

{{FirstName or 'Friends'}} --

**It's been another productive week in House District 50, advancing good legislation and beating back bad bills.**



Just to give you a sense of timeline, we just finished Legislative Day 18, which means **we're nearly halfway through the legislative session and coming up fast on Crossover Day**, a major milestone that, for good and for bad, could determine which bills still have a chance this year to pass into law.

*Let's dive in.*

### BAD BILL TRACKER


This week we saw [HB 1093](#), one of the newest in a slate of **Alien Land Law Bills**, be heard in the House Agriculture Committee. I discussed this thematic bucket of bills, which are being **pushed by conservative interest groups nationwide**, in [last week's newsletter](#).

I think it's fair to say the the committee hearing did not go very well for the bill's sponsor.

We saw many legal and community experts come to testify against the bill (notably there was no testimony in favor), with many making the point that while national security is a key priority, bills written in this way **violate the [Fair Housing Act](#), would devastate many of Georgia's economic interests, and create a discriminatory environment targeting immigrant communities.**

## Fair Housing Act: Protected Classes

Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, as amended, Fair Housing Act (FHA), makes it unlawful to discriminate against individuals in housing transactions based on:



DISABILITY      RACE      SEX      COLOR      NATIONAL ORIGIN      RELIGION      FAMILY STATUS

[Click here to read more about the Fair Housing Act](#)

Here **Jeff Ledford**, Chief Advocacy Officer of the GA Association of REALTORS, [makes several key points](#) of why **HB 1093** would not only run afoul of federal law, it would also not even best serve the national security goals it purports to protect.





*[Click here to see full testimony.](#)*

We also heard testimony from the [ACLU of Georgia](#), [Asian Americans Advancing Justice](#), and the [Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights](#), among many others. We so appreciate the way this coalition has mobilized so quickly, working together to defeat bills like **HB 1093** and **SB 420**, and hope the bill sponsors can find a way to work with these trusted and expert partners to **find a solution that both serves our national interests without violating federal law.**



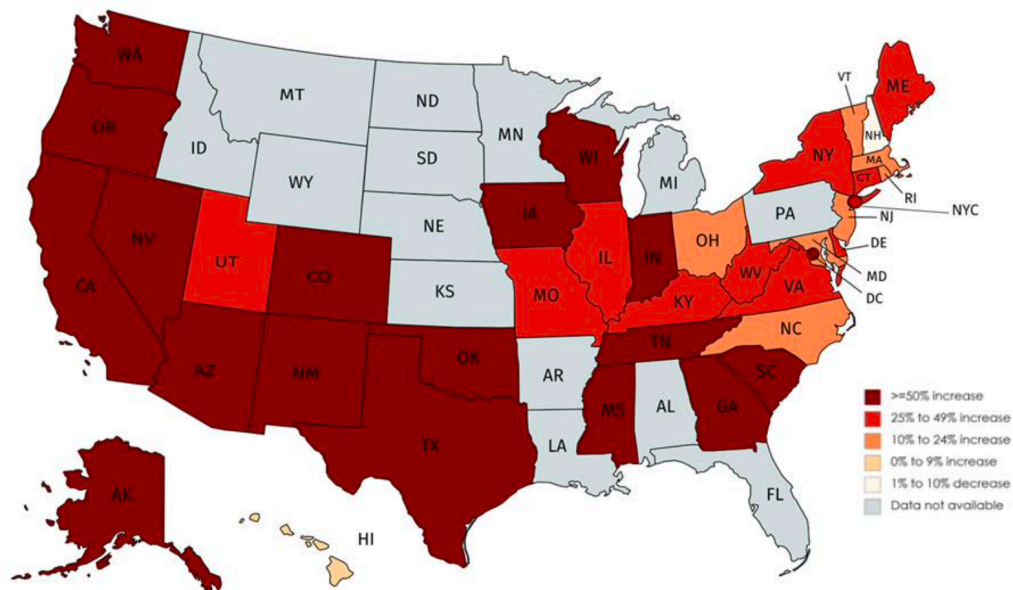
\* \* \*

Another bill from last session unfortunately came back from conference committee and passed in the House this week. This was [HB 557](#), a bill that will, among other things, will allow PAs and APRNs to prescribe limited Schedule II narcotics with a maximum 5-day supply.

