

{{FirstName or 'Friends'}} --

**We've passed the midway point of the 2024 Legislative Session,** and with Crossover Day fast approaching the pace of the work has really picked up. We had another busy week advancing our priority bills and blocking some bad legislation, while also welcoming many special advocates and friends to the Capitol.



*Here are some highlights from last week.*

## CERTIFICATE OF NEED & MEDICAID EXPANSION

Many of us entered this session optimistic about the prospect of **passing full Medicaid Expansion this year.**

Not “someday.” Not “next year.” But *this* year, as hundreds of thousands of patients watched, and hoped, and waited for the same.

# The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

## News

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

### HEALTH NEWS

## Latest push to expand Medicaid shows promise



Credit: Arvin Temkar/AJC

[Click here to read full article](#)

**But I think it's fair to say that the odds appear to have shifted drastically since January.**

This week, Republican leadership introduced [HB 1339](#), which aims to do two things.

First, this bill would **make it somewhat easier to open new healthcare entities** and expand certain service lines (like psychiatric care and OB) in rural Georgia by revising some elements of the state's [Certificate of Need regulations](#).

The second thing this bill would do would be to form a "**Comprehensive Health Coverage Commission**" to evaluate the figures and logistics of possible Medicaid Expansion down the road, perhaps similar to the private insurance model adopted by Arkansas.

Many seem to feel, with good reason, that this indicates **Republicans will continue to forego actual action on Medicaid Expansion**, again leaving Georgia behind in the rapidly shrinking pool of now only ten ([perhaps soon to be nine](#)) states that have still refused to close the coverage gap using federal funds available through the Affordable Care Act.

GOVERNMENT & POLITICS HEALTH

## **GOP lawmakers ready to ease limits on hospital construction, set aside Medicaid expansion for now**

BY: JILL NOLIN - FEBRUARY 22, 2024 1:00 AM

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State Rep. Butch Parrish, a Swainsboro Republican, is the main sponsor of a new health care bill. Jill Nolin/Georgia Recorder (file)

[Click here to read full article](#)

While there are good elements to **HB 1339**, my issue with the bill is that it does not solve the problem at the core of Georgia's ailing healthcare system.

Because the reason Georgia has so many rural hospital closures is not due to CON law.

The reason Georgia has so many rural hospital closures is due to the huge burden of [uncompensated care costs](#), in a state with one of the highest **uninsurance rates in the nation**.

And while I appreciate the attention to rural communities in **HB 1339**, revising CON alone does not increase care access for patients in the coverage gap, just as opening 10 new restaurants wouldn't address chronic hunger for those who cannot afford to buy food.

## Democrats balk at GOP bill to reform hospital construction rules that could delay bipartisan Medicaid expansion talks



House Swainsboro Republican Butch Parrish is sponsoring House Bill 1339, which would loosen state regulations governing where healthcare facilities can open and operate known as certificate of need. The bill also calls for more study of Georgia's healthcare gaps. (Aaleah McConnell/Georgia Recorder)

[Click here to read full article](#)

Further—and I hate to put it bluntly—the **last thing we need is yet another Commission to look at the issue**. We don't need another study committee. We don't need to tabulate and re-tabulate all the numbers we've known and been looking at for the last decade. **There is an urgency to act**, and this urgency seems like something to which our Republican colleagues are insensate.

I've heard a lot in the past few weeks, "We'll look at where things are and try to get it done next year." Well, **some uninsured patients don't have a "next year."**

## AJC POLITICS

Politically Georgia

Elections

Trump Georgia Case

Legislature

Georgia By The Numbers

POLITICS

## Disappointed Democrats vow to continue fight for Medicaid expansion



Georgia House Minority Leader James Beverly said Wednesday that he believes a “majority” of Republicans would be willing to expand Medicaid but fear of receiving a primary challenge by another Republican prevents them from doing so. (Natrice Miller/ Natrice.miller@ajc.com)

