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2025 GAZA Summer Conference
Legislative Update

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Policy Teams



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2025 Legislative Session



- 1,310 Bills Introduced (Excluding Resolutions)
 - 600+ bills impacting local government

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2025 Session Highlights

- Governor's Tort Reform Package
- Federal Policies
- 2026 Elections
- Sine Die Drama



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HR 1 - The One Big Beautiful Bill Signed July 4th

- Key Takeaways for Public Works Leaders
- Loss of Competitive Grant Opportunities
- Section 60019 eliminates the Neighborhood Access and Equity Grant Program, supported projects like:
 - Reconnecting communities divided by highways or rail.
 - Improving pedestrian and bike access.
 - Enhancing transportation and land use for neighborhood connectivity.
- Rescission of Environmental and Climate-Related Funds
 - Title VI includes rescissions of funds for:
 - Clean heavy-duty vehicle procurement
 - Diesel emissions reduction programs
 - Low-carbon construction materials
 - Environmental review process improvements
- Expanded Opportunity Zone Infrastructure Eligibility
 - Section 70421 expands Opportunity Zone eligibility to include public infrastructure projects.
 - Public works agencies could work with finance/economic development teams to align OZ investments with infrastructure needs (e.g., broadband, utilities, roads in redevelopment areas).
- Water Infrastructure Support
 - Section 50501 authorizes new investments in water conveyance and surface water storage projects.
- Tax Exempt Municipal Bond Status Preserved

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2025 Legislation: Bills that Passed

HB 92: Property and Sales Tax Reform	HB 614: Equine Firework Safety
HB 513: SDS Revisions	HB 296: Digital IDs
HB 137: Public Works Bidding Threshold	SB 68 & SB 69: Comprehensive Tort Reform
HB 164: Truck Weight Sunset	HB 652: Extend Implementation Date for EV Charger Regulations
HB 155: Annexation & ZPL	SB 125: Electrical and Plumbing Contractor Qualifications Revision
HB 399: Housing Manager Contact	HB 423: Next Generation 911 Implementation and Oversight
SB 298: Direct Appeal of Immunities	
HB 58: Drone Regulation	
SB 12: Open Records Revision	
HB 199: Judicial Security	
HB 223: Hurricane Relief	
SB 16: Bail Bond Business	
SB 13: GEFA Loans for Natural Gas	



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HB 92 Property and Sales Tax Revision

Signed into law April 1, 2025 (Act 5).

Made revisions to components of HB 581 (2024)

Major Components of HB 581:

1. Property Tax Procedural Changes
2. Statewide Floating Homestead Exemption
3. New Local Option Sales Tax



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HB 92 Estimated Rollback Rate

- The estimated roll-back rate is a new concept that became law in 2025. It was created by HB 581 (2024) and revised by HB 92 (2025).
- HB 581 created the estimated roll-back rate, designed to provide local governments with more flexibility in accurately previewing that year's millage rate to the property owner on their NOA.
- HB 92 added a deadline by which the estimated roll-back rate must be provided and added a fallback provision if a jurisdiction fails to certify and provide an estimated roll-back rate.



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HB 92

Estimated Rollback Rate

- Option 1: A local government may certify an estimated roll-back rate to be included on the NOA.
 - The estimated rollback rate is defined as "the current year's estimated millage rate for general maintenance and operations minus the millage equivalent of the total net assessed value added by reassessments."
 - The levying or recommending authority must certify this rate by a formal vote and provide the rate to the county board of assessors and tax commissioner no less than 15 days prior to the postmark on the annual NOA.
- Option 2: If a local government fails to certify and provide an estimated roll-back rate by the deadline:
 - Then the NOA for that specific jurisdiction will state the previous year's millage rate and provide an estimate of taxes owed
 - Similar to how NOA's were prepared prior to HB 581.



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HB 92

Statewide Floating Homestead Exemption Revisions

Allows local governments that opted out of the HB 581 floating homestead exemption to rescind their decision to opt out and join HB 581's exemption prospectively by adopting a resolution to do so by April 30 for tax year 2025, or by March 1 of any year from tax year 2026 through 2029.

Local governments that opted out of HB 581 and which do not have a generally applicable floating homestead exemption or freeze for their jurisdiction:

- Does not allow future opt out, only ability to opt back in
- Requires the jurisdiction to vote to opt out of HB 581 again by March 1, 2027.
- A disclaimer is added to the tax bill stating the name of the governing authority that opted out of HB 581 Requirement sunsets December 31, 2029.