This provision was couched as a way to address rural healthcare manpower shortages, to ensure that patients can receive care. I think this bill is well-intentioned, and I work closely with many PAs and APRNs, whom I respect and would trust to care for my own family.

**However, the last thing Georgia needs in this moment is more people writing prescriptions for opioids.**

*Figure 3: Percentage change in 12-months ending provisional<sup>a</sup> count of fatal overdoses involving synthetic opioids<sup>b</sup>, 36 states, the District of Columbia, and New York City<sup>c</sup>: Deaths from 12-months ending in June 2019 to 12-months ending in May 2020<sup>d</sup>*



Source: [Georgia Department of Public Health, "Opioid and Substance Misuse Response"](#)

As a nation, we are suffering an [unprecedented epidemic of opioid addiction](#), and Georgia has been hit hard. Georgia continues to see a rise in [opioid-related overdoses and deaths](#), and in the medical community we know that some of this addiction has in fact been seeded by a [cultural ease in the medical community to write prescriptions for opioid-based pain medications](#).

Research shows that [even a three-day course of opioids can increase the risk of opioid addiction](#) even a year out from the initial encounter. And



what we in the medical community have to come to terms with is our role in seeding this addiction.



**Prescription opioids can be  
addictive and dangerous.**

It only takes a little to lose a lot.

 [cdc.gov/RxAwareness](https://cdc.gov/RxAwareness)

**Because the easiest thing in the world is to write someone a prescription.** Not out of malice, not in an act of malpractice, but simply because we naturally want to relieve pain.

What we have learned over the past few decades, however, is that **in our readiness to prescribe opioids, we have done our patients a disservice**, and in fact set them up on a path of opioid addiction, dependence, and sometimes, mortality.

***When we increase the number of people who can prescribe opioids, we will increase the number of opioids being prescribed.***

While this bill has now been voted out of both the Senate and the House, it is my hope that Governor Kemp takes these concerns into account and **vetoes HB 577**.

\* \* \*

POLITICS

## Georgia GOP senators approve sales tax holiday on guns, ammunition



Sen. Jason Anavitarte, R-Dallas, speaks in favor of Senate Bill 344 at the Georgia Capitol on Tuesday. The legislation would make firearms and accessories tax exempt during the first week of hunting season. The Senate approved it on a 30-22 party-line vote, with Republicans in favor. It now heads to the House. (Natrice Miller/...

▼ More

By Maya T. Prabhu

Feb 6, 2024



[Click here to read full article](#)

This week **[SB 344 passed out of the Senate](#)**, which would offer a **sales tax holiday for the purchase of firearms, ammunition and other gun accessories** (including gun safes) during the first week of hunting season in October.

This is one of the latest in a **rash of Republican bills** that have been filed **[after the pro-gun group Georgia 2A endorsed HB 855](#)**, a bill I prefiled in November and which would **allow up to a \$300 tax credit for purchase of safe storage equipment**.





[Click here to watch the full news story.](#)

In brief, three points I will make here:

1. Even the most avidly pro-gun legislators tacitly concede **safe storage is a priority.**
2. We can find **bipartisan consensus** on safe gun storage. However...
3. **Incentivizing the purchase of more guns without a requirement that these guns be secured makes kids less safe.**

I hope as the session moves forward we can continue to work together on prioritizing safe storage while not encouraging conditions that lead to more gun violence, which as of 2020, is [the leading cause of death in children and teenagers in the United States.](#)

## MEDICAID IN GEORGIA

Since the Medicaid redetermination process began last April, **Georgia has dropped more than 503,000 people from Medicaid** — one of the [highest rates of disenrollment in the nation.](#)

# The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

News Metro Atlanta Georgia News National & World News Business Super Bowl Trump Georgia Case Black History Month

HEALTH NEWS

## 'Fighting for their life': Georgia drops 500,000 from Medicaid

The number of Georgia adults and children kicked off the health program puts it among the states with the highest rate of disenrollment



Credit: Ariel Hart

[Click here to read full article](#)

**Our state's inability to address the level of lack of coverage and coverage loss in this state has become unconscionable.** And while money has been devoted to increasing hiring at the [Georgia Division of Family & Children Services \(DFCS\)](#), I have not yet heard of any *immediate* solutions to stop the hemorrhage of Medicaid patients now, most of whom, we need to remember, are children.