By Michelle Baruchman

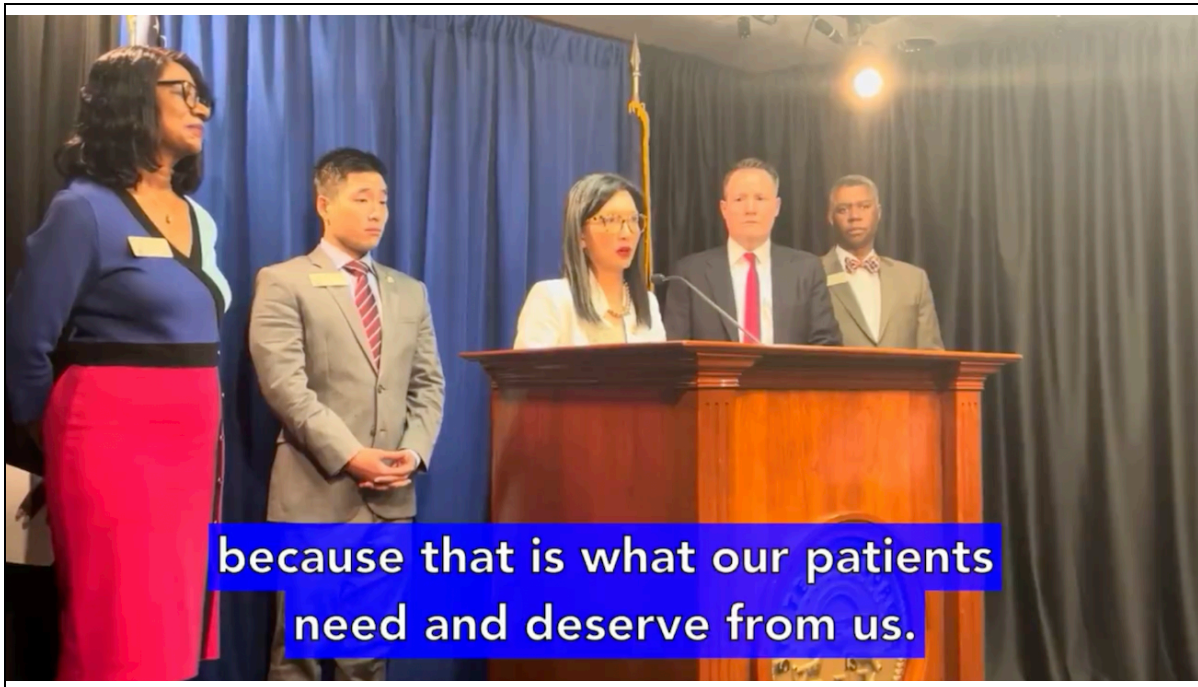
Feb 21, 2024



[Click here to read full article](#)

This week my colleagues and I in the House Democratic Caucus held a [press conference](#) pleading with our Republican colleagues to please, come to the table and work with us on a bipartisan solution to close the coverage gap. Because until that gavel comes down on Sine Die, we will not give up.

Because I still believe this body can accomplish something transformative, together. And until it's over, **I think we still owe it to people to try.**



[Click here to watch full video](#)

## TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF)

Last year the Georgia General Assembly passed [HB 129](#), expanding TANF coverage to impoverished pregnant women in an effort to improve perinatal outcomes and early childhood health.

And while this was a good first step, I pointed out that **TANF benefits had not been updated in three decades**, and were woefully stringent in the modern economic environment.



[Click here to watch full video](#)

As a reminder, here are the TANF benefit cutoffs and monthly benefits as they currently stand, and **as you can see, the math simply doesn't add up.**



**TANF INCOME CUTOFF REQUIREMENTS**  
**FOR QUALIFICATION FOR A FAMILY OF THREE**

**Must earn < \$784 a month and have countable assets < \$1,000**

\$784/month x 12 months = **must earn < \$9,408 per year**

Federal poverty level for a family of 3 = **\$23,030 per year**

**Therefore, Georgia income cutoff for TANF is  
 ~40% of the federal poverty level**

**In addition, must work at least 30 hours per week to qualify**

30 hours/week x 52 weeks/year =  
**1,560 hours worked per year**

1560 hours worked/year earning no more than  
 \$9,408 per year = **\$6.03 per hour**

