

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACCG Governmental Affairs Staff and Policy Council
A Message from the ACCG President
Top Three Policy Priorities
Implementation of Next Generation 911 (NG911)
Long-Term Transportation Funding Mechanisms
Electric Franchise Fees: Parity For Unincorporated Areas
ACCG Policy Priorities
ACCG Guiding Principles
How a Bill Becomes a Law
Six Ways to Engage Legislators
Policy Communication Tools

## ACCG GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS STAFF



Todd Edwards
Director of Governmental
Affairs
tedwards@accg.org
404.805.7883

Public Safety and the Courts



Kaylon Day Governmental Affairs Associate kday@accg.org 229.251.6646 General County Government



Nathan Corbitt
Governmental Affairs
Associate
ncorbitt@accg.org
470.656.0843
Revenue and Finance



Keenan Rogers
Governmental Affairs
Associate
krogers@accg.org
770.826.7539
Economic Development
and Transportation



Joel Truss
Governmental Affairs
Associate
jtruss@accg.org
678.770.9215
Federal
Health and Human
Services
Natural Resources and
the Environment

#### **ACCG LEADERSHIP**

**Dave Wills** *Executive Director*dwills@accg.org
404.522.5022

Clint Mueller Deputy Director cmueller@accg.org 678.772.8911

#### **ACCG POLICY COUNCIL**

#### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Clinton Johnson - Dougherty County Commissioner ACCG President

Marc DeMott - Colquitt

County Commissioner

First Vice President and Policy
Council Chair

Carvel Lewis- Georgetown-Quitman County Chairman Second Vice President Susan Andrews - Harris County Vice Chairwoman Third Vice President

**John Daniell-** Oconee County Chairman

**Toyia Tucker-** Columbus-Muscogee County Councilor

**David Sikes -** Toombs County Chairman Immediate Past President

#### PRESIDENT APPOINTMENTS

Chris Dockery - Lumpkin County Chairman Justin Frasier - Liberty County Commissioner Steve Taylor - Bartow County Sole Commissioner

#### SECTION PRESIDENTS

**Jayson Phillips** - *Paulding County Attorney*County Attorney Representative

Michael Fouts - Coweta County Administrator County Manager/Administrator Representative

Jessica Jones - Upson County Clerk County Clerk Representative

#### POLICY COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND VICE CHAIRS

**Clay Davis** - *Spalding County Chairman Vice* Chair, Revenue and Finance

Jamie DeLoach - Effingham County Commissioner Vice Chair, Economic Development and Transportation

Sharon Cobb-Flanagan - Dodge County Commissioner Vice Chair, Natural Resources and the Environment

Russell Crumbley - Butts County Chairman Vice Chair, Public Safety and the Courts

Myra Exum - Brooks County Commissioner Chair, Natural Resources and the Environment

Russell Gray - Dougherty County Commissioner Vice Chair, Health and Human Services

Carlotta Harrell - Henry County Chairwoman Chair, Federal Nicole Hendrickson -Gwinnett County Chairwoman Chair, Economic Development and Transportation

Demond Mason - Newton County Commissioner Chair, Revenue and Finance

**Bud Owens -** Gordon County Commissioner

Chair, Health and Human Services

Dan Perdue - Houston County Commissioner Vice Chair, General County Government

**Bill Slaughter -** Lowndes County Chairman

Vice Chair, Federal

Kris Stancil - Pickens County
Commissioner
Chair, Public Safety and the Courts

Travis Turner - White County Chairman Chair, General County Government

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Georgia Counties and Partners in County Government,

When it comes to ACCG, advancing Georgia's counties is more than a tagline and 159 STRONG is more than a slogan. Those words accurately define the work of the Association staff and embody who we are as an organization, respectively. Our intentional and deliberate efforts have resulted in many major legislative successes in recent years. Those efforts have also served as the impetus for statewide policy and legislative changes that either improved operational processes for counties or helped secure additional funding to assist with facilitating county services.

The 2026 ACCG Legislative Toolkit details the association's Policy Priorities, a product of those intentional and deliberate staff efforts but, ultimately, a result of the consensus-building policy development process on which the association prides itself. That consensus building process is a hallmark of what it means to be a member of ACCG and the mechanism used to ensure all counties are heard and represented. In addition to the Policy Priorities, the Legislative Toolkit includes the ACCG Guiding Principles and Top Three Policy Priorities, all which will guide our advocacy efforts during the legislative session.

