

# Summary of Enacted Legislation 2021

Prepared by the Judicial Council/  
Administrative Office of the Courts  
Governmental and Trial Court Liaison



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## FOREWORD

The *Summary of Enacted Legislation* provides summaries of bills and resolutions that are pertinent to the judiciary passed by the 156th Georgia General Assembly during the 2021 Regular Session. This publication organizes the summaries in numerical order based on their subject matter.

The *Summary of Enacted Legislation* is intended to be a convenient reference guide. Please note: a bill summary should not be used as the definitive source of legal interpretation. For detailed information, the Act itself should be examined.

Last, but certainly not least, the Judicial Council/Administrative Office of the Courts would like to thank our 2021 Legislative Intern – Sierra Yao – for her contributions during the legislative session.

## SUMMARY OF THE 2021 REGULAR SESSION

The 2021 Regular Session of the 156th Georgia General Assembly convened on January 11, 2021, and adjourned Sine Die on March 31, 2021. As with the previous session, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic caused significant modification in how the House and Senate conducted business. Despite this, the General Assembly was able to meet without serious interruption and passed legislation spanning a wide range of subject matters, including paid parental leave for state employees, extension of COVID-19 liability protections, and medical marijuana expansion. Additionally, the FY 2022 Budget was able to increase and restore some agency funds that were cut in last year's budget amidst the uncertainty of the pandemic.

A significant number of bills affecting Georgia's judiciary passed, including the state budget for Fiscal Year 2022, continued tolling of statutory speedy trial requirements following a judicial emergency, mediation law uniformity, and multiple proposals developed by the Judicial Council's Judicial COVID-19 Task Force.

To view the summaries of all bills tracked by the Judicial Council/Administrative Office of the Courts, please visit [legislation.georgiacourts.gov](https://legislation.georgiacourts.gov).

To view all bills introduced during the Georgia General Assembly's 2021 session, go to [www.legis.ga.gov/](https://www.legis.ga.gov/). To view the bills signed by the Governor in 2021, visit <https://gov.georgia.gov/2021-signed-legislation>.

# BUDGET

[HB 80 - Supplemental appropriations; State Fiscal Year July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021](#)

**House Author:** Rep. David Ralston (R – Blue Ridge)

**Senate Sponsor:** Sen. Blake Tillery (R – Vidalia)

HB 80 is the Amended Budget for State Fiscal Year 2021 (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021). To view the budget as passed by the General Assembly, please click [here](#).

**Signed by the Governor:** February 15, 2021

**Effective Date:** February 15, 2021

Statewide Common Budget Changes for AFY 2021 include increases to reflect a one-time salary supplement of \$1,000 to full-time state employees with current salaries less than \$80,000 and the restoration of funds for personal services and operating expenses. Highlights of the AFY 2021 budget (state funds) include the following:

## ***Court of Appeals***

### *Court of Appeals*

- Increase funds to provide a one-time salary supplement of \$1,000 to full-time state employees with current salaries less than \$80,000 - **\$36,601**
- Increase funds to reflect the salary and travel/per diem expenses for a temporary judge - **\$114,117**
- Restore funds for personal services and operating expenses - **\$108,185**

### *Georgia State-wide Business Court*

- Increase funds to provide a one-time salary supplement of \$1,000 to full-time state employees with current salaries less than \$80,000 - **\$2,153**
- Increase funds for court mailing costs - **\$1,550**
- Increase funds to reflect the corrected salary for the clerk position - **\$19,949**

- Increase funds for rental expenses - **\$74,221**
- Restore funds for personal services and operating expenses - **\$5,311**

## ***Judicial Council***

### *Council of Accountability Court Judges*

- Increase funds to provide a one-time salary supplement of \$1,000 to full-time state employees with current salaries less than \$80,000 - **\$3,230**

### *Office of Dispute Resolution*

- Increase funds to provide a one-time salary supplement of \$1,000 to full-time state employees with current salaries less than \$80,000 - **\$9,689**

### *Institute of Continuing Judicial Education*

- No changes

### *Judicial Council*

- Increase funds to provide a one-time salary supplement of \$1,000 to full-time state employees with current salaries less than \$80,000 - **\$47,366**
- Increase funds to upgrade and maintain the Georgia Courts Registrar - **\$18,750**

### *Judicial Qualifications Commission*

- Increase funds to provide a one-time salary supplement of \$1,000 to full-time state employees with current salaries less than \$80,000 - **\$1,077**
- Restore funds for personal services and operating expenses - **\$27,228**

### *Resource Center*

- No changes

## BUDGET cont.

### ***Juvenile Courts***

#### *Council of Juvenile Court Judges*

- Increase funds to provide a one-time salary supplement of \$1,000 to full-time state employees with current salaries less than \$80,000 - **\$11,842**

#### *Grants to Counties for Juvenile Court Judges*

- Increase funds for operating expenses from two additional superior court judgeships - **\$25,000**

### ***Superior Courts***

#### *Council of Superior Court Judges*

- Increase funds to provide a one-time salary supplement of \$1,000 to full-time state employees with current salaries less than \$80,000 - **\$7,536**
- Restore funds for personal services and operating expenses - **\$4,285**

#### *Judicial Administrative Districts*

- Increase funds to provide a one-time salary supplement of \$1,000 to full-time state employees with current salaries less than \$80,000 - **\$9,689**
- Increase funds for regular operating expenses - **\$46,518**

#### *Superior Court Judges*

- Increase funds to provide a one-time salary supplement of \$1,000 to full-time state employees with current salaries less than \$80,000 - **\$251,901**
- Eliminate one-time funds for equipment set-up costs for one judgeship in the Griffin Circuit - **(\$15,125)**
- Eliminate one-time funds for equipment set-up costs for one judgeship in the Gwinnett Circuit - **(\$15,125)**
- Increase funds for senior judge usage to assist with pandemic-related case backlog - **\$93,096**
- Restore funds for personal services and operating expenses - **\$330,008**

### ***Supreme Court***

#### *Supreme Court of Georgia*

- Increase funds to provide a one-time salary supplement of \$1,000 to full-time state employees with current salaries less than \$80,000 - **\$31,219**
- Increase personal services to add one new justice - **\$14,560**
- Restore funds for personal services and operating expenses - **\$85,454**

[HB 81 - General appropriations; State Fiscal Year July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022](#)

**House Author:** Rep. David Ralston (R – Blue Ridge)

**Senate Sponsor:** Sen. Blake Tillery (R – Vidalia)

HB 81 is the Budget for State Fiscal Year 2022 (July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022). To view the budget as passed by the General Assembly, please click [here](#).

**Signed by the Governor:** May 10, 2021

**Effective Date:** May 10, 2021

Statewide Common Budget Changes for FY 2021 include increases to reflect the restoration of personal reductions. Highlights of the FY 2021 budget (state funds) include the following:

### ***Court of Appeals***

#### *Court of Appeals*

- Increase funds for hardware and software costs - **\$254,000**
- Eliminate funds for one-time funding for cyber security insurance - **(\$75,000)**
- Eliminate funds for one-time funding for the Cyber Security Operations Center - **(\$55,000)**
- Increase funds for cyber security insurance - **\$43,000**
- Increase funds for Cyber Security Operations Center - **\$40,506**

## BUDGET cont.

- Increase funds for one-time funding to continue development of the Case Management System - \$97,500
- Increase funds to annualize rent - \$97,063
- Increase funds to reflect the salary and travel/per diem expenses for a temporary judge - \$117,069
- Increase funds to restore personnel reductions - \$216,370
- Increase funds for grants for legal services for domestic violence - \$175,000
- Increase funds for grants for legal services for Kinship Care Families - \$250,000
- Increase funds for the Georgia Courts Registrar - \$75,000
- Increase funds for one-time matching funds for the Child Support Collaborative Grant - \$21,600

### *Georgia State-wide Business Court*

- Increase funds to annualize costs for one clerk position - \$19,949
- Increase funds to annualize costs for one judgeship and staff - \$70,871
- Increase funds to annualize court mailing costs - \$3,200
- Increase funds for contracts - \$59,986
- Increase funds for rent - \$124,600
- Increase funds to restore personnel reductions - \$10,621

### **Judicial Council**

#### *Council of Accountability Court Judges*

- No changes

#### *Office of Dispute Resolution*

- No changes

#### *Institute of Continuing Judicial Education*

- No changes

#### *Judicial Council*

- Increase funds for the operation of the Weighted Caseload project - \$236,113
- Increase funds for the operation of the Juvenile Data Exchange Program - \$243,945

### *Judicial Qualifications Commission*

- Increase funds for two attorney positions - \$251,114
- Increase funds to restore personnel reductions - \$3,795

### *Resource Center*

- No changes

### **Juvenile Courts**

#### *Council of Juvenile Court Judges*

- No changes

#### *Grants to Counties for Juvenile Court Judges*

- Increase funds for operations from two additional superior court judgeships - \$25,000
- Increase funds for personnel to reflect an adjustment in the employer contribution rate for the Judicial Retirement System from 8.38% to 8.81% - \$34,051
- Increase funds related to the creation of the Columbia County Judicial Circuit - \$25,000