Federal minimum wage = **\$7.25 per hour**

**Therefore, Georgia hourly wage cutoff for TANF is  
 ~17% below the federal minimum wage**

**TANF monthly benefit is a maximum of \$280 a month**

In **1991** (the last time TANF was updated)  
 FPL for a family of 3 = \$11,140/year = **\$928.33/month**  
**\$280/month was 30% of the FPL**

In **2023** FPL for a family of 3 = \$25,820/year = **\$2151.66/month**  
**\$280/month is now 13% of the FPL**

Following this discussion, [HB 565](#) was filed, which would **update some aspects of the TANF program** to better serve impoverished families temporarily undergoing extreme financial hardship.

This bill, which got hung up in the Rules committee last year, again **passed unanimously out of the House Public Health Committee** this week, and is

hopefully headed to the House floor for a vote before Crossover Day! Thank you to [Chair Tyler Paul Smith](#) for sponsoring this important bill!



## GUN SAFETY

**Gun violence is the #1 killer of children and teenagers in this country,** and not a week goes by that we don't hear of another senseless death due to preventable gun violence.



# Student charged in shooting at Atlanta's Benjamin E. Mays High School

February 20, 2024 11:09 AM

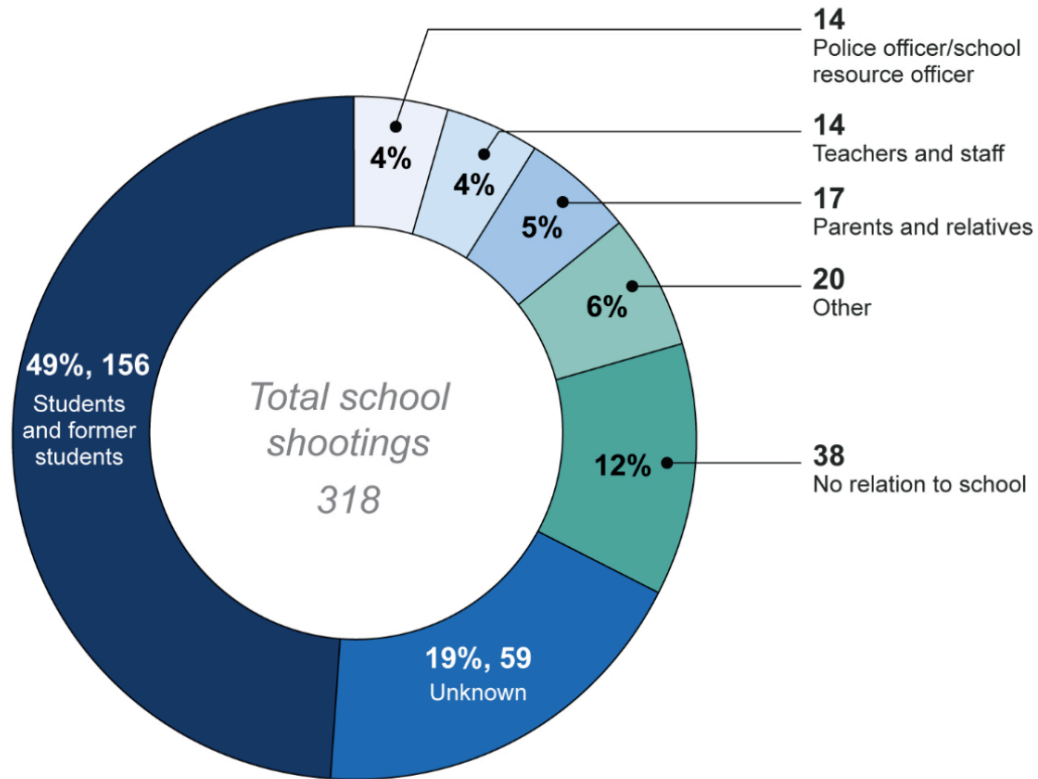
By: [Dyana Bagby](#)



[Click here to read full article](#)

School shootings number among the vast minority of incidents where children or teenagers are shot, but they are among the most tragic and the most preventable. It is worth noting that [approximately half of school shootings are carried out by current or former students](#). It is for this, among many other reasons, that **HB 161, the Pediatric Health Safe Storage Act**, continues to be the top priority of our office to keep our children and communities safer.

