

{{FirstName or 'Friends'}} --

Happy Presidents Day!

Though we have the federal holiday off, we are deep into the heart of this year’s legislative session with **Crossover Day is fast approaching**. This means the next two weeks will be densely filled with floor votes and committee meetings as bills jockey to clear the House vote prior to February 29th. (Yes, you read that right, Crossover Day this year is on Leap Day.)



Let’s get into it.

LUNAR NEW YEAR DAY AT THE CAPITOL

History was made under the Gold Dome this week as Georgia's inaugural Asian American Pacific Islander Caucus celebrated **Lunar New Year at the Capitol**, which was recognized on February 15th in conjunction with [Asian American Advocacy Day at the Capitol](#).

Part of this celebration was the **first ever traditional lion dance under the Gold Dome**, an exuberant custom celebrated across many East Asian cultures to usher in a prosperous, healthy, and auspicious new year!





[Click here for more pictures of Lunar New Year Day at the Capitol](#)

We started the day with some [community recognitions](#), where we commended the work of three groups that have been leaders in the AAPI community.

[Asian Americans Advancing Justice](#) is the first and largest **nonprofit legal advocacy organization** dedicated to protecting the civil rights of Asian

Americans, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander (AANHPI) and Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim, and South Asian (AMEMSA) communities in Georgia and the Southeast. They are also the organizers of the annual Asian American Advocacy Day at the Capitol.


REGISTER NOW!

ASIAN AMERICAN ADVOCACY DAY


FEBRUARY 15, 2024

REGISTER AT: bit.ly/aaad2024


9:00 AM - 1:00 PM
FREIGHT ROOM, THE FREIGHT DEPOT



ASIAN AMERICANS
ADVANCING
JUSTICE
ATLANTA



ASIAN
AMERICAN
ADVOCACY
FUND



[Georgia Asian Times](#) is the largest **digital news media platform** to cover the diverse multi ethnic Asian Pacific community in Georgia, and has for the past decade provided coverage across the diverse Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Malaysian, Cambodian, Laotian, Filipino, Singaporean, Vietnamese, Taiwanese, Thai, Burmese, Indian, and Indonesian communities in Georgia.

Georgia AsianTimes

Take Our Survey! Click here to complete the survey

Complete the I-285 Top End Express Lanes Survey to help us understand your community's needs regarding the proposed project. <https://lnyurl.com/TopEnd-ESurvey-01>

GDOT Express Lanes

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NEWSFLASH Cyberattacks on hospitals are likely to increase, putting lives at risk, experts warn 3 days ago

METRO ASIAN NEWS
Georgia AAPI Legislative Caucus Celebrates Lunar New Year with State Resolution Honors

SPORTS
Klinsmann fired as coach of South Korea's national soccer team after Asian Cup semifinal loss

LIFESTYLE
Sean Wang made a home movie. Now, he and his grandmothers are going to the Oscars

LIFESTYLE
Michael Kors inspired by grandmother's wedding gown for Fall-Winter collection at NY Fashion Week

[Read the Georgia Asian Times here](#)

And [Vibha](#) is a volunteer-driven organization that seeks to **address systemic problems affecting children**, with a particular focus on broadening educational opportunities for children living in poverty. I was proud to present Vibha with [House Resolution 1052](#), recognizing the 25th anniversary of the [Vibha Dream Mile](#), their flagship fundraising events which draws thousands of participants around the world and which raises money for educational projects in the U.S. and India.



Congratulations to all the organizations for your tremendous accomplishments, and please keep up your tireless work showing the world how **AAPI Georgians contribute to the health, wealth, and vitality of our state.**

Speaking of issues that affect the immigrant community...

ALIEN LAND LAW BILLS

The paired Alien Land Law bills, which **would restrict the ability of Georgians of certain national origins from buying or leasing property**, appear to be moving rapidly through their respective chambers.

[HB 1093](#), sponsored by [Rep. David Clark](#), [passed out of the House Agriculture Committee on February 14th](#) and could be placed on the Rules Calendar for a House Floor vote as early as Tuesday.



Dr. Michelle Au 
@AuforGA 

[#HB1093](#), the newest Alien Land Law bill that precludes individuals of certain national origins from real estate purchases, and which violates the Fair Housing Act, just passed out of the House Agriculture Committee.

Expect a fight.



0:05

10:16 AM · Feb 14, 2024 · 1,325 Views

Meanwhile, [SB 420](#), the Senate version of the bill, was [heard on the same day in the Senate Regulated Industries committee](#). The bill was problematic enough that the Chair of the committee, [Senator Bill Cowsert](#), did not bring it to a vote, though as it clearly appears to be a Republican priority I would expect it to return for reconsideration and a vote before Crossover Day.

Here **Jeff Ledford, Chief Advocacy Officer of the [GA Association of REALTORS](#)**, testifies that the bill violates federal law preventing housing discrimination, and would also cripple Georgia's export industry.



[Watch full testimony here](#)

I had the pleasure of speaking with **Donna Lowry** on [GPB “Lawmakers”](#) about these Alien Land Law Bills and their impact on the immigrant community in Georgia.

