



**Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence  
2012 General Assembly - Legislative Report  
March 1, 2012**

- **Budget – Shelter Funding FY 2012 Amended & FY 2013:** Both the House and Senate have passed the FY 2012 Amended budget which adopts Governor Deal's recommendation to replace TANF funds for the remaining quarter of the current fiscal year with state funds. The House is poised to vote on the FY 2013 budget next week which is likely to include the same recommendation on funding for domestic violence programs.
- **Advocate & spousal privilege:** HB 711 creates privilege for communications between victims and advocates in domestic violence and sexual assault programs. It also eliminates the spousal privilege in domestic violence criminal actions. After passing the House, HB 711 has been assigned to the Senate Judiciary Committee. The Senate will not begin considering House bills until after Crossover Day on March 7. Preliminary discussions with Senate Judiciary Committee members have all been positive regarding this bill.
- **Arrest for bond & bail condition violations:** HB 342 authorizes law enforcement to arrest offenders who violate no contact provisions of bonds and probation in the presence of law enforcement. HB 342 has also been assigned to Senate Judiciary and is expected to be considered after Crossover Day.
- **Arrest for victims who “violate” their TPOs:** Rep. Yasmin Neal introduced HB 983 to create a new misdemeanor offense for victims who engage in conduct that would be a TPO violation if the abuser engaged in such conduct. GCADV has expressed serious concerns about such a bill as it would weaken the TPO statute by effectively making all TPOs mutual and would make enforcement of TPOs much more difficult once abusers learn that they can allege the victim initiated contact. HB 983 was assigned to the House Judiciary Non Civil Committee. Chairman Rich Golick has indicated that there will not be time to consider HB 983 this session, but he is interested in considering it before next session. GCADV will coordinate advocacy on this bill with members of House Judiciary Non Civil after the legislative session ends.
- **Drug testing for public benefits recipients:** SB 292 and HB 861 would require applicants for TANF to pay for and pass a drug test as a condition of receiving

benefits. GCADV is concerned that these bills will create an additional obstacle for survivors who depend on TANF's short-term financial assistance. SB 292 has passed out of committee and could be voted on by the full Senate next week. HB 861 will be heard by the House Judiciary Committee on Monday morning. For more information about the bills, see GCADV's action alert on these bills.

- **Statute of limitations for sex crimes:** The Senate passed SB 316 which extends the statute of limitations for certain sexual offense against victims under 16 years. The 10 year statute of limitations would not run until the victim is 18 years old for all offenses except rape which would have a 15 year statute of limitations. The bill is assigned to the House Judiciary Committee.
- **Teen dating violence:** SR 999 urges the Dept. of Education to provide a teen dating violence curriculum for high schools. The bill passed out of the Senate Education Committee.
- **Schedule:** The legislature will be in session on March 5 for day 29 and March 7 for day 30 which is the deadline for all bills to pass one chamber (Crossover Day). They have not adopted a schedule beyond day 31 on March 12.

**Action items:**

- **Contact members of the House Judiciary Committee** (<http://www.house.ga.gov/COMMITTEES/en-US/committee.aspx?Committee=106&Session=21>) **regarding HB 861 and ask them to oppose the bill** because it will make it more difficult for victims of domestic violence to get the financial assistance many need to support themselves and their children after leaving their abusers. See GCADV's action alert for additional talking points.
- **Contact members of the Senate Judiciary Committee and urge them to pass HB 711.** It is especially important to make these calls if a legislator from your community is on this Committee. Members of the committee and their contact information is available here: <http://www.senate.ga.gov/committees/en-US/committee.aspx?Committee=80&Session=21>