

FAMILY & POLICY



AN ADVOCACY PROGRAM OF

MARCH 26, 2010

The General Assembly has passed a hurdle in its schedule. On Friday, the General Assembly met late for “crossover day” – the 30th day deadline by which most bills must have passed one chamber in order to be viable this term. Bills that did not pass out of the originating chamber cannot be considered further, but in some cases, their contents could be amended onto eligible bills. The rule does not apply to the budget.

Revenue and budget. Faced with the threat of deeper cuts and loss of the sales tax exemption for nonprofit facilities, hospitals concluded that a tax on hospital net revenues was preferable. [SB 307](#) (Cole, 125th) requiring a 1.45% tax passed the House. It exempts psychiatric, critical access, and state hospitals and raises about \$169 M. The 10.25% provider cuts Gov. Perdue had proposed after hospitals opposed the tax are now off the table. The House also passed several measures increasing user fees for state services to raise about \$96 M more. House Appropriations subcommittees are meeting the week of March 29th on the FY 2011 budget. Major shortfalls still must be addressed.

Children’ welfare. [HB 1159](#) on adoption records and release of non-identifying medical information passed House Judiciary on 3/24 but was not placed on the House calendar for a vote. [SB 471](#) (Harp 29th) on adoption home studies (3/12 Bulletin) and [SB 304](#) (Unterman, 45th) offering a path through the juvenile court system for commercially sexually exploited children who need restorative services did not clear Senate Judiciary.

Health and health insurance. [HB 1268](#) (Knox, 24th) extending the 65% federal COBRA premium subsidy for people laid off by small firms passed the House. [HB 1184](#) (Cole, 125th) and [SB 407](#) (Hill, 32nd) allow sales of individual insurance policies regulated by other states that may not include services and protections required by

Georgia law; they passed the House and Senate respectively despite opposition from many advocacy groups. [SB 443](#) (Smith, 52nd) creating a Medicaid CMO oversight committee passed the Senate. [HB 1040](#) (Pruett, 144th) (3/12 Bulletin) allowing people with disabilities to receive certain health maintenance services at home passed the House. [HB 1407](#) (Rogers, 26th) requiring a single administrator for Medicaid and PeachCare dental services passed the House. [SB 161](#) (Grant, 25th) passed the Senate; it sets up a task force to make recommendations on treatment of autism.

Safety. [HB 938](#) (Peake, 137th) prohibiting minor drivers from

using a wireless telecommunications device passed the House. [SB 458](#) (Thomas, 54th) passed the Senate. It requires use of seatbelts in pickup trucks except for agricultural uses. [SB 308](#) (Seabaugh, 28th), which passed the Senate, allows concealed weapons in churches (if permitted by the presiding official); bars; and colleges and universities (subject to rules of the Board of Regents or the Board of Technical and Adult Education).

Health reform. As you know, Congress passed and President Obama signed federal health reform legislation during the week. Some of the provisions such as coverage under parents’ policies for young adults and prohibition of rescissions go into effect soon, and others phase in later. The state majority party continues to press efforts to prevent it from being implemented here. Proposed constitutional amendments (3/19 Bulletin) failed to get the 2/3 vote to be placed on the ballot in November. [SB 399](#) (Hill, 32nd) prohibiting state agencies from implementing any part of health reform without authorization passed the Senate, however. Gov. Perdue attempted to get Attorney General Thurbert Baker to join several other states in suing to block reform, but Baker refused. Gov. Perdue now says he will obtain private counsel to file suit.

Highlights

- The General Assembly completed “crossover day,” so most bills that did not pass one chamber are dead unless attached to other measures.
- The legislature will be in session Tuesday-Thursday of the week of March 29th. After that, it will adjourn until April 12th for the 34th day.

You can help!

Locate your State Representative and Senator: www.votesmart.org (Check your driver’s license for 9-digit zip code.)

See previous issues of the Family & Policy Bulletin at www.familiesfirst.org

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