



**FULTON  
COUNTY**

**Fulton County Board of Commissioners  
February 15, 2023**

**2023 State  
Legislative Update**

**Funding for a Behavioral Health Crisis Center**

**Equitable Property Tax Appeals Process**

**Senior Homestead Exemption Simplification**

**Effective & Efficient Justice System**

**Equal Access to Judicial Personnel Benefits**

**MARTA Board Appointment Parity**



**FULTON  
COUNTY**

**2023  
State Legislative  
Agenda**

# Legislative Session Overview

- The House of Representatives passed by substitute the Amended Fiscal Year 2023 budget ([HB 18](#)) on Legislative Day 12. HB 18 is set by a revenue estimate of \$32.56 billion which is a 7.8 percent increase of \$2.36 billion over the original Fiscal Year 2023 budget.
  - Subcommittees of the Senate Appropriations Committee are reviewing the bill, and final passage is expected soon.
- On Monday, February 13, the House Appropriations Human Resources Subcommittee heard Fiscal Year 2024 budget requests from the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD), including our primary policy priority: funding for a Behavioral Health Crisis Center (BHCC).
  - Chairman Robb Pitts and Vice Chairman Bob Ellis provided testimony in support of a funding increase.

# Fulton Legislative Delegation Overview

- Fulton County Government presented the 2023 Legislative Agenda during the first Joint Fulton County Delegation meeting on Thursday, February 2 with a focus on our primary policy priority: funding for a Fulton County Behavioral Health Crisis Center (BHCC).
- The next Joint meeting will be on Thursday, February 16 at 4 p.m. in CLOB 605.
  - Meetings will be held on Thursdays at 4 p.m. We will provide locations weekly.
  - The Department of Registration and Elections has been invited to present at an upcoming meeting, but a date has not been set.

# Primary Policy Priority: BHCC Funding

- Governor Kemp's Fiscal Year 2024 Budget includes \$5,688,919 to operate a Behavioral Health Crisis Center (BHCC) with a 15-bed crisis stabilization unit and 18 observation chairs for adults within Fulton County. *This does not reflect full funding for this project.*
- Fulton County respectfully asks support for DBHDD's full request for a Behavioral Health Crisis Center that includes a 24 bed Crisis Stabilization Unit with 16 observation chairs with enhanced entry ("the Living Room Model"), with annual funding of \$13.3 million per year. At minimum, we request \$6,651,470 for Fiscal Year 2024, representing half-year funding for the DBHDD model, reflecting the facility's opening date of January 2024.

# MARTA Board Appointment Parity

- Fulton County is exploring options on how to achieve MARTA Board Appointment Parity.
- Current MARTA Board members (15 total including Ex-Officio members holding respective State Office) can be found [here](#) and include appointments from: Fulton County (3), DeKalb County (4), City of Atlanta (3), Clayton County (2) and the Governor (1).
  - Ex-Officio members: Commissioner, Georgia Department of Transportation and Executive Director, State Road and Tollway Authority.

# Other Fulton County Priorities

- Rep. Roger Bruce (61<sup>st</sup>) is sponsoring a bill related to the Equal Access to Judicial Retirement Benefits priority, which will repeal a restriction that disallows Fulton County State Court Judges from accruing benefits on the County only portion of their salary. Because this bill is a retirement measure, it is being reviewed by the Office of the State Auditor as is required of all retirement bills.
- Rep. Bruce is also sponsoring a secondary priority to allow the Fulton County Probate Court to collect a \$5 technology fee. The required public notice for this local bill has been published.
- Sen. Sonya Halpern (39<sup>th</sup>) is sponsoring a bill related to the Senior Homestead Exemption Simplification priority which will eliminate the need for lowest income seniors over the age of 65 to renew their homestead exemption every two years.
- House Juvenile Justice Chairwoman Rep. Mandi Ballinger (23<sup>rd</sup>) has agreed to advance the Georgia Code amendments requested by the Fulton County Child Attorney's Office to codify legal representation for minors in legitimation, dependency and termination cases.
- The Fulton County legislative team continues to finalize sponsorship and broad support for bills related to the remaining priorities: Equitable Property Tax Appeals Process

