



Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence 2019 General Assembly – Final Legislative Report

Sine Die, the last day of the Georgia General Assembly Session, occurred on April 2, 2019. The Governor has 40 days from the last day to either sign, take no action, or veto bills. As 2019 was the first year of Georgia's two year session, bills not successfully passed can be taken up again in the 2020 session.

Bills that PASSED

- **Budget – Funding for state-certified domestic violence centers FY 2019 Amended & FY 2020: The FY 2019 amended budget passed both chambers with level funding for domestic and sexual violence programs.** The Governor's FY 2020 budget proposal, which has been agreed upon by the House contains a \$390,000 increase in funds for the addition of one state-certified domestic violence shelter and six state-certified sexual assault centers.

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

- **Dignity for incarcerated women: HB 345** prohibits the shackling and restraint of women who are in their second or third trimester of pregnancy. The bill also ensures that no pregnant woman is subject to particular types of physical examinations unless prescribed and performed by a licensed healthcare professional. **This bill passed both chambers and was sent to the Governor's office on April 11, 2019.** Should the Governor sign or not veto the bill, it will become law on July 1, 2019.
- **Prohibiting insurance discrimination against victims of sexual assault: HB 227** expands existing law which prohibits discrimination against victims of family violence to include victims of sexual assault. **This bill passed both chambers and was sent to the Governor's office on April 4, 2019.** Should the Governor sign or not veto the bill, it will become law on July 1, 2019.
- **Raising marriage minimum age: HB 228** changes the minimum age of marriage from 16 to 17 years of age. **This bill passed both chambers and was sent to the Governor on April 12, 2019.** Should the Governor sign or not veto the bill, it will become law on July 1, 2019.
- **Preservation of sexual assault evidence: HB 282** increases the amount of time that law enforcement agencies are required to preserve certain evidence of sexual assault. **This bill passed both chambers and was sent to the Governor's office on April 11, 2019.** Should the Governor sign or not veto the bill, it will become law on July 1, 2019.



- **Living Infants Fairness and Equality (LIFE) Act-** Bills were introduced in the Senate and House which would place restrictions on women's ability to access abortion care. Both [HB 481](#) and [SB 218](#) would prevent abortion care from occurring once there is a detectable heartbeat and allow exceptions in cases of rape, incest, or when there is threat to the mother's life. While SB 218 did not gain further movement prior to Crossover Day, HB 481 passed on the house floor and in the Senate by substitute. The substitute version was returned to the House where an agree vote occurred. **HB 481 was signed by the Governor on May 7, 2019. The bill is not set to take effect until January 2020.**

Bills that FAILED

- **Firearms and domestic violence:** [SB 150](#) was heard in the Senate Judiciary Committee and a substitute version of the bill was unanimously passed on March 4. This bill would have made it a felony crime for domestic violence perpetrators to possess, transport, or receive a firearm or ammunition while they are subject to a Family Violence Protective Order, if they are on first offender probation, or if they've been convicted of a family violence offense. Despite passing out of committee, it unfortunately did not advance to the full Senate body for a vote. As this is the first year of a two year session, the bill can be taken up again in the next legislative session.

In addition to SB 150, two other firearms and domestic violence related bills were introduced in the House. Both [HB 20](#) and [HB 58](#) remained in the House Public Safety Committee where they were assigned. Neither bill gained a hearing.

- **Strengthening protections for victims of dating violence:** [HB 331](#) would have expanded the definition of family violence to also include dating partners. This bill was tabled and remained in the House Judiciary non-civil committee.
- **Dominant aggressor:** [HB 359](#) would have changed current criminal procedural language of primary aggressor to dominant aggressor when determining whom to arrest. This bill received no hearings and has failed for this session.
- **Equitable housing, public accommodations, and employment:** [HB 19](#), a bill addressing housing discrimination, equal rights of enjoyment/privilege to public accommodations, and prohibiting discrimination in private/public employment remained in the House Judiciary Committee. The bill never gained a hearing during session.



- **Child Support Cooperation Act of 2019:** [HB 80](#) would've required individuals seeking to receive food stamp benefits (SNAP) to cooperate with child support enforcement officials. This bill remained in the House Judiciary and gained no further hearings.
- **Sexual assault by persons with supervisory or disciplinary authority:** [HB 43](#) and [SB 40](#) both sought to revise the crime of sexual assault by persons with supervisory or disciplinary authority over another person. These bills would have closed a longstanding loophole of sexual misconduct occurring between school officials and students. HB 43 passed out of the House Judiciary Committee but was unable to pass out of the Rules Committee and make it to the Senate floor for a full vote. SB 40 gained no further movement in the Senate Judiciary Committee. Both bills have failed for this year's session.
- **Home invasion and domestic violence:** [HB 260](#) would have expanded the existing home invasion statute to include acts of entering with the intent to commit an act of family violence. This bill passed out of the House Judiciary Committee but was unable to make it to the House floor for a vote before Crossover Day. On April 2, 2019, the bill was withdrawn from the House Judiciary Non-civil committee and recommitted.
- **Female inmate health & wellness:** [HB 475](#) would have addressed the housing, health, and wellness needs of female inmates. Additionally this bill would have mandated training for professionals working within prison institutions and who directly interact with pregnant female inmates or those who are post-partum.
- **LEP access to public services:** [HB 363](#) would have provided reasonable access to public services for individuals who have limited English proficiency. This bill remained in the House Government Affairs Committee and received no hearings during the session.
- **Rideshare safety:** [HB 74](#) would have prevented licensed firearm holders who provide ride share services from carrying or possessing a firearm/weapons in the vehicle used to administer transportation services. This bill received no hearings and failed for this session.
- **Increase minimum wage:** [HB 116](#) sought to increase Georgia's minimum wage to \$15. This bill received no hearings and failed for this session.