ACCG's Top Policy Priorities for 2026 include Implementation of Next Generation 911 System, Electric Franchise Fees, and Long-term Transportation Funding Mechanisms. The Top Policy Priorities are outlined in the enclosed priority briefs. The list of remaining Policy Priorities features other significant items the Association will actively pursue.

As we look to the 2026 legislative session of our General Assembly, it is my sincere hope that we continue to experience progress in areas that will contribute to the advancement of Georgia's counties and help make our state 159 STRONG. County officials and our partners in county government are encouraged to use the Legislative Toolkit as a resource when making decisions during the legislative process. Please do not hesitate to contact a member of the ACCG Governmental Affairs staff if they can be of assistance while we all work to make counties in the Peach State ideal places to live, work, and play.

Sincerely,

Clinton Johnson

2025-2026 ACCG President

**Dougherty County Commissioner** 

#### **IMPLEMENTATION OF NEXT GENERATION 911 (NG911)**

#### **BACKGROUND**

A well-functioning 911 system is a critical piece of helping to ensure the public safety of all Georgia citizens. 911 is essential to providing life-saving services to those needing emergency assistance, and 911 service in Georgia is at a critical transition point. While still functional, the current 911 system, also known as Legacy 911, is approaching the end of its useful life. Repairing the current infrastructure is increasingly problematic as finding replacement hardware becomes more challenging, and telecommunications providers will not continue supporting Legacy 911 indefinitely.

The limitations of Legacy 911 drive the need to update Georgia's 911 infrastructure to an Internet protocol (IP)-based network called Next Generation 911 (NG911). Since more than 85% of all 911 calls now originate from wireless devices, there is a need to update the 911 network to an IP-based network. Additionally, those in need of emergency assistance expect 911 to be able to receive voice calls, photos, videos, and text messages, but the current 911 infrastructure is limited.

#### **STATUS**

ACCG commends the General Assembly and Governor for passing HB 423 during the 2025 legislative session, beginning the process of implementing NG911 statewide. However, there remains much work to be done at the state and local level, and this will come at considerable costs. ACCG supports the Georgia Emergency Communications Authority's (GECA) efforts to continue studying and implementing the needed infrastructure, personnel, training, and funding for this transition. Further, the Association encourages the Governor and General Assembly to grant GECA the proper regulatory authority to administer and implement NG911 through legislation and budgetary appropriations in 2026.

#### TALKING POINTS

 Because NG911 systems are broadbandenabled, public safety answering points (PSAPs) will receive a wealth of rich data such as images, video, and perhaps sensor

- data generated by wearable devices like heart monitors from 911 callers.
- The information garnered through the implementation of NG911 will allow betterinformed decisions regarding the type of emergency reported and the appropriate first responders to dispatch.
- Since NG911 systems are IP-based, PSAPs throughout Georgia will be interconnected and able to share data. This interconnection will allow a PSAP to transfer its operations seamlessly and quickly to another PSAP when a natural or manmade disaster renders it inoperable, inaccessible, or uninhabitable.
- This interconnection will also allow PSAPs to handle call overload during other situations that could overwhelm or impede daily operations, such as during planned events that attract thousands of spectators.
- NG911 systems use geospatial data to locate callers, which is far more accurate than the technology used with the Legacy 911 system. One result of more accurate 911 caller locations is that far fewer calls will be misrouted to the incorrect PSAP.
- Since NG911 is a statewide initiative, it will require state funding to provide its core services, build out its emergency IP-based network, create the requisite mapping and data sets, and ensure local PSAPs have the required connections and equipment and the ability to maintain them.
- Georgia must transition to statewide NG911 to adequately provide emergency services now and in the future.

66

With more than 85% of all 911 calls originating from wireless devices, there is a need to update the 911 network to an IP-based network.





#### **LONG-TERM TRANSPORTATION FUNDING MECHANISMS**

#### **BACKGROUND**

Georgia's counties maintain more than 80% of the state's roads and bridges yet receive less than half of recurring state transportation revenues. Transportation costs for local governments have increased significantly—from materials and labor to equipment and project design—while demand for resurfacing, new roads, and bridge improvements steadily increase.

