



Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence 2017 General Assembly - Legislative Report February 24, 2017

- The 2017 General Assembly convened on January 9. This is the first year of a two-year session. The Legislature adopted a schedule which ends the session at 40 days on March 30.
- **Budget – Funding for state-certified domestic violence centers FY 2017 Amended & FY 2018:** Both the House and the Senate have passed their FY 2017 Amended appropriations bills, including the level domestic violence and sexual assault funding proposed by the Governor. The House has also passed its version of the Governor's FY 2018 budget proposal, and the Senate has begun its deliberations on that budget. Once the Senate passed its version of the FY 2018 budget, the House and Senate Appropriations Committees will likely form a conference committee to negotiate and draw up a final set of recommendations for each budget.

Budget documents can be viewed [here](#).
- **Firearms and domestic violence:** GCADV is working with potential bill sponsors to introduce legislation that would make it a felony crime for domestic violence perpetrators to possess a firearm or ammunition while they are subject to a Family Violence Protective Order or is they are convicted of a qualifying family violence-related misdemeanor. The legislation would also require that domestic violence perpetrators who are subject to this prohibition to relinquish their firearms to local law enforcement. Stay tuned for future updates.
- **Sexual assault on college campuses:** [HB 51](#) proposes to drastically limit the ability of colleges and universities to adjudicate sexual assault on campus, among other crimes. It also requires that all felony-level cases be forwarded over to the local criminal justice system. After passing favorably out of the Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee, the bill was sent back to that subcommittee for further changes and received a favorable vote by that subcommittee on February 23. The bill is expected to receive a vote in the full House Appropriations Committee on February 27. **Individuals, domestic violence programs, and sexual assault programs with Representatives serving on the House Appropriations Committee are urged to contact those members and ask them to vote NO on HB 51.** You can find a list of the members of the House Appropriations Committee [HERE](#). You can find the name and contact information for your House member [HERE](#).
- **Confidential name change for victims of domestic violence:** [HB 279](#) would allow victims of domestic violence to file for a legal name change for themselves and their children without being forced to give the customary public notice of their name change. HB 279 passed favorably out of the House Judiciary Committee and is expected to be voted on by the full House on February 27. **Please contact your House member and urge them to vote YES on HB 279.** You can find the name and contact information for your House member [HERE](#).
- **Flexible sick leave – the Family Care Act:** SB 201 requires employers that offer sick leave to allow employees to use that leave time flexibly in order to care for sick children, spouses, and other family members. The bill passed favorably out of the Senate Insurance and Labor Committee and is expected to be voted on by the full Senate on February 27. **Please contact your Senator and urge them to vote YES on SB 201.** You can find the name and contact information for your Senator [HERE](#).
- **Georgia Tenant Victim Protection Act:** [HB 281](#) would offer certain protections to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking who need to vacate their housing lease agreements due to the violence. HB 281 has been assigned to the House Judiciary Committee.
- **Domestic Violence Helping Hands Act:** [HB 291](#) requires that barbers and cosmetologists obtain one hour of training on domestic violence and sexual assault awareness and intervention every two years as a part of their licensure requirements. HB 291 has been assigned to the House Regulated Industries Committee.
- **Drivers' licenses for immigrants:** HB 324 would replace the drivers' licenses currently issued to undocumented immigrants with licenses that conspicuously identify their lack of full legal status. This includes immigrant victims of domestic violence and human trafficking who have been granted this status while awaiting the finalization of their T-Visa, U-Visa, or VAWA petition. GCADV opposes this bill, as it would further stigmatize these victims. HB 324 is currently being considered in the House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee. Stay tuned for future action alerts.