



2017 Final Legislative Update for the Week Ending March 30th

The General Assembly ended the 2017 legislative session on Friday morning, March 31st at 1 AM. Looking back at the 2017 session, this year's "do little" session, as the AJC coined it, was primarily about guns on campus, immigrants and opioids.

House Bill 280 was this year's version of Campus Carry. After being vetoed by Gov. Deal after the 2016 Legislative Session, this proposed legislation was back. On the final legislative day, the House and Senate both passed a compromise version. Regarding immigration, House Bill 452 says the Georgia Bureau of Investigation will be required to share information it has been receiving from Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) on criminal aliens who have been released into Georgia instead of being deported as they were ordered under the Obama administration. House Bill 37 provides that private postsecondary institutions in this state shall not adopt sanctuary policies and provided penalties for those institutions that do violate those policies. To address Georgia's opioid epidemic, House Bill 249 is designed to "collect more information regarding the dispensing and use of certain controlled substances and to change the frequency of reporting opioid prescriptions in the electronic database, the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program ("PDMP"). It now requires physicians and physician assistants to log into the PDMP prior to prescribing painkillers and other drugs. All of these aforementioned bills now sit on Gov. Deal's desk awaiting his consideration.

Another measure that ended up being a political battle between the House and Senate was House Bill 159 authored by Rep. Bert Reeves. The measure proposes to substantially revise, updates and modernizes the "general provisions applicable to adoptions." A "clean" version of HB 159 passed the House on February 24 with a vote of 165-0. After a month of waiting for a hearing in the Senate Judiciary Committee, Sen. William Ligon of Brunswick amended the bill by providing protections to private child placing agencies, including those agencies that have state contracts that would authorize individual agencies to decline to place a child who they deemed to be in conflict with their mission statement. During the committee hearing, objections were raised by Rep. Reeves and the Director of Georgia Department of Family and Child Services, Bobby Cagle, who raised concerns that the amendment may place Georgia in conflict with federal law, potentially placing up to \$200 million in federal funds in jeopardy. Sen. Ligon told the AJC that the changes were "grossly misconstrued" and "the amendment was not discriminatory on its face." After passing out of the committee with the amendment, the bill was not called until the last day of the legislative session at 1:00 AM, and was eventually sent back to committee without being given a vote.

As far as bills directly impacting the social work profession, SB 52 extends a sunset provision authorizing LPCs to perform a 1013 involuntary transportation to a mental health receiving facility was sent to Governor Deal for consideration.

The General Assembly will not meet again until January 2018 for the second year of the legislative biennial. While most of the bills did not make it across the finish line, all of the bills from this year's session will once again be available for consideration during next year's 2018 legislative session.

The below bills have passed their respective chambers and are on their way to the Governor's desk for consideration of his signature:

- **HB 0037 -- Education; private postsecondary institutions in Georgia shall not adopt sanctuary policies; provide**
- **SB 0052 -- Mental Health; authorizing licensed professional counselor; sunset provision; repeal**
- **SB 0088 -- 'Narcotic Treatment Programs Enforcement Act'**
- **The following bills were tracked during this year's session and remain available for consideration during next year's legislative session:**
- **HB 0002 -- Childhood sexual abuse; revival of certain claims; change provisions**
- **HB 0009 -- Crimes and offenses; use of device to film under or through person's clothing under certain circumstances; prohibit**
- **HB 0016 -- Elementary and secondary education; bullying; revise provisions**
- **HB 0037 -- Education; private postsecondary institutions in Georgia shall not adopt sanctuary policies; provide**
- **HB 0051 -- Postsecondary institutions; reporting and investigation of certain crimes by officials and employees; provide manner**
- **HB 0052 -- Social services; TANF assistance for children with legal custodians; provide**
- **HB 0053 -- Juvenile Code; jurisdiction to include children who are under the age of 18 years; change**
- **HB 0077 -- Elementary and secondary education; training materials in mental health; provide**
- **HB 0173 -- Mental health; marriage and family therapists to perform certain acts; authorize**
- **HB 0188 -- Expand Medicaid Now Act; enact**
- **HB 0267 -- The Paid Sick Leave Act; enact**
- **HB 0273 -- Quality Basic Education Act; daily recess for students in kindergarten and grades one through five; provide**
- **HB 0343 -- Criminal procedure; certain outdated terminology; replace**
- **HB 0345 -- Georgia Pay Equity Act; enact**

- **HB 0454 -- Health; publicly funded health facilities offering HIV testing; provide certain information**
- **HB 0455 -- Whole Women's Health Act; enact**
- **HB 0486 -- Georgia Registered Professional Nurse Practice Act; training of proxy caregivers; provisions**
- **HB 0509 -- Human Trafficking Prevention Act; enact**
- **HB 0583 -- Labor and industrial relations; rights, powers, and responsibilities of professional employer organizations are not to be construed to exempt any person from licensure requirements; provide**
- **HR 0354 -- Georgia Department of Education; develop and provide a list of training materials to increase awareness of mental health issues and disabilities; urge**
- **HR 0404 -- Joint Study Committee on Comprehensive Civil Rights Legislation; create**
- **HR 0511 -- State of Georgia; paramount right to life of all human beings; recognize - CA**
- **SB 0004 -- "Enhancing Mental Health Treatment in Georgia Act"; Georgia Mental Health Treatment Task Force; establish**
- **SB 0007 -- Medical Assistance; obtaining federal financial participation for medical assistance payments to providers of Medicaid expansion; authorization of appropriations**
- **SB 0040 -- Mental Health; transport certain mentally ill patients; authorization of emergency medical services personnel**
- **SB 0040 -- Mental Health; transport certain mentally ill patients; authorization of emergency medical services personnel**
- **SB 0052 -- Mental Health; authorizing licensed professional counselor; sunset provision; repeal**
- **SB 0055 -- "Psychiatric Advance Directive Act"**
- **SB 0081 -- "Jeffrey Dallas Gay, Jr., Act."; opioid antagonists under conditions the state health officer may impose; provide state health officer may issue standing order permitting certain persons and entities to obtain**
- **SB 0088 -- 'Narcotic Treatment Programs Enforcement Act'**
- **SB 0099 -- Georgia Crime Information Center; purging a person's hospitalization information for purpose of National Instant Criminal Background Check; provide for a judicial procedure**
- **SB 0119 -- Fair Housing, Public Officers and Employees and the Merit System; discrimination based on sexual orientation; prohibit; public accommodations; provide**
- **SB 0193 -- Positive Alternatives for Pregnancy and Parenting Grant Program; program mission and practice; revise**
- **SB 0201 -- Labor and Industrial Relations; employees to use sick leave for the care of immediate family members; allow**
- **SB 0234 -- Cruelty to Children; leaving certain children in vehicles under certain circumstances constitutes cruelty to children in third degree; provide**

- **SB 0238 -- 'Whole Women's Health Act'**
- **SB 0239 -- Woman's Right to Know Act; voluntary and informed consent requirements; include chemical abortion**
- **SR 0105 -- United States Constitution; religious organizations receive public aid; prevent discrimination - CA**

Wendí L. Clifton, Esq.

NASW Georgia Chapter Legislative Advocate