## K-12 School Shootings by Shooter, School Years 2009-10 through 2018-19



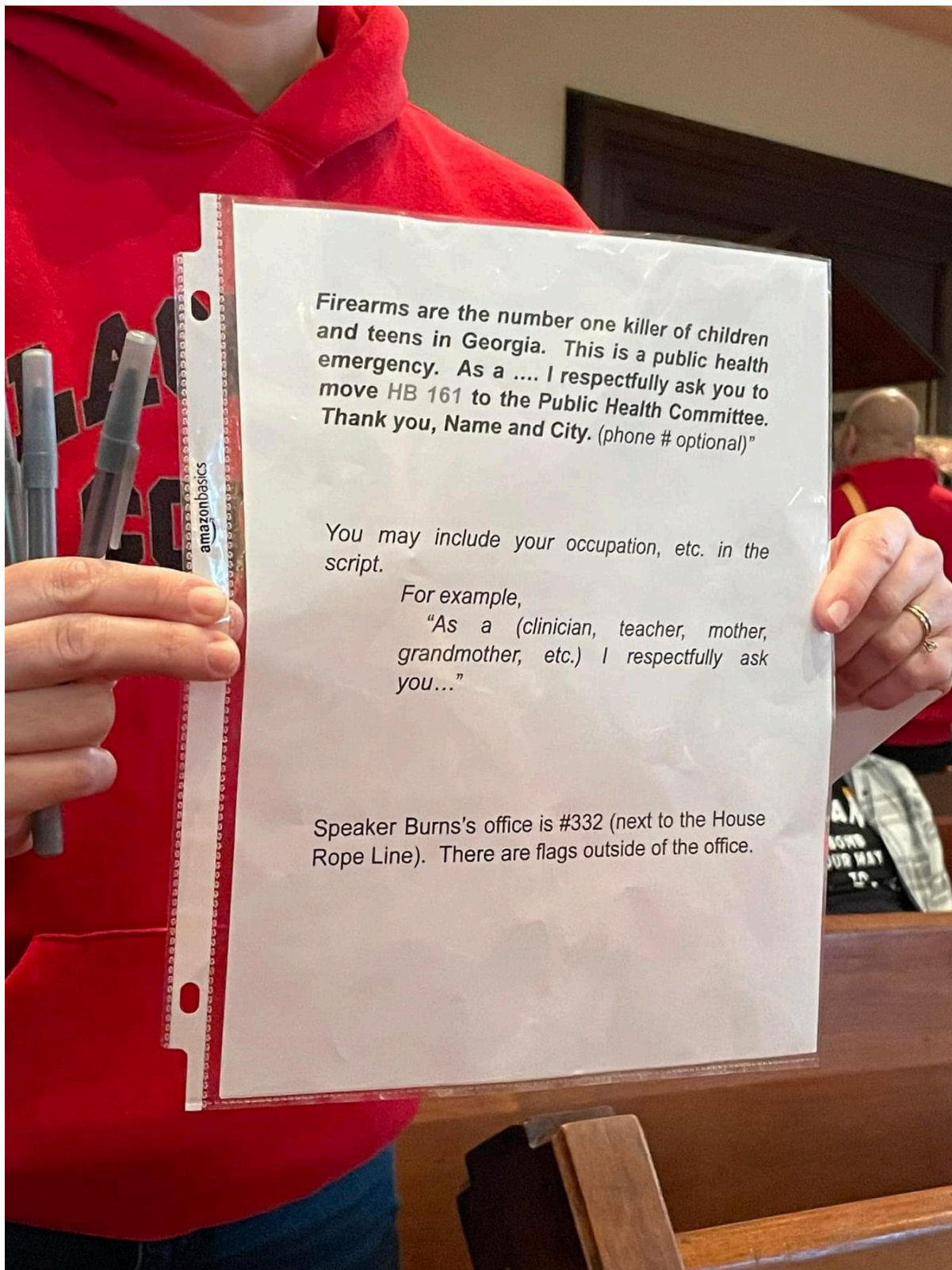
Source: GAO analysis of the Naval Postgraduate School's K-12 School Shooting Database for school years 2009-10 through 2018-19. | GAO-20-455