## BUDGET cont.

### *Superior Courts*

#### *Council of Superior Court Judges*

- Increase funds to restore personnel reductions - \$8,569

#### *Judicial Administrative Districts*

- Increase funds for operations - \$186,074

#### *Superior Court Judges*

- Increase funds to reflect an increase in the employer contribution rate for the Judicial Retirement System from 8.38% to 8.81% - \$125,193
- Increase funds for the costs of one additional judgeship in the Ogeechee Judicial Circuit created by HB786 (2020 Session), effective January 1, 2022 - \$198,790
- Increase funds for the costs of one additional judgeship in the Flint Judicial Circuit created by HB786 (2020 Session), effective January 1, 2022 - \$198,790
- Increase funds for the costs of one additional judgeship in the Cobb Judicial Circuit created by HB786 (2020 Session), effective January 1, 2022 - \$198,790
- Increase funds for personnel to eliminate the equivalent of six furlough days for employees making over \$100,000 - \$706,534
- Increase funds for Senior Judge general usage from the current allocation of 0.75 days - \$523,392
- Increase funds for Westlaw online legal research - \$74,689
- Eliminate funds for one-time funding for equipment set-up costs for one judgeship in the Gwinnett Circuit created by HB21 (2019 Session) - (\$30,250)
- Eliminate funds for one-time funding for equipment set-up costs for one judgeship in the Griffin Circuit created by HB21 (2019 Session) - (\$30,250)
- Increase funds for Law Clerks for judges without any, prioritizing multi-county circuits - \$2,351,578

### *Supreme Court*

#### *Supreme Court of Georgia*

- Increase funds for personnel for positions frozen per HB793 (2020 Session) - \$50,776
- Increase funds for information technology - \$97,500
- Increase funds for supplies and materials - \$67,428
- Increase funds for building maintenance and repairs - \$26,654
- Increase funds for rent - \$516,253
- Increase funds for population-based membership dues for the National Center for State Courts - \$220,328
- Increase funds to restore personnel reductions - \$170,908
- Increase funds for an IT support position - \$95,698

## COMPENSATION/RETIREMENT

[HB 488 – Courts; increase minimum compensation for chief magistrates and others; provide](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Mitchell Scoggins (R – Cartersville)

**Senate Sponsor:** Sen. Chuck Payne (R – Dalton)

HB 488 amends Title 15 of the OCGA to increase the minimum salary and compensation of chief magistrates and clerks of the magistrate courts starting January 1, 2022. The bill additionally provides for the calculation of future minimum compensation.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 4, 2021

**Effective Date:** May 4, 2021

[HB 709 – Waycross Judicial Circuit; Superior Court judges; increase salary supplement](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Dominic LaRiccica (R – Douglas)

HB 709 increases the supplements each county gives to each judge of the Waycross Judicial Circuit and provides that the division of payment among the six counties must not be less than the following amounts for each judge: Bacon County must pay \$490 per month, Brantley County must pay \$590 per month, Charlton County must pay \$490 per month, Coffee County must pay \$1,000 per month, Pierce County must pay \$590 per month, and Ware County must pay \$1,000 per month.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 3, 2021

**Effective Date:** May 3, 2021

# CRIMINAL

## [HB 94 – Crimes and offenses; provide for the crime of theft by possession of stolen mail](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Bonnie Rich (R – Suwanee)  
**Senate Sponsor:** Sen. John Kennedy (R – Macon)

HB 94 creates a felony crime of “theft by possession of stolen mail.” A person commits this offense if he or she possesses stolen mail addressed to three or more different addresses and possesses a minimum of ten separate pieces of stolen mail. Each set of ten separate pieces of stolen mail, addressed to three or more different mailboxes or addresses, constitutes a separate and distinct crime.

The bill also creates the felony crime of “porch piracy.” A person is guilty of the crime if he or she takes or removes three or more envelopes, bags, packages, or other related items of another person from that person’s porch, steps, or immediate entranceway without permission from at least three different addresses.

Both new offenses are punishable by one to five years in prison, though the judge retains discretion to punish either crime as a misdemeanor.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 10, 2021  
**Effective Date:** July 1, 2021

## [HB 231 – Crimes and offenses; victims of stalking; expand applicability of protective orders](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Houston Gaines (R – Athens)  
**Senate Sponsor:** Sen. Brian Strickland (R – McDonough)

HB 231 expands temporary protective orders (TPOs) to cover instances of dating violence, which includes felonies, simple battery, battery, simple assault, and stalking, so long as it is between two people through whom a current pregnancy has developed or who are currently in a dating relationship or have been in a dating relationship within the last six months. The bill defines “dating relationship” as a committed romantic relationship with a level of intimacy above friends. The definition does not require sexual involvement. Within ten days from the filing of a motion, a hearing

shall be held at which time the petitioner must prove his or her allegations by a preponderance of the evidence. The court shall use the specifically listed determinants that confirm the existence of a dating relationship and may grant any protective order or approve any consent agreement to end the dating violence, excluding mutual protective orders that do not meet outlined requirements.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 10, 2021  
**Effective Date:** July 1, 2021

## [HB 236 – Domestic relations; additional monitoring of victim after granting of a temporary protective order; provide](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Yasmin Neal (D – Jonesboro)  
**Senate Sponsor:** Sen. Randy Robertson (R – Cataula)

HB 236 amends Article 1 of Chapter 13 of Title 19 of the OCGA to allow victims with granted protective orders to petition for additional security monitoring from their local law enforcement agencies, including safety checks of the outside of the petitioner’s residence and an officer’s presence nearby the petitioner’s residence. These periodic safety checks will last for 60 days and occur at the frequency of the local agency’s discretion. The monitoring may be terminated at the petitioner’s request or at the determination of local law enforcement.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 4, 2021  
**Effective Date:** May 4, 2021

## [HB 255 – Sexual Assault Reform Act of 2021; enact](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Scott Holcomb (D – Atlanta)  
**Senate Sponsor:** Sen. John Albers (R – Roswell)

HB 255 creates the ‘Sexual Assault Reform Act of 2021’ and requires a judicial circuit’s sexual assault protocol committee to submit an annual certification of compliance to the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council. The committee must also notify the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia of any noncompliant judicial circuits. The bill also declares

## CRIMINAL cont.

that it is a victim's right not to immediately report an alleged sexual assault and that the law enforcement agency with proper jurisdiction shall maintain certain physical evidence for at least 12 months from the date of collection.

HB 255 also creates a statewide sexual assault kit tracking system for use by the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council. The system is expected to track the location and status of sexual assault kits as they move through the criminal justice process, designate the kits as unreported or reported, allow law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, medical facilities that perform sexual assault forensic examinations, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, and other entities with custody of sexual assault kits to update and track the status of the kit, allow victims of sexual assault to anonymously track the status of their kits, and use technology to allow continuous access. This system may use a phased implementation process, but all entities having custody of kits must fully participate in the system by one year from the effective date of the bill.

The Criminal Justice Coordinating Council shall also be required to submit a status report on the launch of the system and its implementation plan to both the appropriate legislative committees and the Governor by January 1, 2022. Additional reports on the status of the sexual assault kit tracking system shall be submitted twice a year and include certain data, such as the total number of kits used to conduct forensic medical examinations, the number of sexual assault kits reported to law enforcement, the average time that law enforcement collects reported sexual assault kits, the number of kits created for reported cases that advance for forensic testing, the number of kits that complete forensic testing, the number of sexual assault kits not reported to law enforcement, and the jurisdictions of which kits have not been submitted to the Division of Forensic Services of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation. Public agencies, public entities, and hospitals providing services to victims of sexual assault will not be liable for civil damages due to a release of information or failure to release information related to the sexual assault kit tracking

system, with the exception of gross negligence.

Furthermore, HB 255 requires each law enforcement agency in the state to enter required information into the FBI's national database of the Violent Criminal Apprehension Program for any investigations of an allegation of rape, aggravated sodomy, or aggravated assault with intent to rape, in which the alleged perpetrator is unrelated to the victim or is known to be a serial sexual offender. This provision applies retroactively to all pending investigations that meet the listed criteria, with the exception of offenses involving a victim between the ages of 14 and 16 and an alleged offender of 18 years old or younger, so long as the alleged offender is not more than four years older than the victim. Alleged perpetrators may petition a court to remove his or her collected information from the databases, and the court is to order a hearing to consider all evidence introduced by the petitioner, the investigating law enforcement agency, and other parties.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 6, 2021

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2021

[HB 258 – Crimes and offenses; response to State v. Williams, 2020 Ga. LEXIS 85; provisions](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Steven Sainz (R – Woodbine)

**Senate Sponsor:** Sen. Sheila McNeill (R – Brunswick)

HB 258 amends Chapter 6 of Title 16 of the OCGA to clarify that the consent of an alleged victim under 16 years old is not a defense to offenses of sodomy, aggravated sodomy, child molestation, aggravated child molestation, sexual battery, and aggravated sexual battery. The bill provides an exemption if the victim is at least thirteen years old, the accused is no older than eighteen, and the age gap between the two is no more than four years.

