



2025 Crossover Day Report

Last week (March 3-7), legislators were in session on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday for Legislative Days 26 through 28.

Thursday marked Crossover Day, the critical deadline for bills to pass out of their chamber of origin to remain viable this session. Any bill that failed to clear at least one chamber before adjournment on Thursday night is effectively dead for the session—unless its language is successfully incorporated into a related bill later in the year.

Both the House and Senate worked through a packed agenda on Crossover Day (3/6). The Senate concluded its business just after 10 PM, while the House adjourned around 11 PM. Several notable bills failed to make it past the deadline, including:

- Two measures that would have authorized sports betting in Georgia
- A bill proposing to withhold funding from public schools and colleges that promote DEI programs
- Legislation aimed at limiting businesses to owning no more than 2,000 single-family homes in Georgia
- A proposal to place a statue of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas across the street from the State Capitol

House and Senate members reconvened this week on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday for Legislative Days 29 through 31. Wednesday will be dedicated to committee work, as lawmakers begin reviewing legislation that has crossed over from the other chamber.

With Sine Die set for Friday, April 4, legislators now have just a few weeks to finalize consideration of the remaining bills.

Budget

On Monday (3/3), the House and Senate reached an agreement on the final version of [House Bill 67](#), the Amended Fiscal Year 2025 budget, which has now been sent to Governor Kemp for approval. The House voted 170 to 3 to accept the Senate's substitute version of the bill, as amended by the House. The Senate then voted 55 to 1 to approve the version sent back by the House.

On Crossover Day, Governor Kemp, alongside Speaker Jon Burns and Lieutenant Governor Burt Jones, held a signing ceremony at the Capitol for the \$40.5 billion Amended Fiscal Year 2025 budget. Key highlights include:

- \$867 million for Hurricane Helene relief and response measures



- \$50 million in additional funding for school security
- \$266 million for water and sewer infrastructure
- \$1 billion in tax refunds for Georgia taxpayers
- Nearly \$500 million for freight investment
- Approximately \$140 million in additional K-12 education funding
- More than \$434 million in new funding for the Georgia Department of Corrections
- Over \$105 million in additional public safety funding

During the ceremony, Lieutenant Governor Burt Jones emphasized the Senate's focus on transportation investments and Hurricane Helene relief funding, while Speaker Burns highlighted the House's efforts to secure funding for school safety and rural hospitals.

The House is expected to pass its version of the Fiscal Year 2026 budget the week of March 10.

Social Issues

On Tuesday (3/4), the Senate passed [Senate Bill 36](#), the *Georgia Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA)*, sponsored by Senator Ed Setzler (R-Acworth), by a vote of 32 to 23. The legislation aims to prevent state and local governments from burdening a person's religious exercise, even if the burden arises from a generally applicable law. The bill's language mirrors a federal RFRA law, which currently does not apply at the state or local levels. The bill has now been assigned to the House Judiciary Committee for consideration. A similar bill introduced by Senator Setzler last session passed the Senate but failed to advance in the House.

On Monday (3/3), the Senate passed [Senate Bill 30](#), sponsored by Health and Human Services Chairman Ben Watson (R-Savannah). This bill seeks to prohibit the prescription and administration of certain medical procedures and treatments for minors related to gender dysphoria. It would expand the existing restrictions to include both irreversible and reversible treatments, such as hormone replacement therapy. The measure passed the Senate 34 to 19 and moved to the House Public and Community Health Committee for further review.

[Senate Bill 120](#), introduced by Senator Marty Harbin (R-Tyrone), proposed prohibiting public schools, local education agencies, public colleges, and the Technical College System of Georgia from promoting, supporting, or maintaining diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs beyond what is required by the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. and Georgia Constitutions. The bill also sought to withhold state funding from postsecondary institutions that violated these provisions.



On Monday (3/3), the Senate Higher Education Committee approved the bill, but despite being scheduled for a floor vote on Crossover Day, the Senate adjourned before voting. As a result, the bill cannot advance further this session.

On Crossover Day, the Senate considered [Senate Bill 57](#), the *Freedom of Speech and Belief Act*, introduced by Senator Blake Tillery (R-Vidalia). The legislation aimed to prohibit financial institutions and utility providers from denying service to individuals based on their political beliefs or the exercise of any constitutional right. After an extended floor debate, during which several amendments were introduced, the measure failed by a vote of 13 to 43.

Several other bills have already passed at least one chamber this session, including:

1. [Senate Bill 39](#), sponsored by Appropriations Chairman Blake Tillery (R-Vidalia), which would prohibit state funds from covering expenses related to gender-affirming care under the State Health Benefit Plan.
2. [House Bill 267](#), the *Riley Gaines Act*, and [Senate Bill 1](#), the *Fair and Safe Athletic Opportunities Act*, both of which seek to prohibit males from competing in women's sports.