To maintain and improve local roads and bridges, counties rely heavily on two state-administered programs: the Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant (LMIG) and the Local Road Assistance (LRA) program. Funded through the state motor fuel tax, LMIG returns roughly 10% of that revenue to cities and counties for resurfacing, bridge repair, and safety improvements, distributed based on population and road mileage, and requires a 10% to 30% local match depending on the region.



Long-term, sustainable transportation funding helps counties maintain Georgia's roads while reducing reliance on property taxes.



The LRA program provided approximately \$250 million to counties collectively in FY 2024–2025, though its continuation beyond FY 2025 depends on annual appropriations. LRA follows the same eligibility rules as LMIG but requires no local match, benefiting smaller and rural counties.

The state motor fuel tax remains the backbone of Georgia's transportation revenue but faces long-term decline as vehicles become more fuel-efficient and electric vehicle adoption increases. As fuel consumption drops, so do the revenues that fund road maintenance. Counties also benefit from the option of adopting a single-county Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (TSPLOST), authorized by the General Assembly to help address transportation needs. However, because TSPLOST collections depend on local sales activity and voter approval, it is not a consistent statewide revenue stream and cannot replace long-term state investment. Other funding sources help reduce

reliance on property taxes for transportation projects.

#### **STATUS**

ACCG will continue to work closely with the Governor and the General Assembly to protect and advocate for core funding programs such as LMIG and LRA while remaining open to responsible, data-driven innovations that reflect the realities of e-commerce, freight growth, and declining motor fuel tax revenues. As discussions evolve, ACCG will provide local data and firsthand insight to help lawmakers evaluate long-term funding solutions. The Association's goal is to ensure that any new approach strengthens—not replaces—the state-local partnership.

Additionally, ACCG supports the creation of long-term, sustainable transportation funding mechanisms that provide counties with predictable and adequate resources to maintain and improve local road and bridge infrastructure. As the General Assembly evaluates future funding solutions, counties will continue to play an active role by educating lawmakers on the challenges they face and supporting proposals that promote fiscal stability, equity, and predictable revenue distribution. The goal is not to prescribe specific mechanisms prematurely but to ensure that local governments have a meaningful voice in shaping the state's long-term transportation strategy.

#### **TALKING POINTS**

- Motor fuel tax revenues are declining due to greater fuel efficiency and electric vehicle adoption.
- LMIG and LRA, when appropriated, have not kept pace with construction and inflation costs.
- Counties maintain over 80% of Georgia's roads but receive less than half of state transportation revenues.
- LMIG remains vital but cannot meet future transportation demands alone.
- Securing alternative funding reduces pressure on property taxes.
- Counties are ready to partner with the General Assembly to modernize Georgia's transportation funding framework.

## ELECTRIC FRANCHISE FEES: PARITY FOR UNINCORPORATED AREAS

#### **BACKGROUND**

Electric Franchise fees are use and occupancy payments that electric utility companies make to city governments for the right to use public property such as roadsides, easements, and utility corridors to deliver their services. These public rights-of-way are valuable community assets built and maintained with taxpayer dollars. These fees compensate cities for granting utilities access to this publicly maintained property.

Under current Georgia law, cities are authorized to collect electric franchise fees, while counties are not. This means that some electric utilities operating on county-maintained roads may pay a fee to a city even when the customers being served are located in the unincorporated area. The result is that unincorporated residents — who rely on county-maintained infrastructure — may be contributing to city revenues without seeing those funds reinvested in their community.

This is a matter of representation and fairness, not competition between cities and counties. Unincorporated residents should not pay for services or fees to jurisdictions where they have no representation.

Utility practices vary across the state. Some providers assess franchise fees both inside and outside city limits, while others limit them to municipal boundaries. This variation shows the issue is not universal, but it highlights an underlying inconsistency in how the use of public property is compensated.

Georgia's unincorporated areas are growing alongside its cities, attracting large power users and industry that rely on county-maintained infrastructure, increasing the need for sustainable funding. Without parity in franchise fee authority, the cost of maintaining those public assets falls back on local taxpayers.