**Signed by the Governor:** April 21, 2021

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2021

## CRIMINAL cont.

### [HB 327 – Organized Retail Crime Prevention Act; enact](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Martin Momtahan (R – Dallas)  
**Senate Sponsor:** Sen. John Albers (R – Roswell)

HB 327, entitled the Organized Retail Crime Prevention Act, adds several requirements for the resale of gift cards by merchants who specialize in the sale of gift cards that are not authorized by the corporate issuer nor its agent, defining these merchants as “third-party card dealers.”

HB 327 makes it a misdemeanor for a third-party card dealer, its agents, or its employees to knowingly fail to make an entry of any material matter in the records, make any false entry, falsify, destroy, or remove the records, refuse to allow an authorized law enforcement agent to inspect the records or any stored value card, or fail to maintain a record of each required transaction for at least three years.

HB 327 also creates the felony offense of organized retail theft. This is defined as a person intentionally organizing others to steal property of a store for purposes of reselling that property for monetary gain. The aggregate value of the property must be \$25,000 or more, and the property must be placed in control of a retail property fence for resale or intended resale. The punishment for the crime is imprisonment of between three to twenty years, a maximum fine of \$50,000, or both.

Finally, the bill clarifies that retail property is not required to be a new item and states that a plea of nolo contendere to the offense of shoplifting counts as a conviction for the purposes of sentencing repeat offenders.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 4, 2021  
**Effective Date:** July 1, 2021

### [HB 363 – Crimes and offenses: protection of elder persons; revise definitions](#)

**House Author:** Rep. John LaHood (R – Valdosta)  
**Senate Sponsor:** Sen. Brian Strickland (R – McDonough)

HB 363 removes various subsections of Title 16 of the OCGA that escalate punishment for elder crimes. The bill further creates the terminology “abuse of access,” defined as illegally taking resources that belong to a disabled adult or elder person when the access to said resources were obtained due to the disabled/elder’s incapacity. “Abuse of access” is additionally included the definition of “exploit.”

**Signed by the Governor:** May 4, 2021  
**Effective Date:** July 1, 2021

### [HB 367 – Controlled substances; Schedules I, II, III, IV, and V; change certain provisions](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Butch Parrish (R – Swainsboro)  
**Senate Sponsor:** Sen. Dean Burke (R – Bainbridge)

HB 367 amends Chapter 13 of Title 16 of the OCGA as part of the annual drug schedule update to make Georgia state law consistent with federal law. The bill adds N-substituted benzimidazole structural class and its derivatives to a list of Schedule I controlled substances, and further adds various drugs to other drug schedules. The bill adds 60 drugs to the list of dangerous drugs, and removes the drugs Brexanolone, Cenobamate, and Lasmiditan from this list.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 4, 2021  
**Effective Date:** May 4, 2021

### [HB 479 – Criminal procedure; revise certain arrest powers; provisions](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Bert Reeves (R – Marietta)  
**Senate Sponsor:** Sen. Bill Cowsert (R – Athens)

HB 479 repeals the citizen’s arrest statute (Article 4 of Chapter 4 of Title 17 of the OCGA) and further revises certain arrest powers of both law enforcement officers outside of their jurisdiction and private citizens seeking to detain an individual.

Law enforcement officers may make an arrest for an offense outside of their jurisdiction without a warrant if the offense is committed in an officer’s presence

## CRIMINAL cont.

or within an officer's immediate knowledge, when in immediate pursuit of an offender for an offense committed within the officer's jurisdiction, or while assisting another law enforcement officer in the jurisdiction of the other officer.

Owners and employees of retail establishments may detain an individual if they have reasonable grounds to believe that the individual committed, or attempted to commit, theft by shoplifting, refund fraud, or theft by unlawful use of receipts or Universal Product Code labels. The owner of any business entity operating on their own property or on the property of others on which they are doing business, may detain an individual if they have reasonable grounds to believe that the individual committed, or attempted to commit, theft by taking, or theft of services. Weight inspectors under the motor carrier compliance division of the Department of Public Safety may detain individuals when needed for purposes of his or her duties. Licensed or registered private detectives or private security businesses may similarly detain individual. Should any of these private persons detain an individual, they must either release the individual or contact law enforcement within a reasonable time. Any individual detained by these private persons who is not released shall be surrendered to a law enforcement officer with their personal belongings in the custody of the law enforcement agency.

This bill is not to be construed to limit or alter any immunity or defense provided within Article 2 of Chapter 3 of Title 16 of the OCGA. With the exception of circumstances involving the use of force in defense of self or others, involving use of force in defense of habitation, or involving use of force to prevent the commission of a forcible felony, private citizens who detain an individual shall not use force intended or likely to cause great bodily harm or death. They may, however, use reasonable force to the extent reasonably believed to be necessary to detain the individual. HB 479 further amends Code Section 51-7-60 to conform to the provisions created by the bill.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 10, 2021  
**Effective Date:** May 10, 2021

[HB 534 – Crimes and offenses: promoting illegal drag racing and laying drags: provide for offense](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Josh Bonner (R – Fayetteville)  
**Senate Sponsor:** Sen. Emanuel Jones (D – Decatur)

HB 534 makes promoting, organizing, or participating in illegal drag racing or laying drags, and reckless stunt driving a misdemeanor of a high and aggravated nature. Anyone convicted of reckless stunt driving shall have their license suspended. The bill outlines the conditions regarding such license suspensions and the associated reinstatements. Subsequent convictions of these offenses within a ten-year period may result in increased punishment including seizure of the associated motor vehicle.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 3, 2021  
**Effective Date:** May 3, 2021

[HB 562 – Criminal procedure; add DFCS case managers to people for whom arrest warrants may be issued only by certain judicial officers](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Kasey Carpenter (R – Dalton)  
**Senate Sponsor:** Sen. Brian Strickland (R – McDonough)

HB 562 amends Article 3 of Chapter 4 of Title 17 of the OCGA to add Division of Family and Child Services (DFCS) case managers to the list of individuals for whom arrest warrants may only be issued by judges of a superior court, state court, or probate court. The bill additionally allows for a prosecutor, in any criminal case in which there is a jury trial, to move for a change of venue in writing should the prosecutor determine that an impartial jury cannot be obtained in the county where the alleged crime was committed and either a previous prosecutor has recused himself or herself, been disqualified, or been removed from the cause for cause, or a local government official has publicly released prejudicial information that has the potential to taint the local jury pool. The judge may transfer the case to any county that is agreed upon by both the defendant and prosecutor.

## CRIMINAL cont.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 3, 2021

**Effective Date:** May 3, 2021

[SB 78 – Invasion of Privacy: prohibition on electronically transmitting or posting nude or sexually explicit photographs or videos for purposes of harassing the depicted person; revise](#)

**Senate Author:** Sen. Harold Jones II (D – Augusta)

**House Sponsor:** Rep. Tyler Paul Smith (R – Bremen)

SB 78 amends Part 3 of Article 3 of Chapter 11 of Title 16 of the OCGA to create a felony crime for posting a sexually explicit photograph or video to a website, file sharing site, or message board that depicts sexually explicit conduct resulting in harassment or financial loss and serves no legitimate purpose to the depicted person. Proliferating this content through electronic means is punishable by a high and aggravated misdemeanor offense. The felony crime is punishable for a first offense by imprisonment of between one to five years, a fine of \$100,000, or both. A second or subsequent conviction of the felony crime is punishable by imprisonment of between two to five years, a fine of \$100,000, or both.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 4, 2021

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2021

[SB 85 – “Max Gruver Act”; enact](#)

**Senate Author:** Sen. John Albers (R – Roswell)

**House Sponsor:** Rep. Mandi Ballinger (R – Canton)

SB 85 amends the definition of “hazing” to include coercing a student through the use of social or physical pressure to consume any food, liquid, alcohol, drug, or other substance that would put the student at risk of vomiting, intoxication, or unconsciousness. The definition of “school organization” is also amended to include associations, corporations, orders, and athletic teams that have students or alumni as its principal members, including local affiliate organizations. The definition of “student” is additionally expanded to include prospectively enrolled students within Georgia schools. Hazing students in connection with

a school organization is punishable by a misdemeanor of a high and aggravated nature.

SB 85 requires that by July 1, 2021, applicable colleges must establish policies that provide for reporting, investigation, due process, and adjudication of alleged hazing incidents between students and student organizations. Adjudications of hazing or hazing-related convictions shall be made publicly available within 15 days from the final adjudication. The mandated reporting must include the name of the school organization that was involved, the date of the hazing incident, and a description of the findings, sanctions, adjudications, and convictions for any person or school organization. The information will be required to be posted prominently on the school’s website for at least five years, although personal identifying information of an individual student is exempted from the public disclosure requirement in compliance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

**Signed by the Governor:** May 3, 2021

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2021

[SB 105 – State-Wide Probation System; conditions and procedures under which probation may be terminated early; revise](#)

**Senate Author:** Sen. Brian Strickland (R – McDonough)

**House Sponsor:** Rep. Tyler Paul Smith (R – Bremen)

SB 105 revises the conditions, procedures, and provisions on behavioral incentive dates (BID) and reporting for the early termination of probation. The bill requires that the Department of Community Supervision (DCS) report to the prosecuting attorney and court within 60 days of the expiration of a behavioral incentive date if the defendant has paid all restitution owed, not had his or her probation revoked in the preceding 24 months or other applicable period and has not been arrested for anything other than a non-serious traffic offense. Should the court or prosecuting attorney request a hearing on the matter

## CRIMINAL cont.

within 30 days of the termination order, then the court must set that matter for a hearing as soon as possible and within 90 days after receiving the order to terminate.

