



Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence 2017 General Assembly - Legislative Report March 10, 2017

- The 2017 General Assembly convened on January 9. This is the first year of a two-year session. The Legislature adopted a schedule which ends the session at 40 days on March 30.

Crossover Day occurred on March 3. Crossover Day is the day by which a piece of legislation must pass its chamber of origin in order to have much chance of passing both chambers by the end of the session.

- **Budget – Funding for state-certified domestic violence centers FY 2017 Amended & FY 2018:** Both the House and the Senate have passed their FY 2017 Amended appropriations bills, including the level domestic violence and sexual assault funding proposed by the Governor. The House has also passed its version of the Governor's FY 2018 budget proposal, and the Senate has begun its deliberations on that budget. Once the Senate passed its version of the FY 2018 budget, 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](#).

- **Firearms and domestic violence:** [HB 541](#) would make it a felony crime for domestic violence perpetrators to possess a firearm or ammunition while they are subject to a Family Violence Protective Order or is they are convicted of a qualifying family violence-related misdemeanor. The legislation would also require that domestic violence perpetrators who are subject to this prohibition to relinquish their firearms to local law enforcement. HB 541 is scheduled to get a vote in the House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee on March 20. The committee will take testimony but will take no vote.
- **Sexual assault on college campuses:** [HB 51](#) proposes to drastically limit the ability of colleges and universities to adjudicate sexual assault on campus, among other crimes. It also requires that all felony-level cases be forwarded over to the local criminal justice system. The bill passed the full House prior to Crossover Day and is now assigned to the Senate Judiciary Committee.
- **Confidential name change for victims of domestic violence:** [HB 279](#) would allow victims of domestic violence to file for a legal name change for themselves and their children without being forced to give the customary public notice of their name change. HB 279

passed the full House prior to Crossover Day and is now scheduled to get a vote in the Senate Judiciary Committee on March 14.

- **Flexible sick leave – the Family Care Act:** [SB 201](#) 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. The bill passed out of the full Senate prior to Crossover Day and is now scheduled to get a vote in the House Insurance and Labor Committee.
- **Domestic Violence Helping Hands Act:** [HB 522](#) requires that barbers and cosmetologists obtain one hour of training on domestic violence and sexual assault awareness and intervention every two years as a part of their licensure requirements. HB 522 received a hearing in a subcommittee of House Judiciary Non-Civil after Crossover Day but did not receive a vote.
- **Georgia Tenant Victim Protection Act:** [HB 281](#) would offer certain protections to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking who need to vacate their housing lease agreements due to the violence. HB 281 has been assigned to the House Judiciary Committee.
- **Drivers' licenses for immigrants:** HB 324 would replace the drivers' licenses currently issued to undocumented immigrants with licenses that conspicuously identify their lack of full legal 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 opposes this bill, as it would further stigmatize these victims. HB 324 passed out of committee with some significant language changes but did not pass out of the full House by Crossover Day, which means that it has very little chance of passing this year.