

2017 Legislative Update Week 11

The General Assembly completed Day 38 at 7:30 pm on Friday, March 24th. This week the legislature will be in session on Tuesday and Thursday with committee meetings on Monday and Wednesday. Sine Die is scheduled for Thursday, March 30.

Budget

[HB 44](#), the 2018 Budget, sponsored by Rep. David Ralston (R- Blue Ridge) was agreed to by the House and Senate and is now awaiting the Governor's approval.

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. This bill passed the Senate Finance Committee on Wednesday, March 22nd and awaits action in Senate Rules.

[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. This bill passed the Senate by a vote of 41-10 on Friday, March 24th.

[HB 199](#) sponsored by Rep. Trey Rhodes (R- Greensboro), an income tax credit incentive for video game development and post production work, is intended to jumpstart emerging companies by making capital more readily available when they need it most. The bill passed out of the Senate with a vote of 46-4 on Wednesday, March 22nd. The House agreed to the Senate version as amended by a vote of 159-4 on Friday, March 24th. The bill now goes back to the Senate for an Agree/Disagree motion.

[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. This effort is designed to help the craft beer and local distillery industries in Georgia. The Senate agreed to the House changes and the bill now awaits the Governor's approval.

Economic Development

[HB155](#), the "Georgia Musical Investment Act" is sponsored by Rep. Amy Carter (R - Valdosta) and offers a 20 – 25% income tax credit for projects that are recorded in Georgia or for tours

that begin in the state. The bill passed the Senate Finance Committee on Wednesday, March 22nd and awaits action in Senate Rules.

[HB 158](#) sponsored by Rep. Ron Stephens (R – Savannah) aims to allow two “destination resorts” with casinos in Georgia and create the Georgia Gaming Commission. The legislation requires a two-billion-dollar minimum investment in Atlanta with 450 million dollars required for the unspecified second location. The bill was heard in the House Regulated Industries Committee on Thursday, March 23rd but no action was taken on the bill.

[HB 265](#) sponsored by Rep. Chuck Efration (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. The Senate version of the bill was agreed to by the House on Wednesday, March 22nd and awaits the Governor’s approval.

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 passed the Senate floor Friday, March 24th by a vote of 37-18.

[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 was scheduled for a vote on Friday, March 24th but was postponed until the next legislative day, Tuesday, March 28th.

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

The Douglas County Chamber is part 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.