Furthermore, SB 105 requires a BID to be included in all sentencing orders involving a situation where person with no prior felony convictions was convicted of or charged with a felony offense and was sentenced pursuant to subsections (a) or (c) of Code Section 16-3-2 or Article 3 of Chapter 8 of Title 42 of the OCGA, and the court imposed a probation or a sentence of 12 or less months of imprisonment followed by a term of probation. If a BID is not included in the order, the timeframe defaults to three years from when the sentence was imposed.

SB 105 also mandates that when a court receives a petition to shorten the period of active probation supervision or unsupervised probation, it must schedule the hearing for as soon as possible and within 90 days after receiving the motion. Additionally, when a report is required to be filed due to a probationer serving three years of his or her sentence, the report must then address both whether the probationer has had his or her probation revoked in the preceding 24 months and the status of the probationer's payments towards any restitution. Should DCS recommend early termination of the probation in its written report, it must notify the prosecuting attorney and simultaneously provide the court with an order to terminate such probation. The court must hear the matter as soon as possible and within 90 days after receiving the order to terminate.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 3, 2021

**Effective Date:** May 3, 2021

[SB 117 – Department of Human Services: offenses of improper sexual contact by employee or agent in the first and second degrees; revise](#)

**Senate Author:** Sen. Butch Miller (R – Gainesville)

**House Sponsor:** Rep. Houston Gaines (R – Athens)

SB 117 creates a new definition for a “person in a position of trust” as a person whom a parent, guardian, or person standing in loco parentis of a minor, has entered into an agreement with and which entrusts that individual with the responsibility of both education and supervision of that minor. The position of trust status lasts only until the agreement has been satisfied or terminated, and the minor is not under the supervision of the individual.

SB 117 also creates a crime for “improper sexual contact by a person in a position of trust” with the first-degree offense occurring when an individual who is in a position of trust engages in “sexually explicit conduct” with a minor and that individual has entered into an agreement that entrusts the individual with the responsibility of both education and supervision of the minor. The first degree of the offense is punishable by imprisonment between one to 25 years and a maximum fine of \$100,000, in addition to further punishment as a sexual offender. If the minor is under years old, then the offense is punishable by imprisonment of between 10 to 30 years and a maximum fine of \$100,000, in addition to further punishment as a sexual offender. If the minor is under 16 years old and the act physically injures the minor or involves an act of sodomy, then the punishment is further escalated to imprisonment of between 25 to 50 years and a maximum fine of \$100,000, in addition to further punishment as a sexual offender.

The bill also creates a second degree of the crime for “improper sexual contact by a person in a position of trust” which is committed when that individual is in a position of trust and engages in “sexual contact”, not including “sexually explicit conduct”, with a minor and that individual has entered into an agreement that entrusts the individual with the responsibility

## CRIMINAL cont.

of both education and supervision of the minor. The second degree of the crime is punishable by a high and aggravated misdemeanor. If the minor is under 16 years old, then the punishment is escalated to imprisonment of between five and 25 years and a maximum fine of \$25,000, in addition to being subject to further punishment as a sexual offender. On a second, or subsequent, conviction of the second degree of the crime, then the defendant will be guilty of a felony that results in imprisonment for between one to five years, in addition to further punishment as a sexual offender.

SB 117 provides a list of offenses which are considered “dangerous sexual offenses” for convictions after June 30, 2021 and provides that any person who commits the crime of improper sexual contact by a person in a position of trust is not allowed visitation with any minor unless the minor is a direct family member and not a victim of the inmate’s sexual offense. Improper sexual contact by a person in a position of trust is also added to the list of crimes that prohibit an applicant from obtaining a license to operate a child welfare agency.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 6, 2021

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2021

[SB 174 – Bonds and Recognizances: appointed judges who are fulfilling a vacancy of an elected judge to issue an unsecured judicial release under certain circumstances; authorize](#)

**Senate Author:** Sen. Steve Gooch (R – Dahunega)

**House Sponsor:** Rep. Steven Sainz (R – Woodbine)

SB 174 allows appointed judges that are fulfilling a vacancy of an elected judge to issue an unsecured judicial release for qualifying individuals. The definition of “unsecured judicial release” is revised to clarify that it is a release that does not have a dollar amount required to be secured, and that it is either on a person’s own recognizance or for purposes of entering a qualifying pretrial program.

SB 174 adds the felony offenses of burglary, entering an

automobile with intent to commit theft or felony, and stalking to the definition of “bail restricted offense.” The misdemeanor offenses of crimes involving family violence, as defined in Code Section 19-13-1, and stalking are also added to the definition of “bail restricted offense.”

**Signed by the Governor:** May 4, 2021

**Effective Date:** May 4, 2021

[SB 235 – Offenses Against Public Order; offense of wearing a mask, hood, or device which conceals the identity of the wearer; revise](#)

**Senate Author:** Sen. Ben Watson (R – Savannah)

**House Sponsor:** Rep. James Burchett (R – Waycross)

SB 235 amends Article 2 of Chapter 11 of Title 16 of the OCGA to clarify that a mask wearer must intend to conceal their identity to be guilty of misdemeanor. The bill also provides an exception for the misdemeanor crime of wearing a mask in public for masks worn in compliance with health provider or agency orders to curb the spread of infectious diseases.

**Signed by the Governor:** April 21, 2021

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2021

## CIVIL

[HB 90 – Torts; certain persons, firms, or corporations who are buyers of land for conversion of timber shall be exempt from certain liabilities; provide](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Bruce Williamson (R – Monroe)  
**Senate Sponsor:** Sen. John Kennedy (R – Macon)

HB 90 amends Article 3 of Chapter 12 of Title 51 of the OCGA to specify the damages that individuals holding a security in land can seek when the land is converted without their consent. The bill creates uniformity with the Uniform Commercial Code by covering harvested timber as business personal property and specifying that a buyer in the ordinary course of business shall not have liability.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 7, 2021

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2021

[HB 112 – Torts; provide certain immunities from liability claims regarding COVID-19; extend applicability for one year](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Trey Kelley (R – Cedartown)  
**Senate Sponsor:** Sen. Brian Strickland (R – McDonough)

HB 112 extends immunities from COVID-19 liability claims provided for by the Georgia COVID-19 Pandemic Business Safety Act from July 14, 2021, to July 14, 2022.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 4, 2021

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2021

[HB 154 – Domestic relations; protection of children; strengthen, clarify, and update provisions](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Bert Reeves (R – Marietta)  
**Senate Sponsor:** Sen. Bo Hatchett (R – Cornelia)

HB 154 clarifies and updates the Code regarding statutory adoption provisions. The bill clarifies the venue alternatives when a child is placed for adoption with an out-of-state resident. The exception to the general venue rule applies when a child is placed in accordance with the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) or when the petitioner is a resident of another country. HB 154 reduces the

statutory age at which a person is allowed to petition for adoption from 25 to 21 years old. The bill clarifies that adoption petitioners are not subject to the requirements of the ICPC when the ICPC's relative exception applies or when the petitioners are residents of another country. Further, the bill clarifies the deadline for submitting a revocation and the method for doing so.

HB 154 modifies various sections relating to the process and authorization of the use of certified mail, including when service is upon a parent and when state law does not require a surrender or termination of parental rights, or when state law authorizes the termination of a parent's rights based on certain circumstances. The bill allows the required search of the putative father registry to be performed after the adoption petition is filed and the results to be attached as an amendment to the petition. It also requires the petitioner to request the appointment of an investigator to verify the allegations in the adoption petition if the court fails to appoint one. HB 154 allows non-resident petitioners to appear for the final hearing via electronic means if the petition for adoption is uncontested. The bill also clarifies the naming conventions to be used and to appropriately preserve anonymity in the event that there are appeals for adoption petitions. HB 154 also provides for the court to determine whether a sufficient amount of evidence has been provided to show that a child has a viable path to lawful permanent resident status, if not already attained, rather than if the child will be able to obtain lawful permanent resident status when examining the evidence for a child born in a foreign country.

HB 154 creates a tort claim under Georgia law, as well as a felony crime to address scenarios where individuals intentionally misrepresent a pregnancy, or their intention to place a child for adoption, when the individual is not pregnant. The felony crime shall be punishable by imprisonment of between one to ten years, a maximum fine of \$10,000, or both, in addition to the convicted individual being subject to a court order that mandates the individual pay back any restitution to the harmed victim. This provision covers instances when the individual has no intention

## CIVIL cont.

of placing a child for adoption and no money has been obtained by the individual, but the potential adoptive parents have expended money based on the misrepresentation. This bill additionally amends the required forms to reflect the changes made to the Code.