# State and Local Government

Bill #/Author	Description	Status
<p><b><a href="#">SB 19</a> Prohibit Collection of passport application and processing fees by clerks of superior courts and probate court judges   Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick (32<sup>nd</sup>)</b></p>	<p>This bill prohibits clerks of superior court and probate judges from keeping U.S. passport application processing fees (\$35 authorized by federal law) as personal compensation. Officials must disclose all passport processing fees collected on a quarterly basis to the county governing authority. Half of these fees will go into the county's general fund, and the other half will be retained by the clerk/probate judge for office operations and maintenance. The General Assembly may pass local legislation to change the percentage amounts retained and deposited into the county's general fund. The fees cannot be used to compensate the clerk, probate judge, or their employees, nor purchase any non-work-related items. Charging additional passport processing fees other than those authorized by federal laws or regulations is also prohibited.</p>	<p>Referred to Senate Government Oversight Committee</p>
<p><b><a href="#">SB 28</a> Repeal an Act fixing the compensation of counties with a population in excess of 500,000   Sen. Clint Dixon (45<sup>th</sup>)</b></p>	<p>This bill repeals an act that prohibits counties with populations in excess of 500,000 from fixing county commissioners' salaries through local legislation. If passed, these counties must have local legislation passed to adjust commissioners' salaries.</p>	<p>Referred to Senate State and Local Governmental Operations Committee</p>
<p><b><a href="#">SB 57</a> Georgia Sports Betting Integrity Act   Sen. Billy Hickman (4<sup>th</sup>)</b></p>	<p>This bill legalizes sports betting in Georgia which will be regulated by the newly created Georgia Sports Betting Commission. Up to nine online sports betting service providers, determined through a procurement process, would be authorized to provide betting. Individuals 21 years old and older can place bets, but no bets are allowed on injuries, penalties, or the outcome of player discipline rulings or replay reviews. Betting services will pay an annual privilege tax of 20 percent of their adjusted gross income, proceeds will be distributed in the same manner as they are for the state lottery.</p>	<p>Referred to Senate Economic Development and Tourism Committee</p>



# Elections

Bill #/Author	Description	Status
<a href="#"><b>HB 17</b></a> Elections; sealing of ballots in secure containers   Rep. Alan Powell (33 <sup>rd</sup> )	This bill provides chain of custody requirements and prohibits the handling of voted ballots without a poll official being present. The bill allows for public notice of logic and accuracy testing for ballot marking devices to be posted on a website or in a newspaper. Regarding mail-in absentee ballot requests, the bill requires the issuance and mailing of absentee ballots within three days of request receipt.	House Governmental Affairs Committee Favorably Reported by Substitute
<a href="#"><b>HB 200</b></a> Elections; Authorize Rank Choice Voting for City Elections   Rep. Joseph Gullett (19 <sup>th</sup> )	This bill allows the use of rank choice voting for city elections in which there are more than two candidates running for an office. Cities must first adopt an ordinance to use this voting method.	Referred to House Governmental Affairs – Elections Subcommittee
<a href="#"><b>SB 101</b></a> Elections and Primaries; Absentee Ballot Applications Good for Runoff Elections   Sen. Sonya Halpern (39 <sup>th</sup> )	This bill will allow an absentee elector's application for an absentee ballot for a primary or an election to also qualify as an automatic application for an absentee ballot for any runoff resulting from such primary or election.	Referred to Senate Ethics Committee
<a href="#"><b>SB 122</b></a> Primaries and Elections; Security Requirements   Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick (32 <sup>nd</sup> )	This bill authorizes members of county boards of elections to serve on performance review boards for review of election superintendents' conduct; limits access to secure areas where ballots are printed and stored; requires blank ballots to be transported in sealed containers, accompanied by signed ballot transfer forms; unseals primary and general election ballot returns kept by the clerk of court so that the public may have access to them; and requires counties to, upon election certification, make documents from an election subject to electronic inspection in high resolution images.	Referred to Senate Ethics Committee

# Taxation

Bill #/Author	Description	Status
<p><a href="#">HB 36</a> <b>Revise language required to be included in notices of current assessment   Rep. Charles Martin (49<sup>th</sup>)</b></p>	<p>This bill adds hearing officer review for tax assessment of certain business personal property in excess of \$200,000.</p>	<p>Referred to House Ways &amp; Means Committee</p>
<p><a href="#">HB 264</a> <b>Revenue and taxation; handling of appeals of property tax assessments; revise certain deadlines and procedures   Rep. Vance Smith (138<sup>th</sup>)</b></p>	<p>This bill shortens the time county board of tax assessors must respond to a property tax appeal from 180 days to 90 days. If the county board of tax assessors does not respond within 90 days, the appeal is forwarded to the county board of equalization. Within 90 days of receiving the notice of appeal, the county board of equalization must hold a hearing. If no hearing is scheduled by the appeal administrator within 180 days from the date of appeal, the valuation asserted by the taxpayer shall become the assessed fair market value. If the taxpayer receives his or her indicated value because no hearing was scheduled, this new value shall not be used for comparison in other tax appeals.</p>	<p>Referred to House Ways &amp; Means Committee</p>
<p><a href="#">HB 290</a>   <b>Revenue and taxation; county tax commissioner duties; revise provisions   Rep. Mitchell Scoggins (14<sup>th</sup>)</b></p>	<p>This bill creates a uniform, three-party contract between the county government, tax commissioner, and municipal government. This contract specifies services to be provided by the tax commissioner, the amount to be paid by the city to the county to approximate county costs, and the amount paid by the city to the tax commissioner for all services. HB 290 limits compensation paid by the city to the tax commissioner to fifty percent of the minimum annual base salary.</p>	<p>Referred to House Ways &amp; Means Committee</p>
<p><a href="#">SR 82</a> <b>Tax Commissioner; waive certain delinquent ad valorem property taxes- CA   Sen. Carden Summers (13<sup>th</sup>)</b></p>	<p>This proposed constitutional amendment authorizes the tax commissioner, subject to local governing authority approval, to waive certain delinquent ad valorem property taxes, penalty, and interest for the purpose of placing non-revenue generating and tax delinquent property back in effective utilization status.</p>	<p>Referred to Senate Banking and Financial Institutions Committee</p>