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HB 513: SDS Revisions

Effective Date: January 1, 2026

Background:

- Joint Study Committee & Joint GMA – ACCG Working Group
- House Bill 1407 (2024)



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HB 513: SDS Revisions

Clarified the ability of the county to use one or more unincorporated revenues to fund unincorporated and jointly funded countywide services

Requires the county to provide an annual report to all parties of the agreement accounting for the funding sources and cost of providing unincorporated and jointly funded countywide services

- The county must "show their work" so that the revenues and expenditures match
- Does not require the county to establish separate accounts

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HB 513: Video Surveillance Preemption

- HB 1073 (2024): Video Surveillance at Gas Stations: Created a new code section preempting counties, municipalities, and consolidated governments from requiring video surveillance equipment at any location where the retail sale of automotive gasoline occurs.
- HB 513 grandfathered in ordinances in place prior to May 6, 2024 (Date Gov. signed HB 1073)



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HB 137: Public Works Bidding Threshold

Effective Date: July 1, 2025

Raises the threshold for public works bidding from \$100,000 to \$250,000.

Projects under \$250,000 will be exempt from specific bidding and procedural obligations, while requiring that contracts over \$250,000 be subject to competitive bidding and public disclosure

Raises and makes uniform the threshold for GDOT, school boards, cities, counties, DOAS



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HB 164: Truck Weight Increase Sunset

History: HB 189 (2023): This bill allowed a 10% variance (essentially 88,000 lbs) in truck weight

- Must be hauling agricultural or farm products
- 150-mile radius of origin to destination
- Only allowed outside of "nonattainment area" (metro-Atlanta counties)
- Sunset truck weight increase and local law enforcement July 1, 2025.

HB 164: Removes the sunset on the weight increase

- Clarifies and strengthens local ability to enforce

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HB 155: Annexation & ZPL

Effective Date: Split between parts of the bill

Provisions of HB 155:

1. Annexation Dispute Panel Revisions
2. Limitation on Power of the Fulton County Development Authority
3. Zoning Procedures Law (ZPL) Changes
4. Limit on Municipal Spoke Annexation



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HB 155: Annexation Arbitration Panel Revisions

Effective Date: January 1, 2026

Revises timeline for DCA to receive strikes and appoint a panel

- 15 business days from receipt of objection → provide 11 potential panelists
- City and County have until noon on the 20th business day to provide strikes
- 20th business day DCA appoints a 5-person panel

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HB 155: Annexation Arbitration Panel Revisions

- Allows municipal and county managers or administrators to be panelists
- Adds to the list of panelists not eligible to be selected
 - May not be seeking employment or been employed in the past 6 years in the county or any city wholly or partially in the county
 - Clarifies how DCA selects among non-struck panelists or fills opening on panel
- Adds that panel will submit written findings and recommendations with an indication how each panelist voted
- Increases pay of panelists - Additional \$100

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HB 155: Zoning Procedures Law (ZPL) Changes

- Effective Date: July 1, 2025 with hold harmless period until December 31, 2026
- Defines 'Quasi-judicial decision'
 - "a final quasi-judicial action that is the exercise of quasi-judicial land use powers, including hearing appeals of administrative decisions and hearing and rendering decisions on applications for variances, administrative permits, or other similar permits not enumerated herein as a zoning decision, pursuant to standards for the exercise of such quasi-judicial authority adopted by a local government. Such term does not include permits issued or decisions made by administrative staff pursuant to the authority designated by ordinance which contains an express right to appeal to a local government board or authority which is subject to these provisions applicable to quasi-judicial decisions."
- Provides for appeal to appellate courts of final judgements or orders reviewing a zoning decision
- Provides for appeal from decisions of the superior courts reviewing quasi-judicial decisions

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HB 155: Limit on Municipal Spoke Annexation

Effective Date: July 1, 2025

Current law allows for annexation of municipal owned property that is connected to the city boundary by the length of a street or street right of way, a creek or river, or right of way of a railroad or other public service corporation if the annexation is approved by the county
HB 155 adds an additional requirement that this type of annexation be approved in a county-wide referendum



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HB 399: Housing Management Contact



Effective Date: July 1, 2025
Requires out-of-state landlords who own or operate single-family or duplex rental properties in Georgia to have at least one - in-state broker responsible for receiving and managing tenant communications. Allows for code enforcement professionals to take receipt of the property managers contact information when there exists probable cause that there has been a code violation.



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SB 298: Direct Appeal of Immunities

Effective Date: July 1, 2025
Allow direct appeals for rulings in civil actions that grant or deny sovereign, municipal, official, or qualified immunity to the state, cities, or counties

It would set a 30-day deadline for filing an appeal after an adverse ruling
Right to direct appeal may only be used once by a party in any action



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HB 58: Drone Prohibition for Ticketed Events

Effective Date: April 1, 2025 (Act 4; Date Signed by Gov.)