Furthermore, the bill allows for the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) to file a petition for the appointment of a guardian for a minor that is under the custody of DFCS so long as the minor is within six months of reaching the age of 18 years old.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 3, 2021

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2021

[HB 443 – Torts: transfer of structured settlement payment rights: provide new requirements](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Rob Leverett (R – Elberton)

**Senate Sponsor:** Sen. Billy Hickman (R – Statesboro)

HB 443 creates the ‘Georgia Structured Settlement Protection Act’ to provide new requirements regarding the transfer of structured settlement payment rights. The bill defines key terms for the process of transferring structured settlements and establishes registration and application requirements for “transferees,” who are defined as people acquiring or proposing to acquire structured settlement payment rights through a transfer. HB 443 provides that a person or entity shall not act as a transferee, attempt to acquire structured settlement payment rights from a Georgia resident, or file a structured settlement transfer proceeding in the state unless the person or entity has registered with the Secretary of State to do business in Georgia. Registration must be renewed annually and include a sworn certification demonstrating that the applicant has secured a surety bond, has been issued a letter of credit, or has posted a \$50,000 cash bond. The bond, letter of credit, or cash bond shall be effective concurrently with an applicant’s registration with the Secretary of State and shall remain in effect for not less than three years after expiration or termination of that registration. It shall additionally be renewed each year when the registration of the applicant is renewed. The

Secretary of State is authorized to set and charge a fee to offset the costs of processing and maintaining the required registration. Additionally, the liability of the surety under the bond is not affected by any breach of contract, breach of warranty, failure to pay a premium, or any insolvency or bankruptcy of the structured settlement purchase company. HB 443 outlines certain actions that transferees or structured settlement purchase companies are prohibited from engaging in and provides for a cause of action for the violation of such prohibitions.

At least ten days before the holder of a structured settlement signs a transfer agreement that transfers his or her interest in such settlement to a transferee, the transferee must provide such holder with certain disclosures outlined within the bill. No transfer of structured settlement payment rights shall be effective unless the transfer has been approved in advance in a final court order based on certain express findings by the court that the transfer is in the best interest of the payee, the payee was advised in writing to seek professional advice, and the transfer does not contravene any statute or the court order of any governing authority. Notice of a transferee’s application for the approval of such transfer must be provided at least 20 days prior to any scheduled hearing on the application. HB 443 outlines the requirements for such notice and application.

The provisions of the bill may not be waived by a payee. All transfer agreements entered into by a payee in Georgia must provide that disputes under such transfer agreement shall be determined by Georgia law. Transfer and structured settlement rights under a structured settlement shall not extend to payments that are life contingent unless the transferee establishes and agrees to maintain procedures that periodically confirm the payee’s survival and give an annuity insurer and the structured settlement obligor prompt notice of the payee’s death. The bill shall not be construed to imply that any transfer agreement entered into prior to the Act’s effective date is valid or invalid, or affect the validity of any transfer of structured settlement payment rights, whether under a transfer

## CIVIL cont.

agreement entered into prior to or subsequent to the bill's effective date, in which the obligor and annuity issuer have waived, or have not asserted their rights under, terms of the structured settlement prohibiting or restricting sale, assignment, or encumbrance of the structured settlement payment rights.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 10, 2021  
**Effective Date:** July 1, 2021

[HB 714 – Georgia Civil Practice Act: revise and provide for new requirements](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Trey Kelley (R – Cedartown)  
**Senate Sponsor:** Sen. John Kennedy (R – Macon)

HB 714 amends the Georgia Civil Practice act to clarify what material terms are required to be present in a settlement offers for injury claims arising from vehicle collisions. The bill also outlines the records that must be included in settlement offers and requires the inclusion of certain contact information to which written acceptance of the offer may be provided. Settlement payment requirements shall now have a deadline of not more than forty days from receipt of the offer instead of the current ten days from the date of written acceptance. HB 714 further states that settlement offers for injury claims arising from vehicle collisions may include a requirement that the recipient shall provide the offeror a statement, under oath, regarding whether all liability and casualty insurance issued by the recipient that provides coverage or that may provide coverage for the claim at issue has been disclosed to the offeror.

HB 714 amends code section 33-7-11 of the OCGA to revise the amount an insured party can collect from an insurer if the insurer refuses in bad faith to pay the insured after the insured makes a demand to be paid from. Current law caps such collection at 25% of the recovery while HB 714 changes this to the \$25,000 or 25% of the recovery, whichever is greater. Finally, the bill amends Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority Act of 1965 to allow for actions arising from those provisions to be brought to before the State

Court of Fulton in addition to the county's superior court.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 4, 2021  
**Effective Date:** July 1, 2021

[SB 28 – Juvenile Code and Domestic Relations: provisions relating to the protection of children: strengthen, clarify and update](#)

**Senate Author:** Sen. Chuck Payne (R – Dalton)  
**House Sponsor:** Rep. Mandi Ballinger (R – Canton)

SB 28 amends multiple code sections relating to the juvenile code, domestic relation and child abuse. The bill clarifies that the definition of “juvenile court intake officer” includes DJJ staff who are acting as a juvenile court intake officer in a delinquency or child in need of services proceeding. The bill further changes and clarifies the definition of multiple relevant terms. SB 28 provides clarity as to what court orders may constitute a valid alternative to foster care and allows for the court to approve a voluntary agreement made between a parent, guardian, or legal custodian and the Division of Family and Children Services. The bill removes a requirement that temporary protective hearings be held within five days from the issuing of an order for temporary alternative to foster care and clarifies that allows an adjudication hearing for a child who is not in foster care to be within held within 60 days whether or not a temporary alternative to foster care has been ordered. The bill also states that, following a temporary protective hearing, DCFS must file a petition alleging dependency if probable cause exists. Finally, SB 28 modifies and clarifies when a juvenile court may permit hearsay evidence.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 3, 2021  
**Effective Date:** January 1, 2022

## CIVIL cont.

### [SB 33 – Torts; cause of action against perpetrators for victims of human trafficking; provide](#)

**Senate Author:** Sen. Clint Dixon (R – Gwinnett)  
**House Sponsor:** Rep. Josh Bonner (R – Fayetteville)

SB 33 amends Chapter 1 of Title 51 of the OCGA to provide victims with a civil cause of action against human trafficking perpetrators. The bill provides a definition of perpetrator and sets the statute of limitations to 10 years after the cause of action or 10 years after an underaged victim reaches age 18. SB 33 additionally establishes a cause of action to the Attorney General to obtain any appropriate relief on behalf of the state.

**Signed by the Governor:** April 27, 2021  
**Effective Date:** July 1, 2022

### [SB 34 – Domestic Relations; name change; victims of human trafficking may petition; provide](#)

**Senate Author:** Sen. Clint Dixon (R – Gwinnett)  
**House Sponsor:** Rep. Josh Bonner (R – Fayetteville)

SB 34 amends Chapter 12 of Title 19 of the OCGA to allow human trafficking victims to request the court to change his or her name under seal.

**Signed by the Governor:** April 27, 2021  
**Effective Date:** July 1, 2021

### [SB 75 – Termination of Residential Lease; victims of stalking; provide](#)

**Senate Author:** Sen. Kim Jackson (D – Stone Mountain)  
**House Sponsor:** Rep. Houston Gaines (R – Athens)

SB 75 amends Code Section 44-7-23 of the OCGA to provide definitions for civil stalking orders and criminal stalking orders and allow tenants with a civil or criminal stalking order to terminate their leases, effective 30 days after providing the landlord with a written termination notice.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 6, 2021  
**Effective Date:** July 1, 2021

### [SB 234 – “Georgia Uniform Mediation Act”; enact](#)

**Senate Author:** Sen. John Kennedy (R – Macon)  
**House Sponsor:** Rep. Rob Leverett (R – Elberton)

SB 234 creates the ‘Georgia Uniform Mediation Act’ and provides uniformity in the laws governing mediation, its participants, and the communications made within. The bill defines terms related to mediation and specifically identifies which mediations are subject to the Act. SB 234 further specifies which communications made during a mediation are privileged and not subject to discovery or admissible in evidence, when and how the privilege may be waived, and when the privilege is precluded or does not otherwise apply.

SB 234 provides that mediation, mediation communications, and such related conduct, will not be admissible or subject to disclosure, except to the extent agreed to by the parties in writing or as otherwise provided by the Code or court required rule of Georgia, unless such communications are subject to the ‘Georgia Open Records Act’.

The bill establishes requirements for mediators and includes what mediators can or must disclose, as well as appropriate timing for when they must disclose it. Additionally, attorneys and other individuals designated by a party may participate in a mediation. Waivers of participation provided before a mediation may be rescinded.

