

## **GSIPP 2025 Week 7 Legislative Update**

Legislators were in session every day except Tuesday this week for Legislative Days 22 through 25, and Tuesday served as a Committee Work Day. The countdown is on for House and Senate members seeking to get their bills passed during the 2025 Legislative Session—Legislative Day 28, which is Crossover Day, is next Thursday, March 6. Bills that do not successfully make it out of their assigned committee and at least one chamber by the time the legislature adjourns next Thursday are effectively dead this session and must be introduced next session unless their language is successfully attached to a related bill later this year.

### **CRNA Scope of Practice**

On Monday and Tuesday the House Regulated Industries Committee considered [House Bill 251](#) by Representative Laruen McDonald (R-Cumming). On Monday all those in favor of the bill testified. All those opposed to the bill on Tuesday testified in opposition of the bill. The measure would allow certified registered nurse anesthetists to order and administer anesthesia and develop anesthesia plans in coordination with physicians, rather than under their direct supervision. The bill specifies that healthcare facilities can set their own policies regarding anesthesia provision. It also would add a liability clause protecting physicians who are not directly involved with anesthesia delivery from being held liable for the actions of CRNAs who administer anesthesia. An amendment was proposed in committee that would exempt metro Atlanta counties from the provisions of the bill, including Bartow, Clayton, Cobb, Gwinnett, Henry, DeKalb, and Fulton Counties. The amendment failed in committee, and when committee members took a vote on the underlying bill, it failed with 6 members voting for it and 9 against. The members who voted for HB251 are Rep. Lauren McDonald, III (R-Cumming), Rep. Kasey Carpenter (R-Dalton), Rep. David Jenkins (R-Grantville), Rep. Ginny Ehrhart (R-Powder Springs), (R- Rep. Dale Washburn (R-Macon), Michael Smith (D-Marietta).

Watch the hearing with the final vote [here](#).

### **Tort Reform – Governor’ Legislative Priority**

After passing the Senate last week 33 to 21, this week [Senate Bill 68](#), one of Governor Kemp’s tort reform measures, was assigned to the House Rules Committee for consideration. On Wednesday Rules Committee Chairman Butch Parrish (R-Swainsboro) announced the creation of a subcommittee that will focus on the lawsuit reform bills and ensured “we are going to pass substantive, meaningful tort reform this session.” The subcommittee members are as follows:

- Representative Rob Leverett (R-Elberton), Chairman - attorney
- Speaker Pro Tempore Jan Jones (R-Milton)
- Majority Leader Chuck Efration (R-Mulberry) - attorney
- Rules Committee Chairman Butch Parrish (R-Swainsboro)
- Judiciary Committee Chairman Stan Gunter (R-Blairsville) – trial attorney
- Appropriations Committee Chairman Matt Hatchett (R-Dublin)
- Representative Mark Newton (R-Augusta) - doctor
- Representative Al Williams (D-Midway)
- Minority Caucus Whip Sam Park (D-Lawrenceville)
- Minority Caucus Chairman Tanya Miller (D-Atlanta)
- Representative Stacey Evans (D-Atlanta) – trial attorney

On Thursday afternoon the newly created Subcommittee of Rules on Lawsuit Reform held a hearing on Senate Bill 68. President Pro Tempore John Kennedy (R-Macon) presented the bill and noted that nuclear verdicts cost Georgians over \$5,000 per household annually. He also argued that skyrocketing insurance premiums have been driven by Georgia’s legal landscape, forcing businesses to shutter and forcing Georgians to travel farther for healthcare and groceries. The committee meeting was hearing only. The bill will still require a formal vote by the committee to continue to move through the legislative process.

On Thursday the Senate unanimously passed [Senate Bill 69](#), the ‘Georgia Courts Access and Consumer Protection Act.’ The bill, also carried by President Pro Tempore John Kennedy (R-Macon), would regulate third-party litigation financing practices in the state. It would ban hostile foreign adversaries like China and Russia from financing lawsuits against Georgia companies to gain intellectual property or to pursue their own political agendas. It would also prohibit litigation funders from having any input into the litigation strategy or from taking the plaintiff’s whole recovery and making sure plaintiffs are aware of their rights. It would increase transparency when it comes to third party litigation for all parties by requiring any litigation financiers to register with the Georgia Department of Banking and Finance and establishing basic guidelines for litigation funds that protect consumers and plaintiffs. On Friday the legislation was assigned to the House Subcommittee of Rules on Lawsuit Reform for consideration.