Source: [US Government Accountability Office](#)

We certainly appreciated the help from [Moms Demand Action](#) this week, as they descended on the Gold Dome for their annual **Advocacy Day at the Capitol!**

I had the honor to address the group at the top of the day, and was truly humbled by their commitment to the cause and their fearless advocacy for **HB 161**, which we are determined to have **recommitted to the House Public Health Committee for a fair hearing and a vote.**





***Would you like to help us advocate for the Pediatric Health Safe Storage Act? [Access our handy toolkit here](#), which has all the background, contact info, and email/call scripts you need to get started!***

We also appreciated the help from a group of [Pediatrics residents](#) from the [Morehouse School of Medicine](#), who personally went to the Speaker of the House's office to ask for **HB 161** to be recommitted to the Public Health Committee.



While advocating for gun safety legislation in a state like Georgia can feel like an uphill battle, know that the needle truly is moving on the issue. Just this week, a familiar-looking bill offering up to a **\$300 tax credit for purchase of safe storage equipment** (e.g. gun safes) has **passed unanimously** out of the [House Ways and Means committee](#), and may come to the House floor for a vote this week.

Even two or three years ago, this would be unthinkable. Now, bills like this are being supported by Republican lawmakers because their voters will no longer tolerate inaction.

**Your advocacy is working. Keep going.**

### ALIEN LAND LAW BILLS

To date there have been (to my count) five versions of the Alien Land Law bills introduced this biennium, which would **restrict the rights of individuals from certain countries of origin from buying or leasing property in Georgia.**

The two most recent attempts have been [HB 1093](#) an [SB 420](#), both of which have now passed out of their [respective committees](#) by this week and could come to a floor vote before Crossover.



**COMMUNITY DINNER**  
**TO STAND UP AGAINST ANTI-ASIAN & ANTI-IMMIGRANT LEGISLATION**

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20  
 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

CANTON HOUSE  
 4825 BUFORD HIGHWAY NE  
 CHAMBLEE, GA 30341

RSVP: [bit.ly/0220communitydinner](https://bit.ly/0220communitydinner)



**社區晚宴 抗議反亞裔和反移民立法**

2024年2月20日星期二,  
 下午6:00至晚上8:00

富麗華  
 4825 BUFORD HIGHWAY NE  
 CHAMBLEE, GA 30341

RSVP: [bit.ly/0220communitydinner](https://bit.ly/0220communitydinner)






We continue to help **inform, update, and organize the immigrant community** against these blatantly illegal bills, as similar pieces of legislation have failed in [Texas](#) and [Florida](#). If Republicans are determined to ram these bills through as currently drafted, it's going to come with a fight.

**National security is an important priority we all share.** But passing sloppy legislation that clearly discriminates against individuals with specific countries of origin is not the way to accomplish that goal.


## IN THE NEWS

# *Alabama Rules Frozen Embryos Are Children, Raising Questions About Fertility Care*

The ruling raises worrisome legal issues for would-be parents far beyond Alabama whose hopes for children may depend on in vitro fertilization.

 Share full article



 1.7K



The Alabama Supreme Court, which ruled that frozen embryos can be considered children under state law. Kim Chandler/Associated Press

[Click here to read full article](#)

This week [an Alabama Supreme Court ruled](#) that **frozen embryos\* should be considered “children” under state law**, casting doubt over fertility care for prospective parents in Alabama and raising complex legal questions with implications extending far beyond Alabama. Already, [three Alabama IVF clinics](#)

[have suspended services](#) as they evaluate whether this ruling puts their patient care at legal risk.

