

TRUE PERSPECTIVES - June 27 - Georgia Legislative Highlights

On June 27 Senator Ben Watson and Representative Jesse Petrea lead a seminar on what the state of Georgia has done this year.



House Bill 1064 – was designed to reward military veterans and help Georgia’s businesses find needed employees by encouraging returning military veterans to live in Georgia. It does so by giving a \$17,500 retirement income tax exemption on military pensions for those under age 62. It gives another \$17,500 exemption on other income if they work in Georgia.

House Bill 1013 – deals with the growing need for mental health insurance coverage, as more and more citizens have debilitating conditions from mental problems as they do from physical traumas. In the old days, mental illness often meant institutionalizing them. That remedy is no longer available. And many tragedies occur when untreated mental illness produces violence against innocent parties.

This bill expands health insurance policy coverage to mental ailments. It also provides tuition assistance to encourage more people to pursue expertise in psychiatric and psychologic fields.

Fiscal Responsibility

HB 1437 – flattens the individual tax rate to 5.49% and reduces it by 0.1% each year until it hits 4.9%.

The legislature also allocated \$1 billion of the state \$3 billion surplus as refunds to Georgia’s tax payers via a credit of \$500 per family on their 2021 tax bill.

This surplus is despite Georgia’s state budget is now some \$30 billion, when as late as 2017, it was \$17 billion. This is a credit to Georgia attracting new businesses and new residents who are paying taxes from good new jobs. In fact, Georgia now has the second lowest total state tax rate per capita in the U.S., and the 8th largest total state population.

Woke Responses

HB 1178 – A “Parent’s Bill of Rights” prevents government agencies or individuals from infringing on a parent’s ability to direct a student’s moral upbringing, or reviewing a school’s instructional materials, or inspecting any of their child’s records.

Also prohibits divisive materials such as Critical Race Theory.

Also allows athletic associations to ban students whose gender is male from participating in athletic events designed for women.

Gun Rights

Georgia now allows concealed carry without needing a separate permit. Only submit to a background check.

To those who worry that an armed law abiding citizenry is dangerous should read the recent Wall Street Journal article on the experience in Brazil. After liberalizing gun ownership rights, Brazil’s high murder rate actually fell by 38%.

Questions and Comments

According to our Sheriff John Wilcher, the Chatham County Jail became first in nation to be accredited for mental health services.

How is the state dealing with many of its public schools failing? Is there a chance that a full voucher system could be passed? Many rural districts like their public schools. The state has strongly supported charter schools as an alternative, but they are not always supported by some urban school systems (like Chatham County). It is always a delicate issue whether a state should try to interfere with local school districts.

Georgia’s state budget allocates 55% to overall education issues, and its public school salaries are above the national average.

The Georgia legislature recently completed reapportionment at the end of 2021. Every ten years, federal, state and local voting districts are updated to account for population change and shifts. Georgia’s recent changes are geographically sound and keep communities of interest intact to the greatest degree possible.

As for voting integrity, this last revision in Georgia has us ranked first in the nation in election integrity, according to the Heritage Foundation. (Editor’s note: in the bottom ten are blue states like New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Washington, Vermont, Oregon, California, Nevada.)



