



**Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence
2012 General Assembly - Legislative Report
February 10, 2012**

- **Budget – Shelter Funding FY 2012 Amended & FY 2013:** The House has passed the FY 2012 Amended budget and adopted Governor Deal's recommendation to replace TANF funds for the remaining quarter of the current fiscal year with state funds. This move suggests that the legislature will follow suit in the FY 2013 budget which is good news for domestic violence programs. The Senate is now considering the FY 2012 budget.
- **Advocate & spousal privilege:** After two subcommittee hearings and two full committee hearings in House Judiciary, the House passed HB 711 by a vote of 162-1. This bill creates advocate privilege and eliminates the spousal privilege in domestic violence cases. HB 711 now goes to the Senate Judiciary Committee. Many thanks to Rep. Edward Lindsey for pushing this bill through so quickly and to Joan Prittie of Project Safe and Ayonna Johnson of the Women's Resource Center to End Domestic Violence for testifying in committee about the importance of this legislation.
- **Arrest for bond & bail condition violations:** HB 342 gives law enforcement the authority to arrest defendants if they violate special conditions of bond or probation. It passed the House unanimously this week. HB 342 is now assigned to the Senate Judiciary Committee.
- **Services for human trafficking victims:** HR 1151 establishes a legislative study committee to recommend a comprehensive system of services for human trafficking victims. The resolution passed the House and now goes to the Senate Health & Human Services Committee. Thanks to Laura Mora of the International Women's House for testifying in committee about the lack of resources available to trafficking victims.
- **Drug testing for public benefits recipients:** Several bills have been introduced to require applicants of TANF, food stamps, and Medicaid to

pay for and pass drug tests before receiving benefits. GCADV is concerned that such a policy would create yet another hurdle for survivors seeking economic independence. SB 292 (Senate Health & Human Services Committee) & HB 668 (House Judiciary Committee) are being heard in committee. See the action item below.

- **Stop Violence Against Women Day** was a huge success! Thanks to so many of you for coming down to the Capitol and making your voices heard! Legislators definitely took notice of the throngs of advocates with purple and teal stickers!
- **Schedule:** The legislature has adopted a schedule that takes us through day 31 on March 12. The schedule is available here:
http://www1.legis.ga.gov/legis/2011_12/fulltext/hr1140.htm

Action item:

- **Contact members of the Senate Judiciary Committee and urge them to pass HB 711.** It is especially important to make these calls if a legislator from your community is on this Committee. Members of the committee and their contact information is available here:
<http://www.senate.ga.gov/committees/en-US/committee.aspx?Committee=80&Session=21>
- **Contact members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee regarding SB 292 and members of the House Judiciary Committee regarding HB 668.**
(<http://www.senate.ga.gov/committees/enUS/committee.aspx?Committee=76&Session=21> for the Senate and <http://www.house.ga.gov/COMMITTEES/enUS/committee.aspx?Committee=106&Session=21> for the House) Ask legislators to oppose these bills requiring drug tests for public benefits recipients because they will make it more difficult for victims of domestic violence to get the financial assistance many need to support themselves and their children after leaving their abusers. Many victims will not have the funds to pay for a drug test and wait for reimbursement from DHS.