**Georgia needs to immediately consider [increasing our ex-parte rate](#) or enacting a pause on renewals for children who have not yet gone through redetermination**, as North Carolina and Kentucky have done. This would stanch the bleed, and allow DFCS to catch up with the redetermination backlog since the Spring.





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## **House of Representatives**

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**STANDING COMMITTEES**  
 APPROPRIATIONS HEALTH SUBCOMMITTEE-  
 CHAIRMAN  
 AGRICULTURE & CONSUMER AFFAIRS  
 GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS  
 INSURANCE  
 PUBLIC HEALTH  
 PUBLIC SAFETY & HOMELAND SECURITY  
 REAPPORTIONMENT & REDISTRICTING  
 RULES  
 SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
 TRANSPORTATION

### **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Members of House Appropriations Subcommittee on Health

Rep. Devan Seabaugh, Vice Chairman	Rep. Mark Newton
Rep. Karen Bennett	Rep. Butch Parrish
Rep. Debbie Buckner	Rep. Jesse Petrea
Rep. Lee Hawkins	Rep. Ron Stephens
Rep. Carolyn Hugley	Rep. Dale Washburn
Rep. John LaHood	

**FROM:** Darlene Taylor, Chairman

**DATE:** Tuesday, February 13, 2024

**RE:** House Appropriations Subcommittee on Health Meeting

**WHERE:** 515 CLOB

**TIME:** 2:00PM

#### **AGENDA:**

- **Call to order by Chairlady Taylor**
- **Georgia Department of Community Health**
  - Commissioner Russell Carlson
- **Georgia Board for Health Care Workforce**
  - Chet Bhasin, Executive Director
- **Georgia Composite Medical Board**
  - Kimberly Lemieux, Interim Executive Director
- **Georgia Drugs and Narcotics Agency**
  - Dennis Troughton, Director
- **Georgia Department of Public Health**
  - Dr. Kathleen Toomey, Commissioner
- **Georgia Trauma Commission**
  - Dr. Dennis Ashley, Chairman

#### **Public Comment**

***The state simply needs to ask the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services for this pause.*** I am unclear why the state has not done this, nor is it clear what the [Department of Community Health](#) intends to do to rapidly re-enroll the hundreds of thousands of eligible children who have lost coverage during the redetermination process. However, as [Commissioner Russell Carlson](#) will be at the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Health this Tuesday, I think **these are questions he needs to answer.**

## TEAM AU IN ACTION

We were so pleased to welcome our friends from the [Medical Association of Georgia](#) this week for [Physicians' Day at the Capitol!](#)





I'm so pleased that **medical advocacy is becoming an increasingly important part of our profession**, and the industry expertise, clinical understanding, and scientific knowledge physician advocates bring to shaping our legislative work is invaluable! As such, Team Au is proud to have **[Dr. Swati Chandhoke](#)** join us at the Capitol this month as our **Senior Health Policy Advisor!** Dr. Chandhoke is a Peds ICU Fellow at [Emory University Hospital](#) and has already helped in advancing the [Pediatric Health Safe Storage Act](#) and our [Insulin Safety Net programs!](#)



\* \* \*

I was excited to see my friend Donna Lowry again as we got a chance to chat on [GPB Lawmakers](#) on February 6th!





Primarily we spoke about the **slate of gun safety bills** Team Au continues to work on this session, and the **newfound Republican interest in bills incentivizing responsible gun ownership**. I look forward to giving everyone updates on these bills soon, as there appears to be genuine bipartisan appetite for moving these measures forward.

(Next time we can also talk about how I, standing up, am nearly the same height as a normal human sitting down.)

\* \* \*

This week I was proud to have not just one, but two House pages come work with us at the Georgia State Capitol!





