

Legislative Summary

Priority “Rubricked” Bills

Below are the bills that we found a top priority for scientific evaluation. Those in **bold** passed, while the rest failed to make it through session. Hyperlinks take you to the scorecard.

Food access: [HB 996](#) (Food deserts), [HB 947](#) (SNAP restrictions), [HB 201](#) (prohibits lab-grown meat)

Technology safety: [SB 540 \(AI and minors\)](#), [SB 178](#) (bitcoin funding), [SB 228](#) (Public bitcoin investing), [SB 37](#) (AI Accountability)

Education safety: [HB 1045](#) (988 hotline on school badges), [SB 74](#) (criminalizing librarians)

Energy innovation: [HB 1133](#) (Solar on landfills), [HB 1304](#) (Portable Solar), [HB 169](#) (breaching land use for solar), [HB 507/203](#) (community solar), [HR 67](#) (committing Georgia to 100% clean energy by 2050)

Environmental regulation: [SB 447 \(Muddy Water Bill\)](#), [HB 1277 \(Increase cost threshold for environmental evaluations\)](#), [HB 211](#) (Reducing PFAS Liability), [HR 100](#) (Study committee on pollution and development)

Public health/autonomy: [HB 1242](#) (Medical Freedom Act), [HB 1089](#)

(Ivermectin), [HB 1275 \(stem cell regulation\)](#), [SB 471](#) (face covering enforcement in schools), [HB 218](#) (flu shots in hospitals), [SB 80](#) (rural hospital tax relief), [HB 100](#) (prescription drug rebates to consumers), [HB 173](#) (vaccine information in schools), [SB 610](#) (Medical aid in dying), [HB 641](#) (shutting off power to ill customers), [HB 54](#) (no puberty blockers to minors)

Reproductive health: [HB 1313](#) (legal protections for healthcare professionals assisting pregnant women), [HB 1138 \(access to contraceptives\)](#), [HB 1346](#) (maternal mental health screening) [Georgia General Assembly - HB 1118 – Increased Maternity Leave](#)

Substance regulation: [HB 958](#) (vape ingredient transparency), [HB 959](#) (flavored vapes) [HB 1248](#) (cannabis decriminalization), [HB 968](#) (kratom scheduling)

Data Centers: [SB 94](#) (consumer utility council), [SB 34](#) (preventing costs on consumers), [HB 528](#) (high use facilities transparency), [HB 559](#) (moving up the sunset date on tax exemptions)

Takeaways:

The Legislature notably failed to pass legislation in the energy and utility sectors. Ill-informed public health bills were killed in the legislative process. While not all reproductive health bills passed, access to contraceptives and maternity leave for state employees increased. Environmental legislation passed that was largely ill-informed and harmful, while renewable energy failed to move through.

Tax Outcomes

In general, Sci4Ga does not look at taxes, but taxes and tax breaks were a major theme of the legislative session. The tax breaks passed will have an impact on the health and well-being of Georgians.

Property Taxes

The bill: [SB 33](#) passed in a last-minute attempt by the legislature to cut property taxes. The final version of the bill limits home value increases to the rate of inflation or 3%.

The problem: Local governments and school districts cannot opt out. While homeowners may see a reduction in out-of-pocket costs, public schools and counties will face a significant shortfall in income needed to provide services such as schools, police and fire departments, health services, and other services that ultimately fall-to and are paid-for by local governments.

Income Taxes

The bill: [HB 463](#) reduces the personal income tax rate (flat) to 3.99% in 2028, and it increases standard deductions.

The problem: While easing taxes for some, sales taxes are likely to increase and reduce affordability for individuals in lower tax brackets. In general, income tax is considered *progressive*, meaning that it impacts higher earners more than lower; sales tax is considered *regressive*, in that it impacts lower earners more than higher.

Additionally, less funding is available to the state for needed services. For more information on the income tax and the unique choice provided to Georgians between sales and income taxes, read [here](#).

Data Center Tax Breaks

The bills: Senate bills [410](#), [408](#), and [476](#) attempted to roll back tax exemptions to data centers. Georgia HB [559](#) ([Rubric Here](#)) also attempted to move up the sunset date on tax exemptions.

The problem: These bills failed to pass the legislature.

Key Issues and Areas

Data Centers

Data centers, power plants, and other large infrastructure require water, land, and other resources – but so does our agriculture and so do Georgians.

