



In-Session Newsletter

February 21st, 2023

Today marks **Day 21** of our 2023 Legislative Session. Crossover Day is just about 2 weeks away. In order for a bill to cross over from one chamber to the next, the bill must pass either House or Senate by the end of the day on March 6th.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Last week we celebrated **Stand With Survivors Days** where we welcomed nearly 100 advocates from across the state to meet with their legislators. We started with **Advocacy 101** on Monday, the 13th facilitated by our newest addition to the GCADV Lobbying Team, **Yosha Dotson**. The following day we convened at Central Presbyterian Church for the **Kick-off Event**. **Vice-Chair Houston Gaines** and **Senator Kim Jackson** greeted us with inspiring words of support for our work and touched upon how important it is to advocate for laws that will save lives. We heard from Mission Acts Clinical Director, **Dr. J** who shared her courageous story of survival and talked about how GA could benefit from having an **Address Confidentiality Program**. **Miss Georgia** even shared a video with us describing her own story of healing from domestic violence and how a Safe Time law may have helped her to recover from the abuse she experienced. If you were an attendee and have not had an opportunity to fill out the feedback form, we value your opinion. It will only take about 5 minutes. You can find the form [HERE](#).

BILLS WE ARE WATCHING

Funding for DV shelters and sexual assault centers continue to be on legislators' minds down at the Capitol. **Today the Senate voted to keep the one- time \$4.4M appropriation** in the remainder of the **FY23** budget (this lasts until June 30th of this year). **Director Jay Neal testified** before the House Public Safety Appropriations Sub-Committee last Monday and spoke to the need for increased funding for shelters, sexual assault centers, CAC's and victims' assistance. In an exchange with Rep. Scott Holcomb, Director Neal described a "**fiscal cliff**" that programs are facing with continued VOCA cuts, the end of supplemental funding and programs that continue to struggle to provide a baseline of services for victims across the state. **Rep. Mary Frances Williams** is circulating a letter signed by her colleagues in the House that asks House Appropriations Chair Matt Hatchett to support our ask of an additional \$7M which would bring the state's appropriation up from 30% of the costs to keep doors open to 50%. **You can help!**

Reach out to your legislator and ask them if they would be willing to sign a letter circulated by their colleagues that supports an increase in our base appropriation. If they are willing to sign, please reach out to GCADV Policy Director at kdillard@gcadv.org or GCADV Lobbyist at Christina@Searles.com. To find your legislator go to www.openstates.org.



Two bills have been introduced as the **Reproductive Freedom Act** [SB15](#) sponsored by **Sen. Sally Harrell** (District 40) and [HB75](#) sponsored by **Rep. Shea Roberts** (District 52). If you would like to support abortion access for all Georgians, you can sign the [Reproductive Freedom Act Petition](#)

[SB61](#)- This bill is sponsored by **Chairman Brian Strickland** (District 17) and **passed the Senate today** and is on to the House. SB61 would make the **Family Care Act** permanent law. This law permits workers who already receive sick time from their employer to use 5 days of that sick time to care for an immediate family member.

[SB83](#) - is a bill sponsored by **Sen. Kim Jackson** (District 41) and it would revise the definition of stalking to include stalking that occurs in the home. This bill has been sent to the Rules Committee but **has not yet made it to the Rules calendar**. Please call or write members of the [Senate Rules Committee](#) and ask that SB83 be added to the Rules calendar.

CALL TO ACTION

Reach out to your legislator in the House of Representatives and ask them if they would be willing to sign a letter circulated by their colleagues that supports an increase in our base appropriation. If they are willing to sign, please reach out to GCADV Policy Director at kdillard@gcadv.org or GCADV Lobbyist at Christina@Searles.com. To find your legislator go to www.openstates.org. You can find your representative's contact information at www.legis.ga.gov.

Please call or write members of the [Senate Rules Committee](#) and ask that they support [SB83](#) stalking legislation that would revise the definition of stalking to include stalking that occurs in the home. **To be added to the Rules calendar.**