



**FULTON
COUNTY**

**Fulton County Board of Commissioners
February 5, 2025**

**2025 Legislative
Session Update**

Legislative Session Overview

- The House Chamber is working on the Amended Fiscal Year 2025 Budget ([House Bill 67](#)) in Appropriations subcommittee meetings.

Fulton County Delegation Overview

- The Joint Fulton County Delegation held a meeting on Thursday, January 28. The Department of External Affairs presented the 2025 Legislative Agenda and requested support for upcoming local legislation.
- The next meeting will be on Thursday, February 6 at 4 p.m. in CAP 216.

Resources for Superior Court Judges & Judicial Officers

Resources for State Court Judges

Support for State Funding for Behavioral Health Resources

Online Publication of Legal Notices

Transit Board Representation

Amendment to Fulton County Housing Authority

Resident Commissioner Requirements

Support for Legislative Proposals for Child Attorneys

Clarification of Purchasing Powers for Constitutional Officers

Premises Liability Reform

Next Generation 911

Support for Medicaid Expansion

Change Personal Property and Freeport Return Dates

Authorize Digital Court Reporting

Raise Highschool Dropout Age (Youth Commission)



**FULTON
COUNTY**

2025

**State Legislative
Agenda**

Primary Policy Priority:

Judicial Resources – Superior Court

- Fulton County requests at least one additional judgeship for Superior Court to more effectively manage the Circuit's high volume of cases and its unique level of complex cases.
 - Distribution and review of current caseload comparisons with other Circuits.
- Fulton County seeks approval of local legislation to authorize Superior Court judicial officers to handle non-serious felony and civil cases by assignment of the Chief Judge. Increasing the authority of judicial officers, who currently handle only family law cases, will create greater efficiency with the case management process.
 - Lobbying Team is securing legislative sponsors.
 - County Attorney's office is on standby for legal notices.

Primary Policy Priority: Judicial Resources – Additional State Court Judges

Fulton County seeks the allocation of two additional State Court judges, increasing the Court from 10 to 12 judges.

- Lobbying Team is securing delegation sponsors.
- County Attorney's office is on standby for legal notices.

Primary Policy Priority:

Ongoing State Investment – Behavioral Health

Fulton County seeks ongoing state funding for Behavioral Health beds, as recommended in the 2023 Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) bed study. This includes:

- Additional funding for Behavioral Health Crisis Centers
 - Monitoring DBHDD proposed budget.
- Increased availability of mental health beds for justice-involved individuals.
 - Monitoring proposed budget for DBHDD and Georgia Department of Corrections.

House Bill 75: Justice for Peanut and Fred Act

- **Sponsors:** Representatives Ridley of the 22nd, Ridley of the 6th, Horner of the 3rd, Tarvin of the 2nd, Chastain of the 7th, and others
- **Committee:** House Agriculture & Consumer Affairs
- **Summary:**
 - Amends Georgia's animal protection laws, specifically addressing the impounding and care of domesticated animals. The bill defines "domesticated animal" to include pets such as dogs, cats, birds, fish and reptiles but excludes livestock. The bill sets guidelines for humane care of impounded animals, including the requirement for necessary veterinary services, and allows private contractors to assist with their care.
 - Euthanasia of an impounded animal can only occur with a court order, after a judge determines it is the most humane option following a hearing. The bill holds government agencies liable for up to \$5,000 if their negligence results in harm to an impounded animal.
 - Allows for the sale or euthanasia of animals that are not returned to their owners, with proceeds from sales used to cover care costs, and any remaining funds either going to the state or local government or the animal's owner.

House Bill 85: Superior Court Judicial Compensation Reform Act

- **Sponsors:** Representatives Leverett of the 123rd, Efstration of the 104th, Burchett of the 176th, Hong of the 103rd, Gunter of the 8th, and others
- **Committee:** House Judiciary
- **Status:** First committee hearing on Tuesday, January 28
- **Summary:** Proposes several changes to the compensation structure for superior court judges in Georgia. Key provisions include:
 - **Compensation Adjustments:** Starting July 1, 2025, superior court judges can opt to receive a new compensation package based on a combination of state salary and locality pay, replacing county salary supplements. Judges in office on this date will have the option to choose this new compensation system without any reduction in their current pay or benefits.
 - **Grandfathering of Judges:** Judges who do not opt into the new system will continue to receive their current compensation, including any county supplements, ensuring no pay decrease during their term.
 - **Locality Pay:** Counties can provide up to 10% of the state annual salary in locality pay to superior court judges, but this replaces existing county salary supplements. Chief judges may still receive additional supplements.
 - **Suspension of Local Laws:** From July 1, 2025, until July 1, 2026, local laws that link the compensation of other officials to superior court judges' salaries will be suspended, preventing automatic increases in those officials' pay based on superior court judges' salary changes.
 - **Retirement Benefits:** Judges who opt into the new system will retain their existing retirement benefits, including those related to locality pay.

Legislative Calendar (SR 6) & Events at the State Capitol

- February 6: Legislative Days 13
- February 10: Legislative Day 14
- February 11: Legislative Day 15
- February 12: Legislative Day 16
- February 13: Legislative Day 17
- March 6: Legislative Day 28 (*Crossover Day*)
- April 4: Legislative Day 40 (*Sine Die*)



- Georgia Council on Aging and Coalition of Advocates for Georgia's Elderly Senior Day on **Tuesday, February 11**
- Fulton Day at the State Capitol on **Thursday, February 20**
- ACCG Capital Connection Conference on **Monday, February 24-Tuesday, February 25**

More events included in weekly written reports