There are ways to support sustainable growth that uplifts all Georgians. We must think critically about this. To begin to address this situation we supported:

- 1. Community protections for Georgia families and farmers. Large developers must pay for infrastructure upgrades that they need and implement community benefit plans.*
- 2. Accountable and transparent planning and reporting of resource use and management.*
- 3. Responsible Incentives based on efficiency measures.*
- 4. Education & Workforce Development supported in community benefit plans.*

Learn more about [Data Centers here](#).

Failed

All notable data center bills failed to pass.

[SB 34 \(Rubric Here\)](#) The original version, from Sen. Hufstetler, prohibited passing the cost of data center power infrastructure onto consumers. After being stripped of its good language and replaced by the inadequate PSC rules (HB 1063), it passed out of committee. Sen Hufstetler had the votes to amend it back to its good language, [but Georgia Power shut down the Senate for the day instead of calling it for a vote](#). The bill ultimately died in Senate Rules.

[HB 1063](#) was the ‘Status Quo’ bill. It would have codified into law the current PSC regulations that require data centers to pay their incremental costs. Only covers all costs of the energy buildout if all new power generation has an existing large-load customer. This required Georgia Power to be 100% correct about predicting the energy needs of data centers. This bill died.

[SB 410](#) (ending new certificates for tax exemption) crossed over and died. [HB 559 \(Rubric Here\)](#) (shortening the sunset on tax breaks from 2031 to 2026) was introduced and died. [SB 408](#) (sunsetting tax breaks in 2027) also died.

[HB 1027](#) (long term contracts for electric power), [SB 94 \(Rubric Here\)](#) (reestablishing a Consumer Utility Council), [HB 528 \(Rubric Here\)](#) (requiring high resource use facilities to submit annual disclosure reports providing detailed information about energy and water usage and taxes), [SB 421](#) (requiring no NDAs for data center power and water use), [HB 1012](#) (data center moratorium), and [SB 436](#) (combination of transparency and a moratorium), all failed.

Environment

The environment impacts what we eat, drink, and breathe, shaping our health. Living in neighborhoods with dirtier water, less greenspace, reduced access to nutritious food, and higher air pollution has a negative impact on a person's economic and physical wellbeing.

Georgia should encourage growth in a method that ensures everyone has a seat at the table, and all members of a community feel positive, not negative, impacts. That which can be measured can be obtained. Understanding the Cumulative Impact of Pollution on Economic Development and Growth is the first step on this journey.

Failed

No meaningful legislation on PFAS pollution (read more [here](#)) passed. [HB 211 \(Rubric Here\)](#) would have excluded 'PFAS Receivers' from legal liability when spreading PFAS, where anyone who is not a chemical manufacturer would be excluded from liability, failed to cross, and died.

[SB 538](#) and [HB 611](#), the Forever Chemicals Act, [HB 1237](#), the Pollution Prevention and Producer Responsibility Act of 2026, and [HB 1212](#), which implemented an excise tax on PFAS settlements, all died.

[HR 100](#), ([Rubric Here](#)), which would have created a study committee on the cumulative impact of pollution on economic development, and [HB 1072/HB 644](#), which would have considered out-of-state regulatory history when processing applications for permits, died.

Passed

The theme of the legislative session appeared to be reducing regulatory barriers to development, at the cost of environmental safety.

[HB 956](#) expands Georgia EPD Solid Waste Management program's spending authority but converts a specified cleanup fund into a generalized "slush" fund.

[HB 1277 \(Rubric Here\)](#) increases the cost threshold for environmental evaluation of projects, which accounts for cost increases but raises the potential for more environmental harm in development.

However, [SB 478](#) sunsets and raises appropriations for outdoor stewardship, providing one environmental win.

Energy

No meaningful legislation passed on renewable energy.

Failed

Solar energy failed to move this session. [HB 1304 \(Rubric Here\)](#) allowing portable solar failed to cross over. HB 320, allowing solar panel recycling [HB 1133 \(Rubric Here\)](#), and [HB 169 \(Rubric Here\)](#), allowing farmers the ability to breach land use agreements for solar power generation died after crossover. HB [507](#) and [SB 203 \(Rubric Here\)](#) (establishing a comprehensive community solar program for Georgia) failed.

