



**Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence  
2015 General Assembly - Legislative Report  
March 20, 2015**

- **Budget – Funding for state-certified domestic violence centers FY 2016:** The Senate passed its FY 2016 budget after receiving the budget approved by the House. As in the House version, the Senate budget includes no change in funding for domestic violence centers but does transfer all funding from the Dept. of Human Services (DHS) to the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC). Unlike the House version, the Senate budget includes a \$230,000 increase in state funds to sexual assault centers. It also includes a \$193,126 increase for grants for civil legal services to victims of domestic violence, which is half of what the House recommended. The House and Senate Appropriations Committees will now conference to negotiate the differences between their budget recommendations. Budget documents can be reviewed [here](#).
- **Statutory transfer of administrative duties for state-certified domestic violence centers:** [HB 263](#) removes the administrative duties for state-certified domestic violence centers from DHS and transfers them to CJCC. HB 263 passed the House prior to Crossover Day and is assigned to the Senate Judiciary Non-Civil Committee.
- **Statutory transfer of the Georgia Commission on Family Violence (GCFV):** The Governor's criminal justice reform proposal, [HB 310](#), includes a merger of the Board of Pardons and Paroles, the Dept. of Juvenile Justice, and the Dept. of Corrections to form a new Dept. of Community Supervision. Since it is statutorily attached to the Dept. of Corrections, GCFV would also move into this new department. HB 310 passed the House prior to Crossover Day and is assigned to the Senate Public Safety Committee.
- **Adding criminal family violence orders to the protective order registry:** [HB 452](#) amends the statute authorizing Georgia's Protective Order Registry so that criminal family violence orders, including stay-away orders in bond or probation conditions, can be entered into that registry. This simple statutory change would give law enforcement the 24/7 access they need in order to make decisions about arrest when a perpetrator violates these orders. HB 452 passed the House on Crossover Day and is assigned to the Senate Judiciary Non-Civil Committee.
- **Harassing communications:** [HB 578](#) expands the harassing phone calls statute to include electronic and online harassment. The bill was introduced late and did not pass the House before Crossover Day. However, the bill did pass through the House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee on March 18 and was attached as a rider to [SB 72](#), which passed the Senate prior to Crossover Day. This has effectively kept HB 578 "alive" for the 2015 session. The bill now moves to the House Rules Committee, which will decide whether the bill goes before the full House for a vote.
- **Long arm statute:** [HB 531](#) amends Georgia's long arm statute, adopting the broadest possible standard by which courts establish personal jurisdiction over out-of-state respondents in civil cases. If passed, this bill may make it easier for courts to issue TPOs against perpetrators living out of state. HB 531 passed the House on Crossover Day and is assigned to the Senate Judiciary Committee.
- **Flexible sick leave – the Family Care Act:** [HB 92](#) requires employers that offer sick leave to allow employees to use that leave time flexibly in order to care for sick children, spouses, and other family members. HB 92 has been tabled in the House Industry and Labor Committee and did not make it through Crossover Day, meaning that it has little to no chance of passing in the 2015 session.
- **Denial of drivers' licenses for immigrants in deferred action status:** [SB 6](#) denies drivers licenses to immigrants in deferred action status. This includes immigrant victims of domestic violence and human trafficking who have been granted this status while awaiting the finalization of their T-Visa, U-Visa, or VAWA petition. GCADV is opposed to this bill, as it would limit safety and economic security options for these victims. SB 6 did not receive a committee hearing and did not make it through Crossover Day, meaning that it has little to no chance of passing in the 2015 session.