In addition to walking through the illegality of bills like this, I noted that when lawmakers who look like me, or other members of the AAPI Caucus, speak out against these bills, it incites some to question our priorities and our loyalties. As a Chinese American serving in the Georgia State Legislature, I am often accused of being not American, a spy, a plant, and an agent of the Chinese Communist Party.

This type of stereotyping, and the knee-jerk conflation of individual Georgians with their family’s country of origin and the foreign

regimes governing those countries, is precisely why bills like HB 1093 and SB 420 are so problematic.



See clip of "Lawmakers" interview, February 15th, 2024.

National security is a vital concern . But bills like this are a clumsy, xenophobic tool that do not serve our national or state goals.

[Read more about the national conservative effort to pass Alien Land Law bills here.](#)

PROGRESS ON GUN SAFETY

Due to the hard work of our broad coalition of gun safety advocates, **incremental gun safety measures around the issue of safe storage** are slowly and continuously building bipartisan support here at the state Capitol.

FOR THE RECORD

Georgia Senate advances tax break for firearm safety devices as lawmakers push gun-related incentives

BY: JILL NOLIN - FEBRUARY 13, 2024 7:57 PM



📷 The concept of using a tax incentive to spur safer firearm storage gained broader appeal in Georgia after a gun rights advocacy group, GA2A, came out in support of a Democrat-sponsored bill that would create a \$300 income tax credit for safe storage devices. Rich Legg/Getty Image

[Read full article here](#)

Just this past week, [a bipartisan bill](#) that would **offer up to a \$300 tax credit for purchase of safe storage equipment** was [voted unanimously out of the House Ways and Means Committee](#), which means it could be put on the Rules calendar and voted off the House floor as early as this week.

Jill Nolin, a reporter with the *Georgia Recorder*, [covered this issue](#) and the rash of new Republican bills and the fresh bipartisan enthusiasm around the issue of safe storage.

The concept of using a tax incentive to spur safer firearm storage gained broader appeal in Georgia after a gun rights advocacy group, GA2A, came out in support of a Democrat-sponsored bill that would create a \$300 income tax credit for safe storage devices.

“GA2A supports any legislation that would lessen the financial burden of possessing and storing firearms,” the group [said](#) in a statement last month.

That bill’s sponsor, Rep. Michelle Au, has signed on in support of the GOP proposal.

“I’m deeply gratified that our Republican colleagues have come to agree that prioritizing safe storage and other measures to encourage responsible gun ownership is a crucial part of keeping our families safer,” Au, a Johns Creek Democrat, said Tuesday. “I will continue to support these bills and hope that we can continue this conversation around the safe storage of firearms.”

[Read full article here](#)

To pass a gun safety bill like this would truly be historic , and I look forward to its continued progress so we can make it easier for gun owners across the state to practice responsible gun ownership, especially around children.

GEORGIA LEFT BEHIND

This week it was announced that [a Medicaid expansion bill will arrive in the Mississippi Senate by Monday](#), beginning a process that could **provide health care to about 230,000 working Mississippians.**

Medicaid Expansion Bill Coming By Monday, Mississippi Lt. Gov. Hosemann Says



BY ASHTON PITTMAN 📅 FEBRUARY 16, 2024



Mississippi Lt. Gov. Delbert Hosemann said Mississippi Senate leaders would introduce a bill to expand Medicaid by a Monday, Feb. 19, 2024, legislative deadline in a Feb. 15, 2024, interview with Mississippi Today. AP Photo/Rogelio V. Solis

[Click here to read the full article in the Mississippi Free Press](#)

Mississippi, like Georgia, is [one of only ten states left in the nation](#) that has thus far refused to expand Medicaid.

It appears that list may soon be getting shorter.

I continue to be perplexed at our Republican leadership's refusal to consider this **prudent, fiscally responsible, morally clear option** at our fingertips to

cover uninsured Georgians. ([Only Texas](#), another state that has refused to fully expand Medicaid, has a higher uninsured rate than Georgia.)

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

News

News Metro Atlanta Georgia News Legislature National & World News Business Fani Willis Black History Month

HEALTH NEWS

Southern lawmakers rethink long-standing opposition to Medicaid expansion



Credit: Ariel Hart/AJC

[Click here to read full article](#)

And while [conversation around the issue continues](#), emphasizing our Republican leadership's evolution in thinking on the issue, frankly **the window is closing on passing Medicaid Expansion this year if we don't move quickly.**

We have a week and a half left to see a Republican-led bill filed before Crossover. [This is a popular issue across Georgia with voters on both sides of the aisle](#), and our conservative, rural districts demographically stand to benefit the most. Republicans can, of course, decide to do nothing yet again. But if that's the case, I think **their voters—the ones hurt most by this partisan intransigence—deserve an explanation.**

TEAM AU EVENTS

PRE-CROSSOVER HD 50 TOWN HALL



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!

