



# 2026 ABC of Georgia Weekly Legislative Report

*Legislative Days 1 – 5 | January 16, 2026*

*By ABC of Georgia Lobbying Firm, Fiveash-Stanley*

## Session Begins

Georgia lawmakers returned to the Capitol on January 12 to kick off the 2026 legislative session. Governor Brian Kemp delivered his final State of the State address on Thursday, emphasizing conservative fiscal management, economic development, and public safety investment. He proposed a one-time tax rebate for Georgians and vowed to accelerate a reduction in the state income tax rate. He joked that, despite being a lame-duck governor, he still wields a “big red pen,” in reference to his veto authority.

Lawmakers will not gavel in officially next week, instead hearing from the state economist and agency heads as work on the amended FY26 and FY27 budgets continues. There will be a deluge of new legislation introduced when the session resumes on January 26.

## Calendar Set

Georgia’s Constitution limits a “regular session” to no more than 40 days each year. The House and Senate have agreed to a full legislative calendar. The critical Crossover Day deadline is set for Friday, March 6 and the final day of session will be Thursday, April 2.

## Open Congressional Race Draws Record Crowd

Georgia Congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene resigned on January 5. A special election is set for March 10 to fulfill the remainder of her term. Qualifying took place this week with a staggering twenty-two candidates entering the race, including state Sen. Colton Moore (R-Trenton). Georgia’s special elections are structured as a “jungle primary” meaning all candidates will appear on the same ballot, regardless of party. The top two finishers will go head-to-head in an April 7 runoff. The seat will then be reelected as part of the normal 2026 election cadence.

## New and Carryover Legislation

*All legislation not enacted during the 2025 session remains available for consideration in 2026. Legislators will also file hundreds of new measures throughout this year’s session. While this weekly report will not include all carried-over measures of interest, rest assured your government affairs team is carefully tracking those items. Our aim is to keep this report focused on active, priority issues.*

## Tax Incentives and Economic Development

**Data Centers.** On January 15, the House Ways and Means Committee received a report from the Department of Audits and Accounts regarding tax incentive evaluations, including the High-Tech Data Center Equipment Exemption. Key findings from the report ([here](#)) are as follows:

- Georgia’s incentive package is similar to what is offered by many other states,
- The incentive is responsible for about 30% of the data centers constructed in the state (meaning 70% would have been built without tax incentives),
- Forgone revenue is estimated at \$430 million,
- Approximately 10,000 jobs are attributed to the exemption,

- The exemption is responsible for \$1.25 billion in value-added to the state, meaning the state's return on investment is \$2.89 per dollar of forgone revenue, and
- It is the construction of data centers that generates the super-majority of economic impact.

Chairman Shaw Blackmon told committee members that Ways and Means would take a deeper look at data centers during a separate meeting.

#### **Data Center Exemption ([SB 410](#))**

**Sen. Matt Brass, R-Newnan**

##### **Assigned to the Senate Finance Cmte on Jan-16**

SB 410 repeals the sales tax exemption on data center equipment sales upon signature of the Governor. Certificates of exemption issued prior to the date of repeal will still be valid. Sen. Nan Orrock (D-Atlanta) has also filed legislation ([SB 408](#)) to accelerate the sunset of the exemption from January 1, 2032 to January 1, 2027.

## **Construction, Real Estate, and Property Taxes**

#### **State-Wide Water Management Plan ([HR 1008](#))**

**Rep. Lynn Smith, R-Newnan**

##### **Favorably reported from the House Natural Resources and Environment Cmte on Jan-16**

HR 1008 is a resolution to ratify amendments to Georgia's comprehensive state-wide water management plan. The amendment reduces membership of the State Water Council to improve effectiveness and participation. It does not substantively change water rights or allocations.

#### **Mandatory State-wide Base Year Homestead Exemption ([SB 382](#))**

**Sen. Chuck Hufstetler, R-Rome**

##### **Assigned to the Senate Finance Cmte on Jan-13**

In 2024, Georgia voters approved a statewide base year homestead exemption, freezing the taxable value of homesteaded property. Under the law, cities, counties, and school systems could opt out of the freeze, creating a patchwork across the state. SB 382 eliminates the local opt-out authority and makes the base-year freeze mandatory statewide. It also changes procedures for SPLOST and ELOST referendums, potentially making it easier for local governments to levy additional sales taxes.

The property tax portion of SB 382 shifts more of the future tax burden on commercial property, multifamily housing, rental homes, second homes, and new homebuyers.

#### **Property Owners Protection Act ([SB 388](#))**

**Sen. Colton Moore, R-Trenton**

##### **Assigned to the Senate State and Local Governmental Operations Cmte on Jan-13**

SB 388 limits local government code-enforcement powers to protect property owners from incarceration, excessive fines, and intrusive inspections. It prohibits local governments from inspecting or investigating residential or commercial property unless there is probable cause of a code violation and it creates an imminent danger. Violations of local building, electrical, or similar codes remain misdemeanors and jail time is expressly prohibited. Sen. Colton Moore filed the legislation on the same day he resigned his seat to run for US Congress. SB 388 is unlikely to advance.

## **Procurement and Banking**

#### **QBS for Procurement ([HB 377](#))**

**Rep. Rob Leverett, R-Elberton**

##### **Returned to the Senate Banking and Financial Institutions Cmte on Jan-12**

HB 377 requires local governments to procure engineering, architecture, and landscape architecture services using the Qualifications Based Selections (QBS) process rather than the low-bid method where

the cost exceeds specific thresholds. It allows the local government to determine selection criteria and provides for direct negotiations with a sole offeror. This language was originally contained in [SB 51](#).

## **Taxation & General Business**

### **Immigration Enforcement ([SB 391](#))**

**Sen. Nabilah Parkes, D-Duluth**

#### **Assigned to the Senate Judiciary Cmte on Jan-14**

SB 391 is part of Senate Democrat's response to national ICE enforcement operations. It prohibits activities related to immigration enforcement in certain locations without a valid judicial warrant. Democrats also introduced [SB 389](#), which requires ICE to wear visible ID and prohibits face coverings; and [SB 390](#), which prohibits the deployment of state military into Georgia without the permission of the Governor.