Energy code and plan legislation also failed to move. [HB 1320](#) putting nuclear energy in the integrated resource plan, died, while [SR 882](#) asked the DCA not to adopt the 2024 International Energy Conservation Code. [HR 67 \(Rubric Here\)](#) committing Georgia to 100% clean energy by 2050 died. [HB 402](#), (clean energy goals and renewable energy financing in the utility commission) also died.

Tax credits also failed. A tax credit for geothermal machinery installations in homes, [HB 248](#), crossed over but did not pass. [HB 212](#) and [HB 213](#) attempted to give tax credits to companies investing in clean energy.

Passed

Electric co-ops must disclose their investments and explain their rationale, according to [SB 256](#).

Water

Passed

Water legislation was a heavy focus for this session, although a large majority of the legislation may cause more harm than good.

[SB 447 \(Rubric Here\)](#) known as the [“Muddy Water Bill,”](#) passed and is on its way to the governor. This bill Reduces time for counties to understand and evaluate construction permits – essentially weakening legal protections to keep dirt, silt, and runoff out of our water.

[HR 1008](#) ratified amendments to Georgia’s statewide water management plan, passing to mixed [negative](#) and [positive](#) reviews as to its impact on efficiency and stakeholder involvement.

[HB 43](#), which would have created a program to help low-income communities get clean drinking water, introduced and died.

Health

This legislative session proposed changes that acknowledge various statewide health disparities including high out-of-pocket costs, limited access, and rural closures. Georgia is facing a rural health crisis: nine rural hospitals closed since 2010 and nearly 20 of the state's remaining 67 rural hospitals are at risk of shutting down. Meanwhile, 11.7% of Georgians are uninsured—well above the national average of 8%—which aggravates healthcare access challenges.

Lawmakers suggested a multitude of bills to support the health of Georgia residents. The following bills specifically focus on vaccine education, rebate savings, pollution tracking and regulation, and rural hospital assistance.

Failed

Harmful legislation regarding public health failed to pass. Bills attempting to reduce vaccination, including [HB 1350](#) and [HB 1242 \(Rubric Here\)](#) died, while [SB 471](#), ([Rubric Here](#)), prohibiting mandatory face coverings in schools, crossed over and died.

Bills regulating and deregulating pharmaceuticals also failed to move. [HB 1089](#), ([Rubric Here](#)), which would have made ivermectin available over the counter, failed in House Rules, and [HB 1332](#) requiring a preference for American-made pharmaceuticals also died.

[HB 218](#), ([Rubric Here](#)), requiring hospitals to offer flu shots to patients 18 and older before discharge, passed out of committee and died. [SB 80](#), ([Rubric Here](#)), allowing more hospitals to qualify as “rural” for tax relief, died. [HB 100](#) ([Rubric Here](#)), where prescription drug rebates go back to consumers, died. [HB 173](#) ([Rubric Here](#)), requiring school information about vaccines in 7th grade, passed out of committee and died.

[SB 610](#), ([Rubric Here](#)), the controversial bill legalizing medical aid in dying, died. Finally, [HB 641](#), ([Rubric Here](#)) a bill preventing shutting of power to seriously ill customers, died this session.

Passed

[HB 1275](#) ([Rubric Here](#)) regulating stem cell therapies passed and is on its way to the governor. [SB 427](#) provides a better pathway for internationally licensed physicians, while [SB 402](#) provides pilot programs for autism support in foster care.

Women's Health

Failed

Three-fifths of the major women's health bills we tracked failed. [HB 1142](#), which would have required a registry of domestic violence offenders, crossed over and failed. [HB 1346](#), ([Rubric Here](#)), which would have provided insurance coverage for maternal mental health screenings, failed to cross over. [HB 1313](#), ([Rubric Here](#)), which would have provided legal protections for reproductive health providers, also died.

Passed

Two major bills increasing access to women's health passed. [HB 1138](#) ([Rubric Here](#)) increased access to contraceptives, allowing pharmacists to dispense self-administered hormonal contraceptives or administer injectable hormonal contraceptives, following in the footsteps of other states.

[HR 1118](#) provides 80 hours (about 7 days) of maternal birth leave, with eligible employees defined as individuals giving birth to a child.

