



In-Session Newsletter
Sine Die – End of Session Edition
May 8th, 2023

This year's Legislative Session ended in the wee hours of the night on March 29th, 2023. Because we are in a biennium, lawmakers whose bills did not pass will be able to pick up where they left off when Session resumed in January 2024. More than 900 bills and 760 resolutions were introduced this session.

GCADV LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY AREAS

\$\$\$ Funding

In addition to the more than \$6.4 that was added to the [SFY23 Supplemental Budget](#), GA Lawmakers added an addition \$2.26M for SANE nurses for sexual assault centers to the [SFY 24 State Budget](#). Funding was also added to the State Budget to remove the 5-year waiting period for pregnant women and children who are lawful permanent residents to apply for Medicaid. \$5M was added to Prosecuting Attorneys Council to fund one victim advocate in each of Georgia's Judicial Circuits as well as one Director to oversee the program. This means that CJCC can redistribute those VOCA dollars that would have otherwise gone to PAC.

Address Confidentiality

Sponsors Welcome

[SB324](#) was sponsored by Sen. Kim Jackson (Stone Mountain) and has three sponsors so far, Rules Chair Matt Brass (Newnan) and Sen. Mike Dugan (Carrollton). SB324 has been assigned to the Senate Judiciary Committee. We will be meeting with members of the committee during the off-session.

BILLS WE ARE FOLLOWING

[SB61](#) – PASSED

Family Care Act is soon to be permanent law and is awaiting the Governor's signature. SB61 requires that employers of 25 or more employees allow employees who already have earned sick time to use that time to care for a sick family member.

[SB131](#) – PASSED

Soon to be permanent law and is awaiting the Governor's signature. SB131 Provides for judicial discretion in determining the rights of a surviving parent to the custody of a child when the surviving parent has been criminally charged with the murder or voluntary manslaughter of the other parent.

[HB129](#) - PASSED

Is awaiting the Governor's signature. HB129 extends TANF benefits to pregnant women and removes the family cap.



SB83 – PAUSED

Would revise the definition of stalking to include stalking that occurs in the home. It passed the Senate and crossed over to the House. Was tabled in committee.

HB404 - PAUSED

Would regulate the amount landlords can charge for a down payment; setting the cap at two times the rent. It would also require landlords to make repairs on most properties and says that a tenant upon signing a lease agreement has to attest that the dwelling is either habitable or uninhabitable. This bill passed the House unanimously but did not make it out of the Senate.

SB132 - PAUSED

Would target immigrant and refugee communities by prohibiting property ownership for individuals from certain countries. This bill passed the Senate with a slim margin of victory on March 2nd but did not pass out of committee in the House.

SB12 – PAUSED

Would draw a connection between gang activity and domestic violence and allows past acts of family violence to be entered into evidence during civil and criminal proceedings. It also requires mandatory minimum sentencing for persons convicted of a second felony or act of family violence who were also in possession of a firearm. This bill did not pass out of committee.

LOOKING AHEAD

2024 Legislative Priorities

Advocates Are Speaking! Thank you for reaching out to us about your legislative interests. As we look ahead to the 2024 Legislative Session, we are considering a few priority areas found below. This list is not exhaustive, and we welcome other ideas that folks may have.

If you are interested in discussing these and other legislative topics, consider joining the GCADV Policy Taskforce. Reach out to Director of Policy, Karimah Dillard at kdillard@gcadv.org for more information.

Funding for DV/SA programs

We will be collecting impact data from programs during the off Session to show the impact of funding cuts for programs and also the wonderful work you all are doing with the funds we have. We will be encouraging you to welcome your legislators to your centers or administration offices so they can see this wonderful work for themselves. Funding does not just include state funding, we are also working on federal funding asks as well. Stay tuned for more action alerts!

Misdemeanor Violation of Dating Violence TPO

The dating violence TPO indicates that if one violates a dating violence TPO they can be criminally charged. For this to happen the statute references a section in the Family Violence



TPO criminal code, but that section fails to reference dating violence. We support a small fix to the family violence criminal code that adds that if one violates a dating violence TPO they can be criminally charged in order to make the language consistent.

Consistent Language in Preventing Mutual TPO's

There is currently not consistent language prohibiting mutual protective orders in our state statute. There is a prohibition on mutual orders in code 19-13-4 (a), but that language is not included in 16-5-94(e). We support a small fix to make that language consistent.

Adding Pets to TPO's

AHIMSA House has been very vocal about the need to add pets to TPO's. Many programs have even started adding kennels to their emergency shelters to meet the need of survivors to have their pets with them when they flee to safety. We support the fix that would ensure that pets are protected in TPO's.

Firearms restrictions for persons convicted of domestic violence misdemeanors

We will continue working with the GA Commission on Family Violence to restrict firearms access to those who have committed domestic violence misdemeanors against their partners.

Expanding TANF per diem for kinship care

TANF recipients experience higher rates of domestic violence than the general population (roughly 50-60% more on average). Currently, if you are a stranger taking in foster children, you are able to receive a \$700/month per diem from TANF. If you are family fostering a family member you only receive \$100/month. This puts an undue burden on relative partnership parents trying to keep their families together. We support efforts to expand kinship care per diems. Important Notice

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Medicaid Unwinding—Now that the Covid continuous Medicaid coverage period has ended, 2.7 million Georgians receiving Medicaid will need to have their eligibility redetermined. It is estimated that more than 500,000 Georgians could lose their Medicaid or Peach Care for Kids due to Medicaid unwinding. **GA Legal Services Program is helping to redetermine eligibility. Please reach out to GA Legal Services at 404-206-5175 or 1-800-498-9469.**



Thank You!

We want to take a moment to express our gratitude to our legislative champions and community partners who work extremely hard to protect the interests and rights of survivors. And many thanks to you, the advocates, who save lives every single day!

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