

2017 Legislative Update
Week 10 – March 17, 2017

The General Assembly completed Legislative Day 35 of the 40 Day Session on Thursday, March 16. They reconvened on Monday, March 20 for Legislative Day 36. The Legislature will be in session Monday, Wednesday and Friday of this week, with committee days on Tuesday and Thursday.

Budget

HB 44, the 2018 Budget, is sponsored by Rep. David Ralston (R- Blue Ridge). The House disagreed with the Senate version of the bill and a conference committee has been appointed to work out the differences between the two chambers.

Business & Industry

HB 61 sponsored by Rep. Jay Powell (R- Camilla) allows the state to collect sales tax on online purchases through either direct collection by the retailer or by notification of the tax amount to the consumer and the state. The bill was heard in the Sales Tax subcommittee on Tuesday, March 14th and has been called up to the full Senate Finance Committee to be heard next week.

HB 192 sponsored by Rep. Beth Beskin (R-Atlanta), aims to return Georgia to an environment that facilitates reasonable decisions by corporate directors and officers. It also encourages companies to incorporate in Georgia, thereby creating opportunities for further economic growth. HB 192 passed out of the Senate Banking and Financial Institutions Committee on Thursday, March 15th and awaits action in Senate Rules.

HB 199 sponsored by Rep. Trey Rhodes (R- Greensboro), is an income tax credit incentive for video game development and post production work. The bill is intended to jumpstart emerging companies by making capital more readily available when they need it most. The bill passed the Senate Finance Committee on Wednesday, March 15 and now moves on to Senate Rules.

SB 85 sponsored by Sen. Rick Jeffares (R – McDonough) is a compromise reached between the Georgia Beer Wholesalers and the craft beer industry which will allow breweries in Georgia to make limited direct sales of their product to their customers. The bill caps the total amount of direct sales by each brewer to 3000 barrels per year and allows a customer to purchase a case of beer per day directly from the brewery for take-out from the premises. The bill was amended in the House to include a provision allowing distilleries to sell their products in a similar manner. The bill passed out of the House on Monday, March 13 by a vote of 147-14. It will now go back to the Senate for an Agree/Disagree motion.

Economic Development

HB 265 sponsored by Rep. Chuck Efstoration (R – Dacula) amends the existing Quality Jobs Tax Credit by allowing qualified projects which have at least \$2.5 million investment to receive a subsequent quality jobs tax credit. The bill also allows for a sales tax exemption of property used for or in the renovation or expansion of certain theaters and provides a sales tax exemption on certain tickets for arts and educational programming. HB 265 passed the Senate on Tuesday, March 14 with a vote of 34-18.

Education and Workforce Development

HB 338 sponsored by Rep. Kevin Tanner (R- Dawsonville), provides for a system of supports and assistance for low-performing schools identified as in the greatest need of assistance. The bill also looks to provide for and create an Education Turnaround Advisory Council and a Joint Study Committee on the Establishment of a State Accreditation Process. The bill continues to be worked on in the Senate Education and Youth Committee and is scheduled for a hearing on Monday, March 20th.

SB 3 sponsored by Sen. Lindsey Tippins (R- Marietta), known as the CONNECT Act, expands credentialing for vocational and skilled labor education in secondary schools. The bill passed out of the House Education subcommittee on Education, Innovation and Workforce Development on Monday, March 13th and will be heard in full committee next week.

Transportation

HB 160 sponsored by Rep. Kevin Tanner (R – Dawsonville), creates the Georgia Commission on Transit Governance and Funding to study and address the needs of mass transportation. The bill passed out of the Senate Transportation Committee on Wednesday, March 15th and awaits action in Senate Rules.

SB 6 sponsored by Sen. Steve Gooch (R – Dahlonega), creates a statewide regional transit council to address regional solutions to issues of infrastructure for transportation. The bill passed out of the House Transportation Committee on Thursday, March 16th and is now in House Rules.

For detailed information on specific legislation visit: <http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/en-US/Search.aspx>

The DC Chamber is a member of the Regional Business Coalition (RBC), an organization of over a dozen of the largest and most active Chambers of Commerce throughout the metro Atlanta region. RBC member chambers represent over 15,000 member companies who employ millions of metro Atlanta residents. The RBC's primary goal is to represent the interests of RBC Chamber members on regional public policy issues impacting our transportation, water and air quality and to advocate for solutions that improve metro Atlanta's quality of life and economic vitality.