**Amiyah McCall** is a senior at Hapeville Charter Career Academy (and in her third year serving as a House page), and **Ella Jeon** is a 9th grader at Northview High School! I hope they both enjoyed their experiences at The People's House, and come back to visit again later in the session!



If you or someone you know is 12-18 years old and interested in applying to be a House Page this session, they can [fill out an application here](#).

## TEAM AU EVENTS

I was proud to stand with members of Georgia's Legislative Asian American Pacific Islander Caucus this Friday to recognize Lunar New Year's Eve at the State Capitol!



To continue the celebration, which in Asian countries can last for a full week, it is my honor to invite you to **Lunar New Year Day at the Capitol, February 15th, 2024!**





**GEORGIA'S LEGISLATIVE  
ASIAN AMERICAN PACIFIC  
ISLANDER (AAPI) CAUCUS**  
*Invites you  
to attend*

*Lunar New Year  
at the Capitol*  
**THURSDAY  
FEBRUARY 15**



**12:00 - 1:00 PM**  
*Community  
Recognitions*  
**3:00 - 4:00 PM**  
*Lion Dance*

This event will be historic in nature, and will feature **the first ever traditional Lion Dance under the Gold Dome** to celebrate the Lunar New Year and usher in the Year of the Dragon!

***This event is open to all.*** We will be having a community recognition ceremony at the South Steps of the Capitol from 12:00 to 1:00pm, a lunch reception, and enjoy the lion dance starting at 3:00pm. **Please join us; children are welcome!**

**Please RSVP** so we can get an accurate headcount, and for an email address where we can send helpful information including a schedule, parking, and tips for entering the Capitol building!

## HOUSE DISTRICT 50 UPDATES

# PRE-CROSSOVER HD 50 TOWN HALL

DR. MICHELLE  
**AU**  
AUGUSTA.GA.COM



## SAT 2/24, 4:00 - 5:30PM

## SIX BRIDGES BREWING, JC

## 11455 LAKEFIELD DR. #300

**SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR PRE-CROSSOVER DAY HD 50 TOWN  
HALL!**

**Saturday, February 24th, 4:00 - 5:30pm**

**Six Bridges Brewing, Johns Creek**

**11455 Lakefield Dr #300, Johns Creek**

**[Click here to RSVP](#)**

As in years past we will discuss the legislative landscape the weekend before Crossover Day, **the second most critical milestone in the legislative session.** We'll chat about priority legislation, drill down on which bills could still move before Sine Die, answer questions, and identify ways that you can meaningfully plug into the process of lawmaking!



Note this is a child/teen and pet-friendly family brewery! **Non-alcoholic drinks and snacks will be available, and all are welcome!**

\* \* \*

I enjoyed watching the **Autrey Mill Middle School 6th, 7th, and 8th grade orchestras** perform at their [pre-Large Group Performance Evaluation concert](#) this week!



*[Listen to the 6th grade orchestra perform "Subatomic"](#)*

Best of luck to the 7th and 8th grade groups, and their incredible conductor **Mr. Tim Anderson**, at LGPE on February 15th at Westlake High School!

\* \* \*

Congratulations to the [City of Johns Creek](#) for an incredible **Lunar New Year festival** this weekend, where we celebrated the [Year of the Dragon](#) together while enjoying food, crafts, music, dance, and cultural demonstrations!





**I feel lucky to represent such a diverse district** that celebrates its residents who have come from all over the world to make Georgia, and Johns Creek, their home.

\* \* \*

Make sure you're [signed up to receive updates](#) on all these projects and more as we continue to ensure that we are best serving everyone in House District 50!

**It has never been more important to pay attention to the work of state legislatures**, and nowhere is it more evident than in our district, at the epicenter of the changing electoral face of Georgia, the leading edge of where swing districts are still being fought and flipped.



As always, please **do not hesitate to [reach out to our office](#)** should you need any assistance, would like to drop by to visit the Capitol, or if you have any concerns you'd like me to address on your behalf.

***It is my honor to be your voice in the Georgia House of Representatives.***

In Service,



Paid for by Au for Georgia Inc.

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United States

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