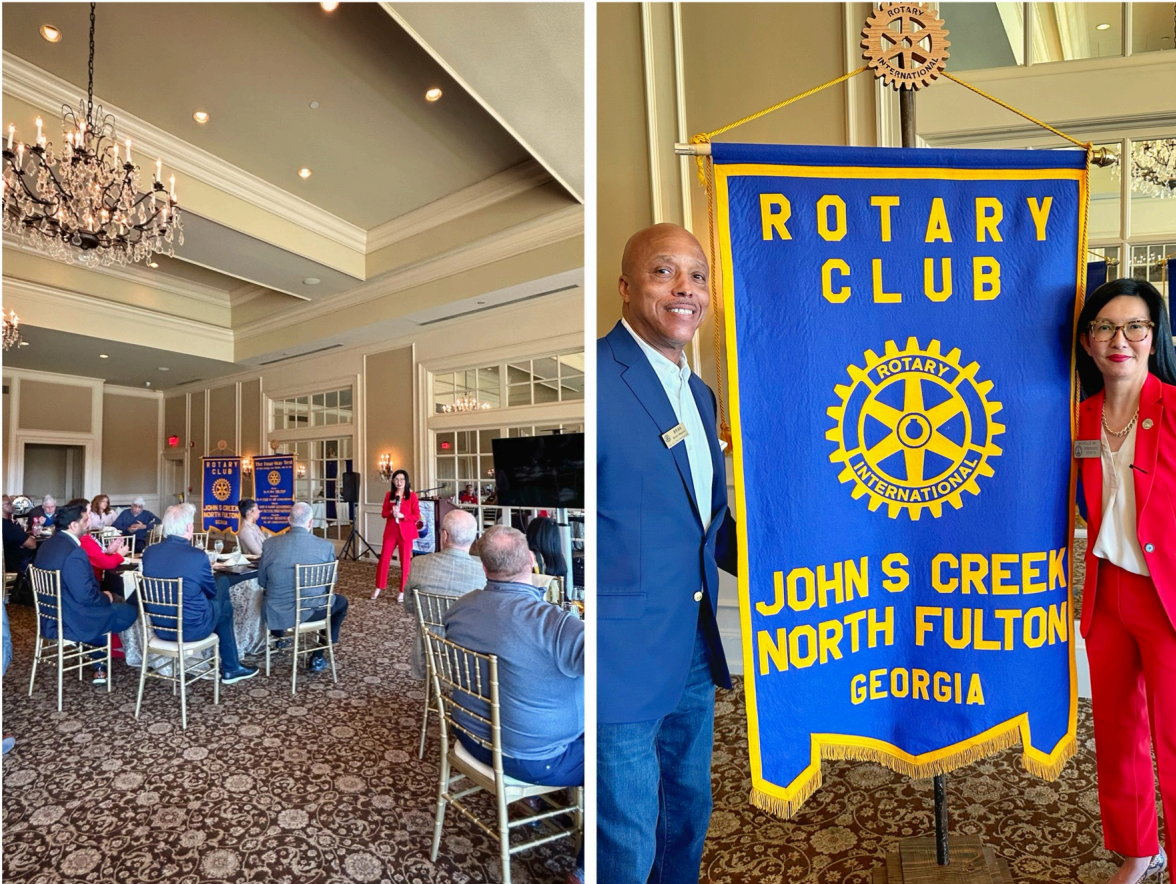
Saturday, February 24th, 4:00 - 5:30pm
[Six Bridges Brewing, Johns Creek](#)
11455 Lakefield Dr #300, Johns Creek
[Click here to RSVP](#)

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!**

HOUSE DISTRICT 50 UPDATES

So pleased to have been invited to speak at the **Rotary Club in Johns Creek** this week—on Valentine’s Day no less!



HD 50 is very special in that it truly is a swing district, and I end up speaking to and working with voters of both parties quite often, because **we prioritize solving problems and getting results over partisan rhetoric.**

In that spirit, I spoke with the Roterians about our work on **surprise medical billing**, public safety measures (including a **tax credit to incentivize the purchase of safe storage equipment**, a key feature of responsible gun ownership around children), and our work to make the intersection of State Route 141 and Grove Point Road **safer for students walking to and from Johns Creek High School.**

* * *

Speaking of the Gladiators, congratulations to the [Johns Creek High School Orchestra](#) for **seating the most students of any Georgia school in the GMEA All-State Orchestra!**

[Neighborhood TV Johns Creek](#) recently did a feature on the orchestra and its director, Mr. Kim, which you can watch here!



JOHNS CREEK HIGH SCHOOL ORCHESTRA STUDENTS

Published on Friday, Feb 9, 2024

Johns Creek High School had 32 orchestra students selected for the 2024 Georgia Music Educators Association All-State Orchestra. The most students selected from one school. Come along as we listen to them and learn more about this highly decorated program.



[Watch full video here](#)

* * *

Congratulations also to the Northview High School Mock Trial team for **winning first place in the 2024 Georgia High School Mock Trial Regional Competition!**



Photo credit: Shayan Ahmed, Aryan Shetty, and Disha Kumar

I had the pleasure of presenting a resolution to Northview's Mock Trial team in 2022 after they won second place at Nationals, and every year I am so proud of your hard work and what you've accomplished! I can't wait to see what the rest of your season will bring!



* * *

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "W. Michelle".



Paid for by Au for Georgia Inc.

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