Tort Reform

Both bills included in Governor Kemp's tort reform legislative package have already passed the Senate.

Last week, Rules Committee Chairman Butch Parrish (R-Swainsboro) announced the formation of the Subcommittee of Rules on Lawsuit Reform, which will oversee the next steps for the legislation. The subcommittee is chaired by Representative Rob Leverrett (R-Elberton) and includes the following members:

- Speaker Pro Tempore Jan Jones (R-Milton)
- Majority Leader Chuck Efration (R-Mulberry)
- Rules Committee Chairman Butch Parrish (R-Swainsboro)
- Judiciary Committee Chairman Stan Gunter (R-Blairsville)
- Appropriations Committee Chairman Matt Hatchett (R-Dublin)
- Representative Mark Newton (R-Augusta)
- Representative Al Williams (D-Midway)
- Minority Caucus Whip Sam Park (D-Lawrenceville)
- Minority Caucus Chairman Tanya Miller (D-Atlanta)
- Representative Stacey Evans (D-Atlanta)



Last week, the subcommittee held its first hearing on [Senate Bill 68](#), a measure proposing comprehensive changes to civil practice, evidentiary matters, damages, and liability in tort actions. President Pro Tempore John Kennedy (R-Macon) presented the bill and answered questions from committee members. A second hearing was held last week (3/3), featuring testimony both in support of and against the measure. However, no formal action was taken.

Additionally, last week the Senate unanimously passed [Senate Bill 69](#), the *Georgia Courts Access and Consumer Protection Act*, which aims to regulate third-party litigation financing practices in Georgia. This bill, also carried by President Pro Tempore John Kennedy, has not yet been scheduled for a hearing in the Subcommittee of Rules on Lawsuit Reform.

Tax Relief

Last week, the House passed two key tax relief measures that are priorities for Governor Kemp.

[House Bill 111](#), sponsored by Representative Soo Hong (R-Lawrenceville), aims to accelerate the reduction of the state income tax from 5.39% to 5.19% in 2025. Under previously enacted legislation, the state income tax rate is set to decrease by 0.1% annually until it reaches 4.99%. The bill was debated on the House floor on Crossover Day and passed by a vote of 110 to 60. It now moves to the Senate for consideration.

Another priority measure, [House Bill 112](#), sponsored by Representative Lauren McDonald (R-Cumming), would provide a one-time tax credit for all Georgia taxpayers who filed returns in 2023 and 2024. Under the proposal:

- Single taxpayers would receive \$250
- Married taxpayers filing jointly would receive \$500
- Taxpayers filing as heads of household would receive \$375

The House unanimously approved the measure on Crossover Day, and it has moved to the Senate for further consideration.

School Safety and Education

On Crossover Day, the House passed [House Bill 268](#), sponsored by Representative Holt Persinger (R-Winder), by a vote of 159 to 13. This measure, a top legislative priority for Speaker Jon Burns (R-Newington), aims to enhance school safety and student information sharing. It would:

- Require student records to be transferred within a specified timeframe when a student moves between school districts



- Establish the Student and School Safety System (S3) to store information on credible threats against Georgia's schools and students
- Mandate that schools adopt Behavioral Threat Assessment Teams and use an anonymous reporting app
- Create mental health coordinator positions in each school district to connect students with available resources
- Increase penalties for terroristic threats and require schools to suspend and provide counseling for students who make credible threats

The bill has moved to the Senate for further consideration.

The Senate also advanced multiple school safety measures last week.

On Crossover Day, the Senate unanimously passed [Senate Bill 17](#), also known as *Ricky and Alyssa's Law*, introduced by Senator Jason Anavitarte (R-Dallas). This legislation would require public and private schools to implement a mobile panic alert system and establish accurate school mapping, integrated with software used by local, state, and federal public safety agencies. The bill has moved to the House for consideration.

Additionally, the Senate approved [Senate Bill 61](#) by Senator Greg Dolezal (R-Cumming) by a vote of 33 to 22. The measure would:

- Strengthen school safety measures through threat assessments, updated safety plans, and enhanced training
- Improve information sharing between schools, courts, and relevant agencies
- Create specific criminal offenses for acts of school violence
- Increase accountability for serious school-related offenses committed by minors

The bill has headed to the House, where it will be assigned to committee.

The Senate also passed [Senate Bill 179](#) by a vote of 54 to 1. Sponsored by Senator Clint Dixon (R-Buford), the bill would:

- Require student records to be transferred within 10 days for students changing schools
- Allow parents to access student records within five days of a request
- Impose a misdemeanor penalty on parents or guardians who fail to disclose ongoing disciplinary issues when transferring their child to another school



- Mandate that students in grades six through 12 take at least one suicide prevention class

The measure has moved to the House for consideration.