(\* Look, not to be That Person, but technically they are not “embryos,” but likely “blastocysts.” OK, carry on.)



The screenshot shows the AJC Politics website header with navigation links for 'Politically Georgia', 'Elections', 'Trump Georgia Case', and 'Legislature'. The article title is 'Alabama embryo ruling has some Georgia abortion rights advocates on edge'. Below the title is a photo of a crowd of people at a rally, with some holding signs. The article is credited to Natrice Miller/AJC and is by Maya T. Prabhu, dated Feb 23, 2024.



State Rep. [Michelle Au](#), a Jones Creek Democrat, said Republicans have seen that limiting abortions is a losing issue at the ballot box.

“Passing this sort of legislation — even though they say they’re not looking at it — this is going to have a huge effect on people’s ability to raise a family,” said Au, an anesthesiologist. “I don’t think (Republicans) are necessarily fully conversant on what the unintended consequences could be on people who really want children.”

[Click here to read full article](#)

I spoke with the [Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#)’s Maya Prabhu about [the implications of the Alabama ruling on Georgia’s legislative session](#). While it seems that Republicans this year have very little appetite for further abortion restrictions (**Georgia already has a six week abortion ban** and I think most Republicans have determined that going any further would be a losing issue for them electorally), we continue to hear talk about restricted access to contraception, sex education, and the concept of “personhood” after conception has been on the table since the passage of **HB 481**.

\* \* \*

Earlier this year I was happy to chat with Saurabh Datar of the [New York Times](#) about [polling and outreach to Asian voters](#). Though **AAPI voters represent the**

**fastest-growing electoral demographic**, they are often invisible in polls because the electorate is incredibly diverse, speaks many different languages, and is therefore expensive to survey.

# The New York Times

RACE/RELATED

## *Asian Americans Are Often Invisible in Polling. That's Changing.*

Without much survey data, there's little information about what issues matter to Asian Americans.





By Saurabh Datar

Feb. 24, 2024 Updated 1:05 p.m. ET

*This article is also a weekly newsletter. Sign up for Race/Related [here](#).*

When Dr. Michelle Au ran for State Senate in Georgia in 2020, an experienced political operative told her: “Don’t waste too much time talking to Asian voters. They don’t vote.”

That same year in Georgia, turnout among Asian American voters, who as a group rarely receive dedicated attention from politicians, nearly doubled, according to data from Georgia’s secretary of state. Dr. Au, a Democrat, became the first Asian American woman to be elected to the State Senate. Joe Biden became the first Democratic presidential candidate to win the state since Bill Clinton, in 1992.

“People really started to realize that there is a large and growing and quite powerful Asian electorate in Georgia, but one that people have, up until now, not been paying attention to at all because of this sensibility that the Asian population is too small to make a difference,” said Dr. Au, who is now serving in the state’s House of Representatives.

[Click here to read full article](#)

I am proud that our campaign, along with many other campaigns in Georgia, have shown the importance of outreach to the AAPI electorate, and **I hope that AAPI outreach becomes a standard part of any local, state, or national campaign strategy.**

TEAM AU IN ACTION

**Georgia's Legislative AAPI Caucus** was proud to be able to support our friends last night at the **Georgia Legislative Black Caucus' Heritage Gala**, as we work together to build broad and diverse coalitions across the state! We are all stronger when we work together, and our numbers continue to grow.



\* \* \*

I was delighted to meet my House Page **Dalun Li** this week as he spent some time helping us at the Capitol! Dalun is a sophomore at [Chattahoochee High School](#), where he plays trombone in the school band. Hope you enjoyed your day with us, Dalun!



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](#).

\* \* \*

It was wonderful meeting with the scholars from **[Student Leadership Johns Creek](#)** during their visit to the Capitol. **HD 50 boasts three of the top 10 public high schools in Georgia**, and young leaders like these here are the future of our state.