Allowing counties the same ability as cities to collect electric franchise fees would shift that burden from residents to the large users who benefit most from county infrastructure, ensuring fairness and consistency across Georgia.

#### **STATUS**

ACCG supports legislation authorizing counties to collect the electric franchise fees that are already being paid on service in unincorporated areas. This legislation would not create a new tax or raise costs for consumers or providers but simply give counties the same ability as cities to cover the cost of maintaining the public rights-of-way that electric utilities use to deliver services. By aligning county authority with municipal authority, this measure ensures that those who rely most on this infrastructure help pay to sustain it—reducing the burden on local taxpayers and allowing counties to maintain their roads and rights-of-way just as cities do.



Unincorporated residents should not pay for services or fees to jurisdictions where they have no representation—parity simply ensures fairness for every community.



#### **TALKING POINTS**

- Franchise fees are use and occupancy payments, not taxes.
- Cities can collect electric franchise fees; counties cannot — even when the service area lies entirely in unincorporated areas.
- Utility practices vary; some apply fees outside city limits while others do not, creating inconsistency across Georgia.
- Counties maintain the roads and rights-ofway used by utilities but receive no direct compensation for that use.
- Unincorporated residents often contribute to city revenues without seeing those funds reinvested locally — counties are seeking fairness and accountability, not competition with cities.
- The proposal ensures consistent treatment of taxpayers statewide, so the funds collected from electric franchise fees support the communities that generate them.
- This will not raise costs for consumers or utilities; it simply reallocates existing payments to the jurisdiction responsible for maintaining the property being used.

### **2026 POLICY PRIORITIES**

#### Waiver of Sovereign Immunity

County governments make many decisions that have an impact on a wide array of citizens and entities. Sovereign immunity protects the public purse (taxpayer dollars) against an onslaught of litigation that may come from impacted parties. In recent years, the General Assembly has introduced numerous bills inviting litigation for policy actions at the local level, that the legislature does not agree with, seeking to waive counties' sovereign immunity as a deterrent from taking such actions. Such legislation would invite plaintiffs' attorneys to file lawsuits against counties claiming the waiver of immunity applies. even where the lawsuit claims have no relationship to the local policy decisions that the General Assembly is trying to deter. ACCG firmly opposes legislative efforts to waive county sovereign immunity, recognizing that safeguarding this immunity is essential to protecting the public purse. Defending against such measures is a priority this session.

## Special Election Cost Reimbursement

Under current law, counties must bear the cost of special elections. As a result, affected counties must allocate funds away from essential, state-required public services to pay for these elections over which they have no control. ACCG supports legislation requiring the state to reimburse counties for all expenses incurred in the preparation for and conduct of special

elections to fill a vacancy in any statewide office, the Georgia General Assembly, the offices of U.S. Senator or Representative, or to approve a statewide referendum. In continued efforts to lower the cost burden of elections on counties, ACCG also supports amending the

election Code to allow a plurality (or 45%) of the vote to win primary and general elections. Since 1964, Georgia has required candidates to earn a majority of votes in their party's primary to win elected office. Georgia is one of only a handful of states still maintaining such a rule.

### Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

The EMS community provides the first hands-on response to Georgians in need, whether provided by a fire or EMS department, a hospital-based service, or private providers who are the EMS zone holder. In some locations a hospital-based service or private provider may provide EMS service under contract with the EMS zone holder. Counties must invest in this service and its personnel in order to provide the highest quality of care. ACCG urges the General Assembly to support legislation that mandates insurance companies pay for current "out of network" ambulance services.

## Increase Medicaid Reimbursement Codes for EMS by 10%

This adjustment will help offset the growing costs of providing emergency medical services, particularly in rural and underserved areas where resources are limited. By increasing reimbursement, EMS providers will be better equipped to sustain operations, retain qualified personnel, and ensure timely, high-quality care for patients in critical situations.

#### **Annual Audit Compliance**

Local governments are required to complete and submit an annual audit to the Department of Audits and Accounts to maintain qualified local government status and eligibility to receive state grants. Dozens of counties have been out of compliance in recent years, largely due to factors outside of the county's control. Examples include noncompliance from constitutional officers, auditor backlog, and auditor turnover. ACCG asks the General Assembly to allow counties an extension on maintaining their qualified local government status if the delay is due to circumstances beyond their control.