Lastly, SB 234 provides that international commercial mediations shall be governed by the Model Law on International Commercial Mediation and International Settlement Agreements Resulting from Mediation unless the parties agree to otherwise.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 10, 2021  
**Effective Date:** July 1, 2021

## COURTS

### [HB 97 – Courts: oath for certain clerks of the probate court; require and provide](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Rob Leverett (R – Elberton)

**Senate Sponsor:** Sen. Bo Hatchett (R – Cornelia)

HB 97 amends Article 2 of Chapter 9 of Title 15 of the OCGA to require that appointed chief clerks of a probate court or appointed designated clerk designated by a probate judge to exercise such judge's jurisdiction concerning uncontested matters, take the oath required of all civil officers and an additional oath to be taken prior to the commencement of his or her duties. Both oaths must be placed on the minutes of the court.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 4, 2021

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2021

### [HB 635 – Courts: each judge of the superior court, state court, and probate court and each magistrate shall have authority to perform any lawful judicial act; provide](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Rob Leverett (R – Elberton)

**Senate Sponsor:** Sen. Brian Strickland (R – McDonough)

HB 635 amends OCGA Title 15 and Title 36 to allow judges of the superior, state, probate, magistrate, and municipal courts to perform any judicial act which he or she is entitled to perform, regardless of where they are physically located at the time of the act. Additionally, HB 635 amends OCGA § 15-6-18 to allow superior and state courts to use non-governmental facilities as an alternative location for criminal jury trials so long as the governing authority either owns the facility or has a contractual relationship with the facility. Superior and state courts are authorized to hold court at alternative locations which are accessible to the public, located in the same county or adjoining county, and considerations for transportation burden being paramount.

HB 635 also creates new Code Section 17-7-4 to give judges authority to approve an accused's waiver of the right to a jury trial and proceed to a bench trial, notwithstanding an objection by the prosecutor (excluding serious violent felonies and death penalty trials).

Finally, HB 635 expands statutory authority for prosecutors to use accusations (rather than indictments) as formal charging instruments, except for cases involving serious violent felonies and only 45 days or more after charges are filed. Both of these provisions have a sunset of June 30, 2022.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 4, 2021

**Effective Date:** May 4, 2021

### [SB 9 – Courts: the Columbia Judicial Circuit and to be composed of Columbia County; create a new judicial circuit for the State of Georgia](#)

**Senate Author:** Sen. Lee Anderson (R – Grovetown)

**House Sponsor:** Rep. Mark Newton (R – Augusta)

SB 9 creates the Columbia Judicial Circuit, to be comprised of Columbia County, effective July 1, 2021. The three judges of the Augusta Judicial Circuit currently residing in Columbia County shall be the three judges of the Columbia Judicial Circuit. The governor shall appoint a district attorney for a term beginning July 1, 2021. All proceedings and litigation currently pending in the Superior Court of Columbia County shall transfer to the Columbia Judicial Circuit.

SB 9 additionally specifies that the five remaining judges of the Augusta Judicial Circuit, as well as the current district attorney, shall remain as the judges and district attorney of the Augusta Judicial Circuit.

The Augusta Circuit will transfer to the Columbia Circuit 25 percent of the amount it held as of January 1, 2021, for court connected alternative dispute resolution program costs. The district attorney of the Augusta Circuit shall transfer to the district attorney of the Columbia Circuit the amount held as of January 1, 2021, that was secured pursuant to condemnation of forfeiture actions.

The judges of both the Columbia Judicial Circuit and Augusta Judicial Circuit shall continue to receive county salary supplements equal to the aggregate county salary supplements currently received by the judges of the Augusta Circuit. The county salary supplements of the judges and district attorney of the Augusta Circuit,

## COURTS cont.

as well as the court-wide expenditures of the Augusta Circuit, shall be paid by Richmond County and Burke County in a ratio equal to their current proportional responsibility. Senior or retired judges of the Augusta Circuit who currently receive a retirement supplement from the three counties of the current Augusta Circuit shall continue to receive such supplement from all three counties. Senior or retired judges owed a retirement supplement after the effective date shall receive such supplement from the county or counties of the circuit from which they retire.

**Signed by the Governor:** March 25, 2021

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2021

[SB 163 – Judicial Emergency: suspension of statutory speedy trial requirements; provide](#)

**Senate Author:** Sen. Brian Strickland (R – McDonough)

**House Sponsor:** Rep. Stan Gunter (R – Blairsville)

SB 163 amends OCGA §§ 38-3-61; 38-3-62 to provide for the continued tolling of statutory speedy trial requirements following a judicial emergency.

New subsection (b) in OCGA § 38-3-62 authorizes a chief judge of a superior court judicial circuit or a chief judge of a state court to grant relief by continuing the tolling of statutory speedy trial requirements in OCGA §§ 17-7-170; 17-7-171 following a judicial emergency if compliance with such requirements is impracticable based on consideration of designated factors. An order granting relief must include certification by the judge that compliance with statutory speedy trial requirements is impracticable. Each certification shall include supporting statistical data and findings of fact to justify relief and a plan to resolve such cases as expeditiously as possible.

Each period of relief shall not exceed eight months and the Chief Justice may reinstate any statutory speedy trial requirement tolled under this subsection.

Nothing in this legislation shall relieve the State of its constitutional obligation to provide for a speedy trial. The authority granted by SB 163 sunsets on June

30, 2023, and no order granting relief from statutory speedy trial requirements shall be issued after that date.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 4, 2021

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2021

## GENERAL

[HB 134 – State government; meetings relating to cybersecurity contracting and planning from open meeting requirements; exclude](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Victor Anderson (R – Cornelia)

**Senate Sponsor:** Sen. Bo Hatchett (R – Cornelia)

HB 134 excludes cybersecurity related meetings regarding contracting and planning from open meeting requirements and exempts all related plans and documents from public disclosure. A vote to enter into a cybersecurity contract taken in an exempted meeting is not binding until a subsequent vote is taken in an open meeting.

**Signed by the Governor:** April 29, 2021

**Effective Date:** April 29, 2021

[HB 146 – Public officers and employees; paid parental leave for eligible state employees and eligible local board of education employees; provide](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Houston Gaines (R – Athens)

**Senate Sponsor:** Sen. Butch Miller (R – Gainesville)

HB 146 amends Article 1 of Chapter 20 of Title 45 of the OCGA to provide eligible employees of state government and local boards of education with a maximum of 120 hours of paid parental leave for qualifying life events after six continuous months of employment. “Qualifying life events” are defined as the birth or adoption of child, as well as placement of a child in foster care. The bill further allows employing entities to create and share nonconflicting rules overseeing the administration of this paid parental leave, given that they address whether the paid leave will run concurrently with federal leave and whether employees are required to show documented proof to demonstrate need. Lastly, eligible employees paid hourly qualify for paid parental leave if they have worked a minimum of 700 hours within the 6 months preceding the leave request.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 5, 2021

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2021

[HB 168 – Penal institutions; certain information within inmate files of the Department of Corrections shall not be classified as confidential state secrets when requested by the district attorney; provide](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Jesse Petrea (R – Savannah)

**Senate Sponsor:** Sen. Ben Watson (R – Savannah)

HB 168 amends Code Section 42-5-36 of the OCGA to allow the Department of Corrections to provide inmate files of inmates sentenced for violent felonies or dangerous sexual offenses against minors to district attorneys if such files are requested. District attorneys may only request such information for the purpose of submitting information or filing a written objection, and the provided records are not subject to public disclosure requirements. The files are confidential and no subject to public disclosure. Any person who violates the confidentiality of these records or conspires to do so may be charged with a misdemeanor.

**Signed by the Governor:** April 21, 2021

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2021

[HB 362 – Environmental Protection Division; effective date for standards, rules, and regulations; revise](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Trey Rhodes (R – Greensboro)

**Senate Sponsor:** Sen. Tyler Harper (R – Ocilla)

HB 362 updates and amends various definitions of game and fish species and extends the effective date of which criminal violations against the rules and regulation shared by the Environmental Advisory Council and the Board of Natural Resources to January 1, 2021.

HB 362 exempts minnow seines and minnow traps from the list of unlawful methods of taking fish in Georgia fresh waters. It is, however, unlawful to use minnow seines and minnow traps to take any game fish or American eels unless the fish are 5 inches in length and not sold or used for commercial purposes or within trout waters. It is additionally unlawful to use minnow seines and minnow traps to fish for non-game fish in fresh waters without a valid resident or nonresident fishing license. All violations of this bill

## GENERAL cont.

are guilty of a misdemeanor.

**Signed by the Governor:** April 27, 2021

**Effective Date:** April 27, 2021

[HB 465 – Local government; imposing civil penalties upon an alarm systems contractor for a false alarm that occurs through no fault of alarm systems contractor; prohibit](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Joseph Gullett (R – Dallas)

**Senate Sponsor:** Sen. Randy Robertson (R – Cataula)

HB 465 amends Chapter 60 of Title 36 of the OCGA to allow local governments to impose fines, fees, and civil penalties upon alarm system contractors for false alarms in situations of improper installation, failure to provide evidence of the alarm verification process, and instances attributed to the contractor's error. Should the alarm system contractor be in compliance, however, local governments may impose fines, fees, or civil penalties on the individual property owner for false alarms.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 3, 2021

**Effective Date:** May 3, 2021

[HB 497 – Code Revision Commission; revise, modernize and correct errors or omissions](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Chuck Efstrotation (R – Dacula)

**Senate Sponsor:** Sen. Dean Burke (R – Bainbridge)

HB 497 is the annual code revision bill, which revises, modernizes, corrects errors or omissions, reenacts various portions of the OCGA.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 10, 2021

**Effective Date:** May 10, 2021

[HB 553 – State government; participation in hearings by electronic communications; provide](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Stan Gunter (R – Blairsville)

**Senate Sponsor:** Sen. Bo Hatchett (R – Cornelia)

HB 553 amends Chapter 13 of Title 50 of the OCGA to allow administrative law hearings to be conducted via remote electronic communications, provided that all parties consent and an individual's rights not be infringed upon. At the administrative law judge's discretion, one or more witnesses may participate through remote electronic communications. The bill additionally allows the Office of State Administrative Hearings to require the electronic filing of documents and to serve any party electronically unless law requires alternative means of service. Records of hearings may also be made available and transferred by electronic means. Lastly, HB 553 adds the Department of Community Health to the code of "reviewing agency".