## Georgia Healthcare Professionals Data System

This week the Senate passed [Senate Bill 131](#) by Senator Mike Hodges (R-Brunswick) 49 to 1, which would create the Georgia Healthcare Professionals Data System. The system, which would be maintained by the Georgia Board of Healthcare Workforce, would be designed to provide the public with information about the demographics and geographic distribution of healthcare professionals. The Board would collect de-identified data from various state licensing boards regarding licensed healthcare professionals who are actively practicing. Data to be collected would include age, gender, proficiency in English and other languages, location of practice, and license type. The compiled information would be accessible to the public through the Board's website.

The bill now heads to the House for consideration.

### Other healthcare legislation

- [Senate Bill 72](#), the 'Hope for Georgia's Patients Act,' was unanimously passed by the Senate on Monday. The bill by Rules Committee Chairman Matt Brass (R-Newnan) would expand the access of individualized investigational treatments to patients who have severely debilitating or life-threatening illnesses.
- [House Bill 571](#) was introduced by Health Committee Chairman Lee Hawkins (R-Gainesville) this week. The measure, which would provide for the licensing of radiologist assistants, was passed by the House Health Committee on Thursday.
- On Tuesday the House Insurance Committee passed [Senate Bill 5](#) by Senator Kay Kirkpatrick (R-Marietta). The measure would require health insurers to implement and maintain a program that allows for the selective application of reductions in prior authorization requirements. The bill is now eligible for selection by the Rules Committee for a vote on the House floor.
- This week the House Insurance Committee approved [House Bill 170](#) by Representative Karen Mathiak (R-Griffin). The measure would require a 30-day turnaround when a licensed healthcare provider makes a written request to an insurer for payment that has been made for provider services. In her presentation of the bill in the Insurance Committee, the sponsor noted the bill's purpose is to ensure transparency and the responsible disclosure of payments.
- On Tuesday the Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee passed [Senate Bill 162](#) by Senator Chuck Hufstetler (R-Rome), which would require the Georgia Composite Medical Board to implement an automated credentialing system for healthcare providers in Georgia. The measure was approved with an amendment that would change the word 'credentialing' to 'licensing' in several places in the bill.

## **Red Tape Rollback**

On Wednesday the Senate considered [Senate Bill 28](#), the ‘Red Tape Rollback Act of 2025,’ by Senator Greg Dolezal (R-Cumming). The legislation, which is a priority for Lieutenant Governor Burt Jones, would require all state agencies to complete a top-to-bottom review of all agency rules and regulations every four years. Agencies would be required to account for the economic impact of all proposed rules and provide economic reports to the General Assembly when major rules are proposed that would cost individuals, businesses, and/or local governments more than \$1 million over five years. State agencies would also be directed to reduce compliance and paperwork burdens on small businesses, when feasible. Under the measure, legislators would also have the ability to request a “Small Business Impact Analysis” for pending legislation. The measure passed the Senate 33 to 21, and it has been assigned to the House Budget and Fiscal Affairs Oversight Committee for consideration.

## **Lieutenant Governor’s Legislative Priorities**

On Wednesday the Senate approved [Senate Bill 79](#), the ‘Fentanyl Eradication and Removal Act,’ which is a legislative priority for Lieutenant Governor Burt Jones this session. The bill, which is sponsored by Senator Russ Goodman (R-Cogdell), would establish stiffer criminal penalties for fentanyl-related offenses. The measure would remove fentanyl from Georgia’s current statutes relating to possessing, selling, distributing, manufacturing, and trafficking opiates and create a separate schedule of offenses specific to fentanyl and its related substances. Current possession penalties start at 1 gram, but this bill would include fentanyl mixtures with any other drug and consider the entire weight of that mixture under the fentanyl schedule. The legislation was passed on the Senate floor 50 to 3 and now heads to the House for consideration.