## **2026 POLICY PRIORITIES**

#### **Estimated Rollback Rate**

The estimated rollback rate was created under HB 581 (2024) and revised under HB 92 (2025). 2025 was the first year of its implementation, and confusion remains.

- Mixed Notices Some jurisdictions provided an estimated rollback rate while others did not. This has resulted in three different forms being created by the Department of Revenue: one with only estimated rollback rates, one with no estimated rollback rates, and one with some of each. ACCG supports improving clarification on the annual notice of assessment (NOA).
- M&O Only The estimated rollback rate applies to the maintenance and operations (M&O) millage levy only, and not to special service district or other levy types. The result is that other levy types are either not represented, or are underrepresented on the NOA. ACCG supports additional clarification to reduce this confusion.

## Restrictions on the Use of Speed Detection Cameras in School Zones

ACCG opposes any legislation that seeks to eliminate the ability for local governments to use speed detection cameras and/or speed detection technology in school zones. ACCG also opposes any legislation that seeks to restrict/eliminate the use of speed detection cameras or technology by penalizing local governments through

the removal of state funding for any local government violation of state laws regarding the use of speed detection cameras or technology, i.e. inaccurate speeding tickets, unlawful additional fees, etc. Lastly, ACCG opposes any legislation that appropriates revenue directly to schools, school systems, or school boards of a respective county or municipality.

#### Tax Exemptions for Fire Services

- ACCG supports a sales tax exemption for equipment and supplies purchased and utilized by local volunteer fire departments as well as nonprofit organizations and foundations that provide fire services.
- ACCG supports a title ad valorem tax exemption for vehicles purchased and utilized by local volunteer fire departments as well as nonprofit organizations and foundations that provide fire services.
- ACCG encourages the General Assembly to authorize revenue alternatives to the property tax to fund fire services, such as fire assessments based on square footage and type of dwelling.



### **2026 POLICY PRIORITIES**

#### **FEDERAL**

#### Federal Inmate Exclusion Policy

ACCG requests that the federal government allow federal benefits such as Medicaid, Veterans Affairs, and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to remain active for eligible inmates / detainees in local jails pre-adjudication. Federal law prohibits the use of federal funds and services for medical care provided to "inmates of a public institution." The federal law does not differentiate between a convicted inmate and a person incarcerated prior to conviction. The "Medicaid Inmate Exclusion Policy" should be rescinded for those awaiting trial who have not been convicted. Those accused should not lose their federal health benefits until the adjudication process is complete for those individuals in a pretrial status. This policy creates a financial burden for counties and adds to the behavioral and mental health crises our communities are experiencing.

#### Next Generation 911 (NG911)

ACCG urges Congress to pass legislation that includes adequate funding to support the implementation of Next Generation 911 (NG911) and ensure a statewide network. As communications technology transitions from analog systems to Internet Protocol (IP) based systems, the means of accessing 911 must also transition. While the technology exists for the 911 centers, many struggle to make the transition

from the outdated analog systems, built over 50 years ago, to modern digital IP-based systems. Once fully implemented, NG911 systems will process multi-media data and provide greater security, sustainability, and reliability than the aging analog 911 systems.

## Housing Affordability and Accessibility

ACCG urges Congress to provide dedicated federal funding to enhance the capacity of counties and local governments in addressing housing issues. This includes updating current regulatory policies to allow flexibility in using funds for needs assessment plans and alternative housing solutions. We advocate for a national housing policy that sets clear annual housing goals, ensures adequate and predictable funding, provides an assessment needs platform, incentivizes energy-efficient buildings, and fosters partnerships with state and local governments, as well as private and nonprofit sectors, to support new construction and rehabilitation for both rental and homeownership properties, particularly for workforce housing. ACCG also supports the HELPER Act, a bipartisan bill proposing a new, one-time use home loan program under the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) for first responders and teachers to purchase their first home. This program would allow the borrower to get a loan without a down payment or Private Mortgage Insurance.