# Public Safety

Bill #/Author	Description	Status
<p><b><a href="#">SB 31</a> Prosecuting Attorneys: Reimbursement of Expenses Incurred by the Attorney General   Sen. Brandon Beach (21<sup>st</sup>)</b></p>	<p>This bill requires the Attorney General’s Office to receive reimbursement for the cost and expenses occurred when they take on a criminal case due to failure to prosecute by a district attorney. These costs will likely be a shared expense between the state and counties.</p>	<p>Referred to Senate Judiciary Committee</p>
<p><b><a href="#">SB 42</a> Human Trafficking Hotline Information; model notice requirements; increase the fine for failure to comply   Sen. Mike Hodges (3<sup>rd</sup>)</b></p>	<p>This bill increases the fine for failure to comply with model notice requirements with human trafficking hotline information in businesses and on the internet.</p>	<p>Senate Passed</p>
<p><b><a href="#">SB 44</a> Street Gang Terrorism and Prevention Act   Sen. Bo Hatchett (50<sup>th</sup>)</b></p>	<p>This bill strengthens the sentencing for all gang-related offenses by imposing mandatory minimum sentences but specifically targets the recruitment of minors by instating even stricter mandatory minimums for those whose gang-related offenses involve a minor or otherwise vulnerable individual.</p>	<p>Senate Passed by Substitute</p>

# Public Works

Bill #/Author	Description	Status
<b><a href="#">HB 193</a> Local government; increase dollar values of certain public works construction contracts exempt from bidding requirements   Rep. Victor Anderson (10<sup>th</sup>)</b>	<p>This bill raises the dollar amount threshold required to bid out public works projects from \$100,000 to \$250,000.</p> <p>ACCG supports this measure as does the Georgia Municipal Association and the Associated General Contractors of Georgia.</p>	House Governmental Affairs Committee Favorably Reported

# Transportation

Bill #/Author	Description	Status
<b><a href="#">HB 189</a> Highways, bridges, and ferries; allowable variance for weight limitations upon a vehicle or load   Rep. Steven Meeks (178<sup>th</sup>)</b>	<p>This bill increases the allowable weight variance from 5% to 12.5% for all five-axle commercial trucks. The rise in weight limits from 80,000 pounds to 90,000 pounds will allow vehicles hauling forest products, live poultry, concrete, solid waste and others to haul a heavier load. Additionally, this legislation removes any mile radius restrictions in place now.</p> <p>ACCG opposes this measure as does the Georgia Municipal Association and the Georgia Department of Transportation.</p>	House Transportation Committee Favorably Reported By Substitute
<b><a href="#">HR 66</a> Ratify Governor Brian P. Kemp's Suspension of Motor Fuel Executive Orders   Rep. Matthew Gambill (15<sup>th</sup>)</b>	<p>This resolution is required to ratify Governor Brian P. Kemp's 2022 Executive Orders that suspended the collection of state motor fuel and diesel fuel taxes.</p>	Referred to House Ways & Means Committee

# Legislative Calendar ([SR 6](#)), Events, & Special Days at the State Capitol

- Thursday, February 16: Legislative Day 20
- Tuesday, February 21: Legislative Day 21
- Wednesday, February 22: Legislative Day 22
- Thursday, February 23: Legislative Day 23
- Monday, February 27: Legislative Day 24
- Monday, March 6: Legislative Day 28 (Crossover Day)
- Wednesday, March 29: Legislative Day 40 (Sine Die)

- Thursday, February 16: [Fulton County Day at the Capitol](#)
- Thursday, March 9: [ACCG Legislative Breakfast](#)