One of the final bills passed on Crossover Day was [House Bill 328](#), sponsored by Representative Kasey Carpenter (R-Dalton). The bill, which passed 98 to 75, would:

- Increase the Student Scholarship Organization (SSO) program's annual cap from \$120 million to \$140 million
- Eliminate the ability for taxpayers and businesses to carry forward unused credits to future tax years
- Amend provisions related to insurance companies' participation in the program

The bill has moved to the Senate for further review.

Gambling

Late last week, Representative Marcus Wiedower (R-Watkinsville) introduced two pieces of legislation aimed at authorizing and regulating sports betting in Georgia.

- [House Resolution 450](#) proposed a constitutional amendment to allow the General Assembly to legalize sports betting in Georgia. If passed by the legislature, the measure would require approval from a majority of Georgia voters in a statewide referendum.
- [House Bill 686](#), known as the *Georgia Sports Betting Act*, would establish the Georgia Lottery Corporation's authority to regulate sports betting. The bill proposed a 24% privilege tax on adjusted gross income from sports betting and the creation of the Georgia Sports Betting Proceeds Trust Fund to manage tax revenue.

During a Higher Education Committee hearing on Wednesday (3/5), House Minority Whip Sam Park (D-Lawrenceville) introduced an amendment to add i-Gaming, which would have expanded online betting to include casino-style games. The amendment failed, and the original resolution passed out of committee unchanged.

Both measures were added to the House floor calendar late on Crossover Day, but neither was brought up for a vote before the House adjourned at 11 PM.

Separately, [Senate Resolution 131](#), sponsored by Senator Carden Summers (R-Cordele), sought to amend the Georgia Constitution to legalize sports betting and casino gaming. However, the measure failed in the Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee and is no longer eligible for consideration this session.



Gun-Related Legislation

On Tuesday (3/4), the House passed [House Bill 79](#), the *Firearm Safe Handling and Secure Storage Tax Credit Act*, sponsored by Representative Mark Newton (R-Augusta). The legislation would allow taxpayers to claim a tax credit of up to \$300 for eligible expenses related to firearm safety courses and secure storage devices. Key provisions of the bill include:

- An annual aggregate cap of \$3 million for the tax credit program
- A lifetime cap of \$300 per individual taxpayer
- An aggregate annual cap of \$10 million for the program
- Prohibition on carrying forward unused tax credits
- A sunset date of 2031 for the program

The measure passed the House 165 to 8 and has moved to the Senate for consideration.

Additionally, [Senate Bill 47](#), which passed the Senate earlier this session, proposes an 11-day sales tax exemption on firearms, gun safes, ammunition, and related accessories. The tax holiday would begin annually on the second Friday of October. Sponsored by Senator Jason Anavitarte (R-Dallas), the bill has been assigned to the House Ways and Means Committee for further review.

Data Centers

Earlier this session, Representative John Carson (R-Marietta) introduced [House Bill 559](#), which sought to eliminate the sales and use tax exemption for data centers at the end of 2026—five years earlier than the current 2031 sunset date. However, the measure never received a hearing in the Ways and Means Committee and is not eligible to move forward this session.

Last session, the General Assembly passed [House Bil 1192](#), which would have:

- Paused the issuance of data center tax exemption certificates between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2026
- Established the Special Commission on Data Center Energy Planning

However, Governor Kemp vetoed the bill at the end of the 2024 bill review period.

Another data center-related bill, [Senate Bill 34](#), introduced by Senator Chuck Hufstetler (R-Rome), also failed to advance this session. The bill proposed requiring electric utilities to recover costs incurred to serve commercial data centers directly from those data centers. While the measure passed the Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee, it was not selected by the Rules Committee for a floor vote ahead of the Crossover Day deadline.



Speed Cameras

Last week, the House passed two bills aimed at changing school zone speed camera laws in Georgia.

- [House Bill 225](#), sponsored by Representative Dale Washburn (R-Macon), would prohibit local governments and law enforcement agencies from entering into or renewing contracts for automated traffic enforcement safety devices. The bill seeks to phase out school zone speed cameras entirely by 2026. The measure passed the House by a vote of 129 to 37 and has been assigned to the Senate Public Safety Committee for consideration.
- [House Bill 651](#), sponsored by Representative Alan Powell (R-Hartwell), takes a different approach. Instead of banning the cameras, it would establish new regulations, including:
 - Setting standards for warning signs in school zones where speed cameras are used
 - Requiring that funds collected from violations be used solely for public safety and school safety initiatives
 - Mandating that schools obtain a permit from the Georgia Department of Transportation before installing a camera

The bill passed the House 164 to 8 and has also been assigned to the Senate Public Safety Committee for further review.