam Ashling, Dana Barrett, Penny Brown Reynolds, Adrian Consonery Jr.

- Attorney General - Tanya Miller, Robert 'Bob' Trammell.

- Agriculture Commissioner - Clarence Blalock, Thomas Dean, Ambuj 'A.J.' Jain, DeAndre Mathis, Keisha Sean Waites.

- State School Su-

perintendent - Brett A. Hulme, Jason Moon, Nikki Porcher, Michelle Michi Sanchez, Christian Wise Smith.

- Public Service Commission, District 5 - Craig Cupid, Shelia Edwards, Angelia Pressley.

- U.S. Congress, 8th District - Kelly Esti, Justin M. Lucas.

On the Republican ballot, contested races include:

- U.S. Senate - Earl L. 'Buddy' Carter, Mike Collins, John F. Coyne III, Derek Dooley, Jonathan 'Jon' McCollum.

- Governor - Chris Carr, Clark Dean, Rick Jackson, Burt Jones, Gregg Kirkpatrick, Brad Raffensperger, Tom Williams, Ken Yasger.

- Lt. Governor - David Clark, Greg Dolezal, Steve Gooch, John F. Kennedy, Brent Lynn Nelson-Porter, Takosha Swan, Blake Tillery.

- Secretary of State - Tim Fleming, Vernon Jones, Kelvin King, Ted Metz, Gabriel 'Gabe' Sterling.

- Attorney General - Bill Cowsert, Brian Strickland.

- State School Superintendent - Nelva Lee, Fred 'Bubba' Longgrear, Mesha Mainor, Randell E. Trammell, Richard Woods (I).

- Public Service Commission, District 3 - Fitz Johnson, Brandon Martin.

- Public Service Commission, District 5 - Bobby Mehan, Carolyn Tatum Roddy, Josh Tol-

bert.

- State Senate, 8th District - Russ Goodman (I), Greg Tyre.

- State House, District 176 - James Burchett (I), Michael Dockery.

There are also some non-partisan contests, which will be on all ballots. They are:

- Justice, Supreme Court of Georgia - Charles "Charlie" Bethel (i), Miracle Rankin.

- Justice, Supreme Court of Georgia - Jen Auer Jordan, Sarah Hawkins Warren (i).

- Judge, Court of Appeals of Georgia - Trenton "Trent" Brown (i), Will Wooten.

- Judge, Court of Appeals of Georgia - Fatima Harris Felton, Elizabeth D. Gobeil (i).

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HELP WANTED

Stephen C. Foster State Park in Fargo, GA is now hiring for Administrative Support. Minimum qualifications are a High School Diploma or GED AND ability to perform basic office functions and computer related duties. The entry salary is \$29,020.16. Please go to <https://gadnr.org/careers>. From this page you can view the DNR Vacancy Announcement (pages 14 and 15) and access the DNR Application for Employment. Email applications to Parks6@dnr.ga.gov or bring/mail your completed application to Stephen C. Foster State Park at 17515 GA Highway 177, Fargo, GA. This position is open until filled. Call the park at 912-637-5274 if you have any questions.

The Clinch County Commission is seeking two (2) full-time Equipment Operator I's for the County Road Department. Applications can be picked up at the Board of Commissioners Office at 22 Court Square, Suite B.

Job Duties:

- Loads material and supplies and delivers them to the appropriate work sites.
- Hauls cold patch, gravel, and other road materials.
- Operates small equipment and mowers.
- Performs labor duties as needed.
- Performs other duties as assigned.
- Transports personnel to work sites.
- May operate heavy equipment if needed.
- Maintains equipment and makes routine repairs.
- Cleans all assigned equipment.

Qualifications:
Graduation from high school or GED, with at least two (2) years experience as a light equipment operator. Must possess a valid Georgia Driver's License and a CDL License is desired.

Hours: Monday - Thursday 7:00 am to 5:00 pm; subject to being on-call after hours and on weekends.