**Signed by the Governor:** April 29, 2021

**Effective Date:** April 29, 2021

[HB 548 – Social services; reasonable access to records concerning reports of child abuse to the Administrative Office of the Courts; provide](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Katie Dempsey (R – Rome)

**Senate Sponsor:** Sen. Bo Hatchett (R – Cornelia)

HB 548 amends Code Section 49-5-41 of the OCGA to authorize the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) to access records of child abuse reports to facilitate data sharing, collection, and analysis of permanency and safety outcomes for children who have been the subject of dependency actions and actions to terminate parental rights. The AOC shall enter into required agreements with the Division of Family and Children Services to ensure that HIPPA compliance is maintained and that federal regulations on disclosure are not violated.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 3, 2021

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2021

## GENERAL cont.

### [HR 332 – Melton, Georgia Supreme Court Chief Justice Harold; 30 years in state government; commend](#)

**House Author:** Rep. David Ralston (R – Blue Ridge)

HR 332 recognizes and commends Georgia Supreme Court Chief Justice Harold Melton for his 30 years of service in state government.

### [SB 20 – Child Advocate Advisory Committee; composition; revise](#)

**Senate Author:** Sen. Chuck Payne (R – Dalton)

**House Sponsor:** Rep. Mandi Ballinger (R – Canton)

SB 20 amends Article 11 of Chapter 11 of Title 15 of the OCGA to add the following three members to the Child Advocate Advisory Committee: one current or former foster parent, one former foster child who became an adult or graduated from high school while in Georgia, and one individual who served a minimum of three years as a court appointed special advocate. The membership for each position shall be appointed by the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Speaker of the House, respectively.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 3, 2021

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2021

### [SB 32 – Public Disclosure; certain personal records of state and federal employees; exempt](#)

**Senate Author:** Sen. Matt Brass (R – Newnan)

**House Sponsor:** Rep. Joseph Gullett (R – Dallas)

SB 32 amends Titles 43 and 50 of the OCGA to add personal mobile or wireless telephone numbers and insurance information to the list of exemptions from public employee disclosure mandates. The bill additionally exempts home addresses from disclosure in publicly available rosters of licensees maintained by division directors of professional licensing boards. SB 32 furthermore builds upon the code of “public employee” to include employees in federal government and its agencies, departments, or commissions.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 6, 2021

**Effective Date:** May 6, 2021

### [SB 114 – Professions and Businesses; grounds for refusing to grant or revoking a license; revise](#)

**Senate Author:** Sen. Randy Robertson (R – Cataula)

**House Sponsor:** Rep. Martin Momtahan (R – Dallas)

SB 114 amends Chapter 1 of Title 43 of the OCGA to prohibit professional licensing boards from revoking or refusing a license due to the applicant’s active supervision by a community supervision officer for a felony conviction or a crime involving moral turpitude. However, felony violations of Chapter 5 of Title 16 and convictions requiring registration on the sexual offender list are excluded and may be denied of licensure.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 4, 2021

**Effective Date:** May 4, 2021

### [SB 185 – Revenue and Taxation; all questions of law decided by a court; matters from state board of equalization and refunds and appeals be decided without deference; require](#)

**Senate Author:** Sen. Bo Hatchett (R – Cornelia)

**House Sponsor:** Rep. Todd Jones (R – South Forsyth)

SB 143 requires that all questions of law decided by a court of the Georgia Tax Tribunal, including interpretations of constitutional, statutory, and regulatory provisions, be made without any deference to any written or unwritten determination or interpretation that may have been made on the matter by the Department of Revenue. This requirement will have no effect on the judicial standard of deference accorded to rules shared pursuant to the ‘Georgia Administrative Procedure Act’. The bill is applicable to all proceedings commenced before the Georgia Tax Tribunal or a superior court on or after the date it becomes law.

**Signed by the Governor:** April 29, 2021

**Effective Date:** April 29, 2021

## GENERAL cont.

### [SB 195 – Hemp Farming; definition; revise](#)

**Senate Author:** Sen. Jeff Mullis (R – Chickamauga)

**House Sponsor:** Rep. John Corbett (R – Lake Park)

SB 195 makes several updates to the law regarding low THC oil. The bill amends Title 16 of the OCGA to clarify that provisions and offenses relating to low THC oil also include its resulting products

SB 195 excludes products that are approved by the federal Food and Drug Administration from the definitions in state law, including low THC oil, marijuana under the ‘Georgia Controlled Substances Act’, and tetrahydrocannabinols under Schedule I controlled substances. The bill also removes epidiolex from Schedule V controlled substances.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 3, 2021

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2021

### [SB 202 – Elections and Primaries; persons or entities that mail absentee ballot applications shall mail such applications only to eligible registered electors; provide](#)

**Senate Author:** Sen. Max Burns (R – Sylvania)

**House Sponsor:** Rep. Barry Fleming (R – Harlem)

SB 202 makes substantial changes to multiple areas of Georgia election law. The bill modifies the composition and chairmanship of the State Election Board. The bill also gives the State Election Board the ability to suspend local and county election superintendents and appoint temporary replacements. This act may be undertaken either at the request of a local government or by the State Election Board’s own initiative. The process for this suspension along with the associated replacement or reinstatement of affected officials is provided in the bill and no more than four officials may be suspended at the same time. If such suspension is taken against a probate judge, the suspension does not affect the judge’s non-election duties. Performance reviews of local election superintendents may be requested by members of the General Assembly or by local governments. These reviews may then be undertaken by an independent review board at the direction of the State Election Board. The bill prohibits

local election superintendents and boards of registrars from accepting non-governmental funds. SB 202 also provides for the appointment of an acting election superintendent in counties where the probate court judge serves in that capacity and there is a vacancy in that office.

The timeline for requesting absentee ballots has been modified and new requirements have been attached to the use and validation of absentee ballots. The bill also mandates that absentee ballots are now to be printed on security paper. SB 202 requires all counties to have at least one secure ballot dropbox and outline regulations regarding these dropboxes. The bill allows local election officials to begin processing absentee ballots on the third Monday prior to an election, but these ballots may not be formally tabulated until the close of polls on election day. The bill also modifies certain practices regarding casting of provisional ballots and adds restrictions on casting ballots at the incorrect precinct.

SB 202 also updates requirements regarding early voting dates and mandates that early voting be allowed to take place on certain Saturdays during the advance voting period. Different requirements apply during runoff elections. When they occur, runoffs must be held on the 28th day following the initial election or primary. Polling hours may only be extended by order of a superior court judge. The bill additionally states that if a precinct has more than 2000 electors and had wait times longer than an hour in the previous year’s general election, the local election superintendent must either reduce the size of the precinct or provide additional equipment and/or poll workers before the next general election.

The bill further adds additional requirements regarding notice of the designation, change, or closures of polling locations and makes the giving of food or drink to voters within 150 feet of the polling location a misdemeanor offense. Self-service, unattended water dispensers may be set up by poll workers. The giving of money or gifts to voters within this area is also explicitly prohibited.

## GENERAL cont.

The bill requires counties to publish various reports regarding statistics related to casting of in-person and absentee ballots and outlines the requirements for these reports. SB 202 also mandates that vote counting must continue non-stop from the closure of polls until all votes are counted. Election returns must be certified by the local election superintendent by 5:00 pm on the Monday following election day.

SB 202 makes it a misdemeanor to record or photograph a voted ballot and makes it a felony for an unauthorized person to observe a voter to see how they voted. The bill also makes it a felony for an unauthorized person to accept an absentee ballot from an elector for delivery or return to the board of registrars.

Finally, among other changes, the bill updates and modifies provisions regarding special elections and the filling of vacancies. The bill clarifies that vacancies for the office of chief judge of a magistrate and civil court must be filled by the appointee of the Governor until a successor is elected.

