



**Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence
2016 General Assembly - Legislative Report
February 19, 2016**

- **Budget – Funding for state-certified domestic violence centers FY 2016 Amended & FY 2017:** The House and Senate have each passed their versions of the FY 2016 Amended budget bill, and on February 19, the House passed its version of the FY 2017 budget bill. Both the FY 2016 Amended budget bill and the House version of the FY 2017 budget bill include the level domestic violence and sexual assault funding proposed by the Governor, and the House version of the FY 2017 budget includes the \$193,125 increase for grants for civil legal services to victims of domestic violence, as also proposed by the Governor.

Once the Senate passes its version of the FY 2017 budget, the Appropriations Committees of both chambers will form a conference committee to negotiate and draw up a final set of recommendations for both the FY 2016 Amended budget and the FY 2017 budget.

Budget documents can be viewed [here](#).

- **Recidivist domestic violence offenders:** [SB 193](#) would ensure that a previous family violence battery conviction against the same victim or any family violence felony conviction against any household member would result in a subsequent family violence battery and would be punished as a felony. On February 2, the Senate passed SB 193 unanimously. The bill now moves to the House, where it has been assigned to the House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee.

- **Rape kit processing – the Pursuing Justice for Rape Victims Act:** [HB 827](#) would establish a protocol for local law enforcement for the handling and submission of rape kits to the Georgia Bureau

ACTION ALERT!
If your Representative serves on the House Rules Committee, ask them to put **HB 827** up for a vote. House Rules Committee members are listed [HERE](#).

of Investigation for testing. On February 11, the House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee voted to give a "do pass" recommendation for HB 827. The bill now sits in the House Rules Committee which will decide whether it will go before the full House for a vote.

- **Sentencing and post-conviction relief for battered persons convicted of violent crimes against their batterers:** [HB 702](#) would give judges adjudicating cases of murder, manslaughter, aggravated assault, or aggravated battery the discretion to depart from mandatory minimum sentencing guidelines if the judge concludes that the defendant was the victim of family violence or child abuse committed by the person against whom the crime was committed. On February 8, HB 702 had a hearing in a subcommittee of the House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. The subcommittee did not vote on the bill but plans to have another hearing on the bill soon.

- **Flexible sick leave – the Family Care Act:** [HB 746/SB 242](#) require employers that offer sick leave to allow employees to use that leave time flexibly in order to care for sick children,

ACTION ALERT!
If your Senator serves on the Senate Rules Committee, ask them to put **SB 242** up for a vote. Senate Rules Committee members are listed [HERE](#).

spouses, and other family members. HB 746 has been assigned to the House Industry and Labor Committee. SB 242 has been assigned to the Senate Health and Human Services Committee, which voted on February 9 to give the bill a "do pass" recommendation. SB 242 now sits in the Senate Rules Committee which will decide whether it will go before the full Senate for a vote.

- **First Amendment Defense Act:** [SB 284](#) was merged by the Senate Rules Committee into the House-approved [HB 757](#). GCADV opposes [HB](#)

[757](#) in its amended form, as it would prohibit the government from taking any adverse action against nonprofit organizations that discriminate against LGBT people, single mothers, and sexually active straight couples by denying them services based on religious beliefs.

Victims of domestic violence who fall into these categories could legally be denied the services that many nonprofits are contracted with the state of Georgia and given taxpayer

dollars to provide, services such as shelter and other housing, food assistance, medical assistance, and other services essential for safety and well-being. Such discrimination could jeopardize the federal funds many nonprofits receive which strictly prohibit them from denying services to specific populations, particularly LGBT individuals.

ACTION ALERT!

Contact your Representative and urge them to vote **NO** to the Senate changes to HB 757. Click [HERE](#) to find the name and contact info for your Representative.

On February 19, the Senate passed the amended HB 757. The House must now vote to Agree or Disagree with the bill as amended.

- **Schedule:** The legislature has adopted a schedule that takes us through Day 40 on March 24. The schedule is available [here](#).
- **Unsure who your Senator and Representative are?** Click [HERE](#) to look them up and find their contact information.