### **ACCG GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

#### LOCAL ISSUES

ACCG provides a common platform that allows counties to maximize their legislative influence by making requests of the General Assembly and Congress through a unified effort. Through ACCG's policy development process, a policy platform is adopted, containing issues of significant importance to all counties or a reasonable portion of them. ACCG will not become directly involved in lobbying local legislation or general legislation that is drafted to affect only one county. ACCG will, however, notify the affected county of the pending legislation and will, at the request of the county, provide technical assistance. ACCG urges members of the General Assembly to refrain from passing this type of legislation without the support of the county governing authority. Where legislation will benefit some counties at the expense of others, ACCG will notify all counties of the potential benefits and consequences of the legislation but will not take a position.

#### **HOME RULE**

Home rule is the right of the people to determine and implement a public policy at the grassroots level. Home rule power is conferred on Georgia counties by Article IX, Section II, Paragraph I of the Georgia Constitution. Local governing authorities have the power to adopt ordinances, resolutions, or regulations relating to its property, affairs, and local government, as long as they are not inconsistent with state law or the Georgia Constitution. Although state laws may define minimum standards, they should not preempt counties from passing ordinances that establish a more stringent standard for their communities. The preservation of administrative and fiscal home rule authority allows counties to develop and implement community-based solutions to local problems. ACCG believes that counties, as the government closest to the people, are the most appropriate authority to serve the needs and requirements of the community.

#### **COST SHIFTING**

A state directive that compels local governments to provide a service, program, or benefit without providing the appropriate monies or a funding source is regarded as an unfunded mandate. County officials recognize that some state mandates are justified because they achieve agreed upon state-wide policy goals. However, many, if not most, mandates on counties are imposed without the consensus of local governments or the resources necessary for their implementation. Mandates shift costs to local property taxpayers, financially drain county governments, and impede a county's ability to adequately deliver the fundamental services required by law. Mandates also compromise a county's ability to provide discretionary services requested by the local community. ACCG opposes any state or federal actions that limit the ability of local elected officials to make fiscal and public policy decisions for the citizens they represent. Furthermore, counties support the establishment of an agreed upon course of action whereby state and county elected officials deliberatively evaluate the appropriate funding and delivery of intergovernmental service responsibilities between counties and the state.

#### LOCAL REVENUES

To provide services requested by the local community or required by the state, counties need an adequate stable revenue source that is diverse and fairly spreads the tax burden across the residents of the county. State-determined restrictions on local revenues hinder a local community's ability to establish a revenue structure that fairly distributes the financial burdens of local government to all citizens of the county based on the unique characteristics of the county.

### **ACCG GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

When new state laws or annexation erodes a portion of the local revenue base, county commissioners must shift the tax burden to other residents or reduce the level of county services provided. Politically, neither of these choices is popular. The decision to tax should occur at the same level of government where the decision is made to enact a new service or enhance an existing service. Local governments should have an equal share of flexibility and control over both revenues and expenditures as they are directly linked.

#### SERVICE DELIVERY

To help create and maintain the quality of life desired by the residents of a community, counties should be given the flexibility to create new services, expand existing services, or discontinue a service. If a service is funded partially or fully using county revenues, then the county governing authority should have a level of control over the service commensurate to its share of the funding. Local government services in the unincorporated areas should be provided solely at the discretion of the county governing authority and such services should not be disrupted by annexation. Service delivery responsibilities within the incorporated areas of the county should be determined jointly with the city. When the state wishes to provide services locally, they should coordinate with the counties to determine the most efficient method of service delivery and funding of the service.

#### LAND USE

County officials must have the ability to make reasonable decisions for zoning, comprehensive planning, and infrastructure issues to ensure that the local community grows and develops in a way that adds value to the community and improves the quality of life for all residents. This includes a county's right to adopt local land use and other environmental regulations to protect its unique natural resources and vision for the community. Citizens expect the county commission to exercise its ability to manage and direct growth without being subjected to prohibitive claims for damages for infringement on private property rights. Likewise, county land use decisions should not be thwarted by municipal annexations. Locally elected officials are in the best position to balance the rights of individual property owners with the rights and wishes of all property owners within a county.