Nutrition and Substances

Failed

All major substance and nutrition bills failed, with mixed effects on safety. Substance regulation lacked movement, as [HB 959](#) ([Rubric Here](#)), prohibiting flavored vapes, and [HB 958](#), ([Rubric Here](#)), requiring vape ingredient transparency, died, and [HB 1248](#) ([Rubric Here](#)), decriminalizing cannabis, died. [HB 419](#), requiring opioid antagonists within the University System of Georgia, crossed over and died.

[HB 996](#), ([Rubric here](#)) which would have provided beneficial reporting on food deserts, failed to crossover. However, [HB 947](#), ([Rubric Here](#)), which would have placed harmful restrictions on SNAP, crossed over and then failed. [HB 201](#), ([Rubric Here](#)), which prohibits selling lab-grown meat, died.

[HB 968](#), ([Rubric Here](#)), which states that kratom is to be considered a Schedule I controlled substance, died.

LGBTQIA+ Rights/Sex Education

Failed

Harmful legislation for LGBTQIA+ rights failed. Notable legislation that had crossed over were [SB 30](#), no hormone therapies to minors, [SB 39](#), excluding gender affirming care from state funds, and [HB 267](#), requiring separate bathrooms in schools.

[HB 54](#) originally provided for home health services by licensed registered nurses and physician assistants (A needed bill). An amendment ([Rubric Here](#)) prevented minors from having access to puberty blockers. An amended version from the Senate returned to the House and died.

Education

Failed

Legislation aimed at increasing mental health outcomes in school failed. [HB 1045 \(Rubric Here\)](#), which would have put 988 on school badges, crossed and died, and [HB 1471](#), which would have created five mental health days in school, also died.

Educational quality and quantity legislation failed in the shadow of literacy bills. [HB 1259](#), which would have prohibited virtual instruction if the school system did not meet performance benchmarks, crossed over and failed, while [SB 171](#), creating an advanced mathematics pathway, also failed. [SB 513](#), which would have increased attendance requirements for K-12, died.

However, harmful legislation on school and library services died. [SB 497](#), which would have limited non-instructional services school faculty can provide to children without parental permission, crossed and failed. [SB 248](#), which created prohibitive library materials standards, died, while [SB 74](#), ([Rubric Here](#)), which would criminalize librarian behavior, crossed and died.

Passed

Literacy became the focus of the session. [HB 1193](#), the Georgia Early Literacy and Dyslexia Act of 2026, passed and is signed. [SB 93](#) is signed and enacted, aligning state educator preparation courses with science-based reading, and [HB 307](#) is also enacted, providing for early identification of reading difficulty and dyslexia support.

This is exciting, as we were there in the beginning - [Education and Workforce – Science for Georgia](#).

Other education eligibility and access legislation passed, including updated dual achievement program eligibility in [HB 1293](#), and requiring enrollment <2 days after requested for foster care students in [SB 431](#).

Administration and Regulation

Failed

Red tape rollbacks died after crossover. The notable bill was [SB 28](#), while [SB 440](#), which changed the role of the Department of Public Health, also failed. [HB 903](#), which would have applied the Georgia APA to all executive branch agencies with a few exceptions, died after crossing over.

Passed

Two notable changes passed for regulations. [HB 1247](#) prohibits courts and administrative officers from deferring to agency interpretations, while [HB 1254](#) moves regulations from some boards to the Secretary of State.

Technology and Safety

Failed

[SB 398](#), which would have prevented virtual peeping and deepfakes, crossed over but ultimately failed. [SB 37](#), ([Rubric Here](#)), the AI accountability act, was introduced and died.

[SB 178](#) ([Rubric Here](#)) would have allowed the state treasurer to invest up to 5 percent of any fund in Bitcoin. The treasurer would also be allowed to loan digital assets, if it does not increase financial risk of the state. Introduced and died. [SB 228](#) ([Rubric Here](#)) would have allowed the Georgia treasury to invest public money in Bitcoin. It was also introduced and died.

Passed

As AI use increases, the general assembly worked to increase safety. [SB 444](#) certifies private review agents for health insurance and restricts the use of AI in determining healthcare coverage. [SB 540](#) ([Rubric Here](#)) also regulates AI conversation with minors, stating that operators are required to institute “reasonable” methods to prevent sexually explicit conduct, suggestions of sexual conduct, objectification, or posing as a natural person, including in relationships or role playing. Reasonable age verification methods such as ID are required, alongside disclosures and parental resources.