



**Georgia Department
of Human Services**

Office of Legislative Affairs
and Communications

Georgia General Assembly

Session wrap up

Ashley Fielding Cooper, Director

Vision, Mission and Core Values

Vision

Stronger Families for a Stronger Georgia.

Mission

Strengthen Georgia by providing Individuals and Families access to services that promote self-sufficiency, independence, and protect Georgia's vulnerable children and adults.

Core Values

- Provide access to resources that offer support and empower Georgians and their families.
- Deliver services professionally and treat all clients with dignity and respect.
- Manage business operations effectively and efficiently by aligning resources across the agency.
- Promote accountability, transparency and quality in all services we deliver and programs we administer.
- Develop our employees at all levels of the agency.



2017 General Assembly Session

- 40-Day session began on Jan. 9
 - Ended March 30
- Year one of Biennial
 - Bills not achieving full passage by Day 40 are still “live” in 2018
- Study Committees in the summer-fall could elevate new legislative priorities for 2018
- Open statewide elective offices could elevate new legislative priorities in 2018



2017 General Assembly Session

The Office of Legislative Affairs and Communications tracked more than 60 bills and resolutions in the House and Senate.

These include:

- House Bills 43 and 44
 - AFY 17 and AFY 18 budgets
- House Bill 124, sponsored by Rep. David Clark
 - Moves prosecution of welfare and food stamp fraud to criminal code
- House Bill 250, sponsored by Rep. Mandi Ballinger
 - Authorizes DHS to accept certification letters from DECAL for approval of babysitters of foster youth
- House Bill 221, sponsored by Rep. Chuck Efstration
 - Uniform Power of Attorney law
- Senate Bill 137, sponsored by Sen. Greg Kirk
 - Shifts burden of administrative fee for child support to noncustodial parent



Agency-initiated legislation

House Bill 75

- *Sponsor:* Rep. Wendell Willard
- *Status:* Signed by Gov. Deal May 8
- *Summary:* Closes a loophole in current law, protecting information from release if it is provided to DFCS case managers by law enforcement in investigations of a child's death or serious injury.



Agency-initiated legislation

House Bill 86

- *Sponsor:* Rep. Mary Margaret Oliver
- *Status:* Signed by Gov. Deal May 8
- *Summary:* Adds “sex trafficking” to the definition of child abuse. Bill seeks to fulfill a requirement in federal law and to ensure continued federal funding through the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA).



Agency-initiated legislation

Senate Bill 168

- *Sponsor:* Sen. Butch Miller
- *Status:* Signed by Gov. Deal May 8
- *Summary:* Expands access to Georgia's child abuse registry, allowing other governments to receive information to vet potential foster and adoptive parents and investigate child abuse. Bill also allows private adoption agencies to receive information from child abuse records (pre-registry) and enables the Division to share information with other agencies that work with families.



Agency-initiated legislation

House Bill 344

- *Sponsor:* Rep. Katie Dempsey
- *Status:* Awaiting Senate floor vote
- *Summary:* Clean up legislation from *HB 568*, passed in 2015. Bill changes the term “movant” to “party.” The change is necessary to implement the full intent of *HB 568*, and to allow adults court-ordered to pay child support request a paternity test if they have not previously had access.



Study Committees

Senate Study Committees

- SR 188 - Senate Study Committee on Barriers to Georgians' Access to Adequate Healthcare
- SR 352 - Senate Study Committee on Homelessness
- SR 392 - Senate Study Committee on Rural Georgia
- SR 412 - Senate Study Committee on Stroke Trauma Centers
- SR 414 - Senate Study Committee on Utilization and Modernization of the State Capitol and Other Buildings

House Study Committees

- HR 240 - House Study Committee on Georgians' Barriers to Access to Adequate Health Care
- HR 629 - House Study Committee on Utilization and Modernization of the State Capitol and Other Buildings

Joint Study Committees

- **SR 130 - Joint Study Committee on Transparency and Open Access in Government**
- HR 338 - Joint Study Committee on Establishment of a Leadership Academy



Questions

Ashley Fielding Cooper
Ashley.Fielding@dhs.ga.gov