#### STATE/COUNTY PARTNERSHIP

Counties were created to function as local subdivisions of the state. To tailor services to the needs of the different geographic and demographic areas of the state, decision making power must be granted to locally elected representatives. The state sets general parameters, including minimum standards and levels of service, then local officials should decide what additional services and enhancements the local community desires. The state and its local county subdivisions must work in tandem to improve the quality of life for all Georgia residents. To facilitate this partnership the state should:

- Fully fund state services and not require or attempt to coerce counties into subsidizing the service.
- Provide support (i.e., funding and technical assistance) to attain a minimum level and standard
  of services needed statewide (i.e., crime information center, crime lab, utility assessments,
  training public safety officers, establishing uniform assessment procedures and transportation
  improvements).

## HOW A BILL IS PASSED IN THE GEORGIA LEGISLATURE

3

(F)

8

10

A legislator recognizes the need for a new law or changes in existing law and decides to introduce a bill.

The legislator files bill with the Clerk of the House or Secretary of the Senate.

Following the first reading, the presiding officer assigns the bill to a standing committee.

The bill is considered by the committee. The author and other legislators may testify. If controversial, public hearings may be held.

The Clerk or Secretary prepares a General Calendar of bills that were favorably reported from committee.

The Presiding officer calls up bills from the Rules Calendar for floor consideration.

After debate, main question is called and members vote. If the bill is approved by a majority of the house, it is sent to the other house.

The bill is enrolled and sent to the Governor (if requested). Otherwise, all enrolled bills are sent to the Governor following adjournment, known as sine die.

Acts and other laws enacted during session are printed in the *Georgia Laws* series. The act is also incorporated into the Official Code of Georgia Annotated and becomes effective July 1, unless a different effective date is provided.



On legislative day after filing, the bill is formally introduced. In Chamber, the bill's title is read during the period of first readings.

In the House chamber, on the following legislative day, the Clerk reads the title of the bill (second reading) even though the actual bill is currently in committee. In the Senate, the second reading occurs after the bill has been favorably reported by committee.

The bill is reported favorably by committee and returned to the Clerk or Secretary.

The Rules Committee of each house meets and prepares a Rules Calendar from the bills on General Calendar for floor consideration the next day.

Once the presiding officer calls bills up from the Rules Calendar, the Clerk or Secretary reads the bill's title (third reading). The bill is now ready for floor debate, amendments, and voting.

If second house passes bill, it is returned to the house where the bill was introduced. If the first house rejects the changes and second house insists, a conference committee may be appointed. If the committee report is accepted by both houses...

The Governor may sign bill or take no action, which will make the bill a law. The Governor may veto the bill, which requires a two-thirds majority in both houses to override.



12







## Six Ways to Effectively Engage Your Legislators

Follow These Tips to Connect with Your State Legislators

- Make sure you have your legislators' contact
- 1. information should you need to reach them on short notice.
  - Invite your legislators to attend your county
- **2.** commission meetings and tour your county facilities.
- Thank your legislators for their positive efforts on behalf of your county.
- Remain cordial when discussing your concernswith, or opposition to, pending legislation in order to maintain good working relationships.
- Meet before and during the session to review
- **5.** the Legislative Toolkit and discuss bills that impact your county.
- **6.** Meet periodically for briefings on current issues.

2026 LEGISLATIVE TOOLKIT

## Policy Communication Tools USE THESE TOOLS TO STAY INFORMED ON THE

USE THESE TOOLS TO STAY INFORMED ON THE LATEST ACCG POLICY NEWS

#### WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Published and emailed every Friday during the legislative session, the Legislative Update is the weekly report that helps keep county officials informed about the various issues moving through the General Assembly.

Contact Nicole Butler (<a href="mailto:nbutler@accg.org">nbutler@accg.org</a>) if you would like to receive this publication.

## ACTION ALERTS

ACCG will periodically release Action Alerts regarding issues that require immediate action from county officials. The Action Alerts will include background information on the issue as well as talking points that county officials can use when speaking to their legislators.

#### LIVE UPDATES OVER ZOOM

Join the Governmental Affairs Team every Friday at 9:00 a.m. for the Virtual Legislative Update via Zoom. Be sure to tune in for weekly recaps of what took place under the Gold Dome.

#### X (FORMERLY KNOWN AS TWITTER)

Follow us on X (@GACounty) for real-time information and updates from the Capitol as various events take place.

15

