



**Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence
2016 General Assembly - Legislative Report
January 29, 2016**

- The 2016 General Assembly convened on January 11. This is the second year of a two-year session, which means that any bill that did not pass last session is still eligible to be passed. Any bills that do not pass this session will be “dead” and must be reintroduced next session.
- **Budget – Funding for state-certified domestic violence centers FY 2016 Amended & FY 2017:** The Governor has released his proposed FY 2016 Amended and FY 2017 budgets, both of which include level state funding for state-certified domestic violence centers and state-funded sexual assault centers. The Governor’s proposed FY 2017 budget also includes an increase of \$193,125 for grants for civil legal services to victims of domestic violence, administered by the Administrative Office of the Courts.

On January 27, the House passed its FY 2016 Amended appropriations bill – including the level domestic violence and sexual assault funding proposed by the Governor – and sent it along to the Senate for further deliberation by the Senate Appropriations Committee. The House Appropriations Committee will now begin deliberating on the Governor’s FY 2017 budget proposal. The House and Senate Appropriations Committees will likely form a conference committee to negotiate and draw up a final set of recommendations for each 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 January 27, SB 193 passed favorably out of the Senate Judiciary Non-Civil Committee by committee substitute. The bill now moves to the Senate Rules Committee, which will decide whether the bill goes before the full Senate 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. HB 702 has been assigned to the House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee.
- **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, 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.
- **Stop Violence Against Women Day** will be held on February 2 from 8 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. Please plan to attend! We will gather at Central Presbyterian Church on Washington Street across the street from the Georgia State Capitol for breakfast and a legislative briefing/training and then head across the street to lobby our legislators.
- **Schedule:** The legislature has adopted a schedule that takes us through Day 40 on March 24. The schedule is available [here](#).