O.C.G.A. § 6-1-4 preempts local governments from regulating the testing or operation of unmanned aircraft systems (drones)

HB 58 makes it unlawful to operate a drone within 400 feet or above a ticketed entertainment event

Punishable as a misdemeanor
Numerous exceptions



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Open Records Revisions

Milliron v. Antonakakis, 319 Ga. 616 (2024)

Decided August 13, 2024

Milliron submitted an Open Records Act (ORA) request to Antonakakis, a professor at Georgia Tech, seeking records related to Antonakakis's services to Georgia Tech as a private contractor

Antonakakis did not respond, GT gave some documents, Milliron sued

Trial Court dismissed claiming ORA did not apply to private contractors and request should have gone to GT's designated officer. Court of Appeals affirmed

Georgia Supreme Court Reversed

Concluded that the Open Records Act applies to records held by private contractors performing services for public agencies

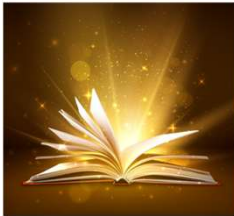
Requests for such records can be made directly to the custodian of the records, including private contractors, even if the agency has a designated open records officer



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SB 12: Open Records Revisions



Effective Date: May 14, 2025

Defines "custodian" or "lawful custodian" as he agency that has charge, custody, care, and control over a public record or an employee of such agency who is designated as the custodian of such agency's records

Requires ORA requests to be made on the custodian and requires the custodian to retrieve records from private persons or entities

No duty to retrieve from other agencies

Private persons or entities are required to produce the public records



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HB 199: Judicial Security

Following trend of removal of personal information

SB 215 (2023) – Law Enforcement

Officer Information

SB 508 (2024) – Limit Information

of Judges



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HB 199: Judicial Security

Effective Date: July 1, 2025
Revises Provisions of SB 508
State and local government must restrict from public disclosure personally identifiable information that identifies person as a judge or justice
Upon request, state or local government must remove publicly available personally identifiable information (personal phone number, home address, property or tax records) of judges or justice
Exception to Open Records Act
Administrative Office of the Courts will create form to request removal of information

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Other Bills That Passed

HB 223: Hurricane Relief – Includes TREES Act which allows local governments to waive timber tax following a natural disaster and apply for state funding to replace revenue

SB 16: Bail Bond Business – Allows local elected officials to engage in the bail bond business if it is not within their jurisdiction

SB 13: GEFA Loans for Natural Gas - Expand the authority of the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority to provide loan financing for natural gas systems and projects.

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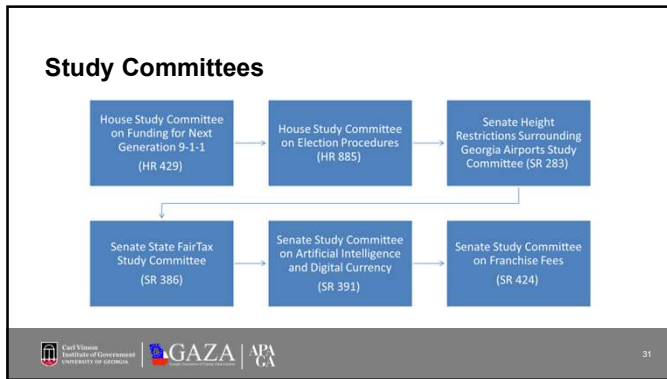
Other Bills That Passed

HB 614: Equine Firework Safety - Grant local governments the authority to adopt ordinances prohibiting the use of consumer fireworks within 200 yards of facilities housing equines

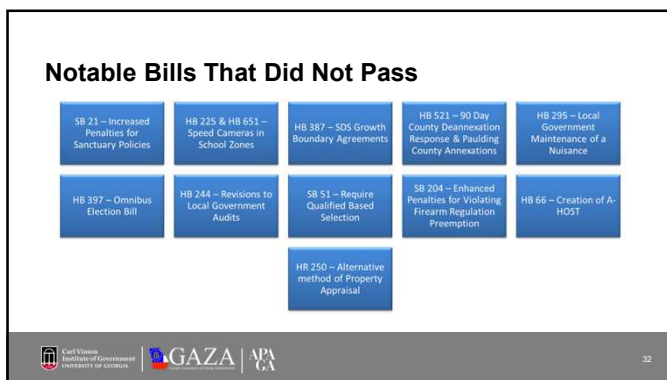
HB 296: Digital IDs – Allows for the presentation of Digital IDs to law enforcement and requires technology to accept such IDs by July 1, 2027

SB 68 & SB 69: Comprehensive Tort Reform – Governor Kemp's tort reform package on civil litigation and third-party litigation funding

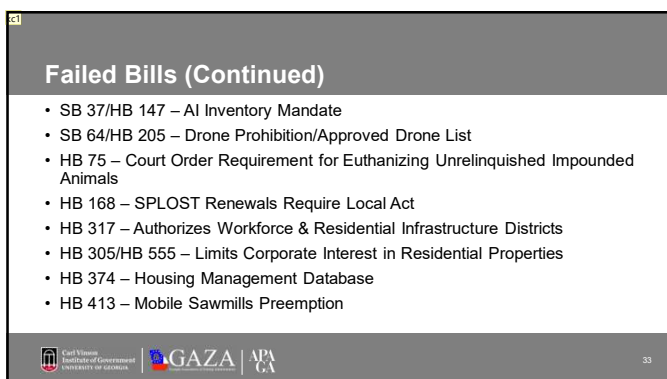
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Questions?

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