**Welcome to the People’s House!** If you are with a school group and interested in visiting the Capitol, please don’t hesitate to [reach out to my office](#) and we’d be happy to spend some time with you while you’re here!

## HOUSE DISTRICT 50 UPDATES





I enjoyed meeting with voters from HD 50 and beyond at our **Pre-Crossover Day Town Hall** Saturday afternoon at [Six Bridges Brewing](#)! Look for our next Town Hall after Legislative Day 40, when I will be able to give the district a recap of the good, the bad, and the ugly of what the Georgia General Assembly accomplished by Sine Die.

\* \* \*

Believe it or not, it's time to vote! *Again!* **Early voting started last Monday for Georgia's Presidential Preference Primary**, and will continue for the next three weeks.

# FULTON VOTES 2024

## Advance Voting Hours and Locations

**Monday February 19 to Friday March 8, 2024**

**Monday – Friday from 9 a.m. until 7 p.m.**

**Saturdays February 24 & March 2 from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.  
Sundays February 25 & March 3 from 12 p.m. – 5 p.m.**

Adams Park Library

Alpharetta Library

Buckhead Library

C. T. Martin Natatorium Recreation Center

Chastain Park Recreation Center

College Park Auditorium

Dorothy Benson Senior Center

East Point First Mallalieu United Methodist Church

East Roswell Library

Elections Hub

Etris-Darnell Community Recreation Center

Evelyn G. Lowery Library at Cascade

Fairburn Annex

Fulton County Government Center

Fulton County Customer Service Center at Maxwell Road

Gladys S. Dennard Library at South Fulton

Grant Park Recreation Center

High Museum of Art

Joan P. Garner Library at Ponce de Leon

Johns Creek Environmental Campus

Louise Watley Library at Southeast Atlanta

Metropolitan Library

Milton Community Center

*for full addresses please visit*  
**[www.fultonvotes.com](http://www.fultonvotes.com)**

Milton Library

North Fulton Service Center

Northeast Spruill Oaks Library

Northside Library

Northwest Library at Scotts Crossing

Palmetto Library

Robert F. Fulton Library at Ocee

Roswell Library

Sandy Springs Library

South Fulton Service Center

Southwest Arts Center

Welcome All Recreation Center

Wolf Creek Library

# FULTON VOTES 2024

## Advance Voting Drop Boxes and Offices

*Voters may return absentee ballots to drop boxes or Elections Offices during Early Voting hours*

**Monday February 19 to Friday March 8, 2024**

**Monday – Friday from 9 a.m. until 7 p.m.**

**Saturdays February 24 & March 2 from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.**

**Sundays February 25 & March 3 from 12 p.m. – 5 p.m.**

### ABSENTEE BALLOT DROP BOXES

**Alpharetta Library**

10 Park Plaza  
Alpharetta, GA 30009

**Buckhead Library**

269 Buckhead Avenue NE  
Atlanta, GA 30305

**C.T. Martin Recreation Center**

3201 M.L.K. Jr Drive SW  
Atlanta, GA 30311

**College Park Auditorium**

3631 Main Street  
College Park, GA 30337

**East Roswell Library**

2301 Holcomb Bridge Road  
Roswell, GA 30076

**Sandy Springs Library**

395 Mount Vernon Highway  
Sandy Springs, GA 30328

**Wolf Creek Library**

3100 Enon Road  
South Fulton, GA 30331

### OFFICE LOCATIONS

**Elections Hub**

5600 Campbellton Fairburn Road  
Union City, GA 30213

**Fulton County Government Center**

130 Peachtree Street SW  
Atlanta, GA 30303

**North Fulton Service Center**

7741 Roswell Road  
Sandy Springs, GA 30350

**South Fulton Service Center**

5600 Stonewall Tell Road  
South Fulton, GA 30349

More information on early polling locations and absentee ballot drop box sites above. **You can check your voter registration status at**

**<https://mvp.sos.ga.gov/s/>**



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.

5805 State Bridge Road, Suite G238  
Johns Creek, Georgia 30097  
United States

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