**Signed by the Governor:** March 25, 2021

**Effective Date:** March 25, 2021

[SB 238 – Code Of Georgia; enactment of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated; revise provisions](#)

**Senate Author:** Sen. Brian Strickland (R – McDonough)

**House Sponsor:** Rep. Chuck Efstation (R – Dacula)

SB 238 clarifies which portions of the Code have the effect of law and identifies the contents of the Code that do not have the effect of law. The bill also clarifies the oversight of the Code Revision Commission and repeals the provision that tasks the Commission with registering the copyright claim and defending actions in any court in connection with the claim.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 10, 2021

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2021

## PUBLIC SAFETY & TRAFFIC

[HB 165 – Motor vehicles; use of mounts on windshields for the support of wireless telecommunications devices and stand-alone electronic devices under certain circumstances; allow](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Timothy Barr (R – Lawrenceville)  
**Senate Sponsor:** Sen. Randy Robertson (R – Cataula)

HB 165 amends Part 4 of Article 1 of Chapter 8 of Title 40 of the OCGA to allow for phone and other electronic technology mounts to be placed on the front windshield of motor vehicles so long as the driver's view is minimally unobstructed.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 4, 2021

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2021

[HB 353 – Motor vehicles; clarify what constitutes an obstruction for purposes of exceptions to when a vehicle is to drive on the right side of roadway](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Todd Jones (R – South Forsyth)  
**Senate Sponsor:** Sen. John Albers (R – Roswell)

HB 353 amends Article 3 of Chapter 6 of Title 40 of the OCGA to delineate how motor vehicles should overtake cyclists, stating that drivers are to pass a cyclist by moving into a non-adjacent lane, or reduce their speed and proceed around the bicycle with a 3 foot radius. All violations of this Code section are misdemeanors punishable by a maximum fine of \$250.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 4, 2021

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2021

[HB 466 – Motor vehicles; number of required hours in the intervention component of DUI Alcohol or Drug Use Risk Reduction Programs; reduce](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Alan Powell (R – Hartwell)  
**Senate Sponsor:** Sen. Randy Robertson (R – Cataula)

HB 466 requires the Department of Driver Services to establish a curriculum for a driver education training courses and driver training courses, which are permitted to be offered in-person, online, or via remote participation platforms. The Department cannot issue

certain driver's licenses to people under 18 years unless they meet the qualifications outlined within the bill. Georgia residents of at least 16 years of age who have a valid instruction permit for a period of at least 12 months may apply for a Class D driver's license to operate a non-commercial Class C vehicle if certain criteria are met. Any individual who is at least 17 years old, provides proof of military enlistment, and meets specified qualifications are eligible for a Class C driver's license.

In specified instances, HB 466 additionally allows driver training schools and public or private high schools to administer the skills test required for a commercial driver's license. The Department of Driver Services commissioner is authorized to issue a special license to qualified driver training school instructors allowing them to serve as driver's license examiners and conduct tests required for the issuance of a driver's license. The bill requires the department to be notified when there is a change in ownership of a driver training school, DUI Alcohol or Drug Use Risk Reduction Program, or driver improvement program.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 4, 2021

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2021

[HB 579 – Public Safety and Judicial Facilities Act; enact](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Mary Margaret Oliver (D – Decatur)

**Senate Sponsor:** Sen. Emanuel Jones (D – Decatur)

HB 579 changes the short title for Chapter 75 of Title 36 of the OCGA from the "War of Terrorism Local Assistance Act" to the "Public Safety and Judicial Facilities Act" and removes the requirement that public safety and judicial authorities must pass a referendum in order to issue bonds for new projects.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 10, 2021

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2021

## PUBLIC SAFETY & TRAFFIC cont.

### [HB 693 – Motor vehicles; operation of farm tractors on interstate highways; prohibit](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Steven Meeks (R – Screven)

**Senate Sponsor:** Sen. Lee Anderson (R – Grovetown)

HB 693 prohibits farm tractors from travelling on interstate highways unless deemed necessary by the Department of Public Safety. However, farm tractors or implements may travel on state or local roadways should they be in compliance with Code Section 40-8-4. If the width of a farm tractor is more than a roadway or more than half the width of a roadway without marked lanes, the operator shall safely move the tractor as far to the right-hand side of the roadway as possible. If a farm tractor or implement of husbandry cannot be moved to the far right-hand side of a roadway, drivers of other vehicles must yield the right-of-way to the tractor or implement of husbandry.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 9, 2021

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2021

### [SB 165 – Motor Vehicles; autonomous vehicles from certain vehicle equipment requirements; exempt](#)

**Senate Author:** Sen. Steve Gooch (R – Dahlonoga)

**House Sponsor:** Rep. Don Hogan (R – St. Simon's Island)

SB 165 amends Title 40 of the OCGA to allow people the option of affixing either an amber strobe light or a specified emblem to low-speed vehicles to allow them to legally operate on state highways.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 4, 2021

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2021

## LOCAL

### [HB 582 – Cherokee County; probate judge; provide nonpartisan elections](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Jason Ridley (R – Chatsworth)

HB 582 provides that future elections for the probate judge of Cherokee County nonpartisan elections.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 3, 2021

**Effective Date:** May 3, 2021

### [HB 634 – Wilkinson County; Magistrate Court; provide one-year terms of office for magistrates](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Danny Mathis (R – Cochran)

HB 634 provides one-year terms of office for magistrate judges in Wilkinson County.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 3, 2021

**Effective Date:** May 3, 2021

### [HB 703 – Bleckley County; probate judge; provide nonpartisan elections](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Danny Mathis (R – Cochran)

HB 703 provides that future elections for the office of the Bleckley County probate judge be nonpartisan elections.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 3, 2021

**Effective Date:** May 3, 2021

### [HB 704 – Bleckley County; Magistrate Court chief judge; provide nonpartisan elections](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Danny Mathis (R – Cochran)

HB 704 provides that future elections for the Bleckley County Chief Magistrate be nonpartisan elections.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 3, 2021

**Effective Date:** May 3, 2021

### [HB 705 – Bleckley County; Probate Court; charge technology fee](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Danny Mathis (R – Cochran)

HB 705 authorizes the Probate Court of Bleckley County to collect a technology fee until July 1, 2031, to provide for the court's technological needs. The fee shall be set by the probate judge and may not exceed \$5.00. The right to collect this fee shall terminate on July 1, 2031 and any remaining fees will be allocated towards general technology needs of the county.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 3, 2021

**Effective Date:** May 3, 2021

### [HB 767 – Lee County; Magistrate Court; law library fee; revise permitted uses of funds raised](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Bill Yearta (R – Sylvester)

HB 767 authorizes the Magistrate Court of Lee County to charge a fee not exceeding \$5.00 in each action or case with the purpose of maintain the Lee County Law Library. The bill additionally establishes a Magistrate Court Law Library Fund Committee and provides for its membership to consist of the chief judge of the magistrate court, a member of the Lee County Board of Commissioners, and an attorney with the State Bar of Georgia membership who practices law privately in Lee County.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 3, 2021

**Effective Date:** May 3, 2021

### [HB 770 – Gilmer County; Magistrate Court; authorize assessment and collection of a technology fee](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Bill Yearta (R – Sylvester)

HB 770 authorizes the Gilmer County Magistrate Court clerk to collect a technology fee until July 1, 2031, to provide for the court's technological needs. The judge will set the amount which shall not exceed \$5.00. The right to collect this fee shall terminate on July 1, 2031 and any remaining fees will be allocated towards general technology needs of the county.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 3, 2021

**Effective Date:** May 3, 2021

## LOCAL cont.

### [HB 777 – DeKalb County; State Court; provide definitions](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Matthew Wilson (D – Brookhaven)

HB 777 provides that the DeKalb County State Court will be governed by general law relating to state courts. Twice a year, all judges of the State Court of DeKalb County are to conduct a meeting of the entire bench of the court, with nine judges constituting a quorum. The bill additionally removes outdated provisions, modifies the provisions related to the appointment of assistant solicitors, modifies the fee schedule of the court, and provides for the chief judge of the court, who is to be the longest serving judge of the court and serve as chief judge until December 31, 2022.

HB 777 further modifies the provisions for the punishment of contempt and provides for a new procedure for the selection and removal of the clerk, marshal, and chief probation officer of the State and Magistrate courts. Additionally, the bill provides for the uniform compensation and joint decision making for the state court judges and chief magistrate judge of the county.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 3, 2021

**Effective Date:** January 1, 2022

### [HB 795 – Glascock County; Probate Court Judge; repeal Act providing for supplement to compensation; provide for an applicability date](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Mack Jackson (D – Sandersville)

HB 795 repeals an act to provide a supplement to the compensation of the Glascock Probate Court judge, effective on December 31, 2024.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 3, 2021

**Effective Date:** December 31, 2024

### [HB 800 – Ben Hill County; Probate Court; authorize assessment and collection of a technology fee](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Clay Pirkle (R – Ashburn)

HB 800 authorizes the Probate Court of Ben Hill County to collect a technology fee until July 1, 2031, to provide for the court's technological needs. The judge will set the amount which shall not exceed \$10.00. The right to collect this fee shall terminate on July 1, 2031 and any remaining fees will be allocated towards general technology needs of the county.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 3, 2021

**Effective Date:** May 3, 2021

### [HB 803 – Fannin County; Magistrate Court; authorize assessment and collection of a technology fee](#)

**House Author:** Rep. David Ralston (R – Blue Ridge)

HB 803 authorizes the Magistrate Court of Fannin County to collect a technology fee until July 1, 2031, to provide for the court's technological needs. The chief judge will set the amount which shall not exceed \$5.00.

**Signed by the Governor:**

**Effective Date:** May 3, 2021

### [HB 804 – Hull, City of; provide new charter](#)

**House Author:** Rep. Rob Leverett (R – Elberton)

HB 804 provides a new charter for the City of Hull.

**Signed by the Governor:** May 3, 2021

**Effective Date:** May 3, 2021

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## VETOED BY THE GOVERNOR

<https://gov.georgia.gov/2021-vetoed-legislation>

*No Relevant Vetoes*

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