

FAMILY & POLICY



AN ADVOCACY PROGRAM OF

APRIL 23, 2010

Legislators are shifting more tax burden to people with lower incomes. The Senate amended [HB 1198](#) (Manning, 32nd) to eliminate the refundable part of the Low Income Tax Credit, the portion that goes to taxpayers earning less than \$20,000. (The House still must agree.) This followed last week's vote to give corporations and wealthier Georgians \$500 M per year in tax breaks and adoption of the transportation plan authorizing a new 1% (\$1.5 B/year) sales tax on groceries and other goods.

The Senate passed its version of the FY 2011 budget, and House-Senate conferees are trying to resolve differences. See [House-Senate Differences](#). General funds are 17.8% below the FY 2009 budgeted amount. [Community Health](#). Overall, the Senate provides \$32.5 M more in general funds for Medicaid and PeachCare. It agreed with the House on eliminating the proposed 1.98% Medicaid/PeachCare rate cuts to doctors, dentists and other providers and agreed to implement the family planning waiver so that more women can receive services. The Senate disagreed with specific cuts to CMOs such as limiting administrative expenses and profits, but still includes the \$29 M in rate cuts. The Senate doubled the amount of proposed revenues from PeachCare premium increases, and allows DCH latitude on how to impose them instead of requiring a flat \$5/month increase. The Senate eliminates \$11 M in savings from moving people using ventilators from hospitals to nursing homes. In Public Health, the Senate includes \$3.7 M more funding than the House, partly by assuming \$1.4 M more in fee receipts. It offsets a cut in Babies Can't Wait with federal funds, but leaves a \$387,396 cut in Babies Born Healthy. The House recommended a health department grant-in-aid cut of \$2.25 M above the deep cut the Governor proposed, but the Senate reduces that to \$821,846. The Senate made a deeper cut to Area Health Education Centers and agreed to eliminate state funds for the Rural Health Association.

Ga. Partnership for Caring, St. Joseph Mercy Care, the SE Firefighters Burn Foundation and others. [Human Services](#). The Senate agreed with the additional House cut in Medicaid and food stamp eligibility services of \$3.4 M on top of the \$3.2 M cut eliminating 137 workers.

While the House proposed to eliminate EMBRACE, the Senate provides \$173,250 in state funds and replaces \$321,750 with federal funds. The Senate also agreed to the \$10.3 M cut in child welfare services. DHS says the \$783,128 cut in independent living for youth moving out of foster care will be made up by county funds to protect federal match. The Senate asks for a

\$1.34 M cut to Adoption Services instead of the House \$1.3 M. [Education](#). The Senate disagrees with eliminating migrant education, makes a cut of \$242,994 instead of \$514,973 to Communities in Schools affiliates, cuts \$727,500 more than the House's \$1.6 M from school nurses, restores \$893,000 of a \$2.2 M cut to the Preschool handicapped Program, and restores some funds for testing. Total funding for school systems is \$950 M less than the QBE funding formula prescribes even after including federal stimulus funds.

Bills have only two more days to pass. [HB 1040](#) (Pruett, 144th) allowing unlicensed caretakers to perform certain home health care maintenance activities passed the Senate with slight changes and now needs agreement by the House. [SB 308](#) (Seabaugh, 28th) would allow concealed weapons in churches (if allowed 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). It has been favorably reported by the House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. [HB 866](#) (Allison, 8th) allows the state to make matching grants to organizations to support doctors who move to rural areas. Senate Health and Human Services recommended passage.

Highlights

- Legislators have two session days left to finish the business. The current plan is to meet Tuesday, 4/27 and finish on Thursday, 4/29.
- The General Assembly has passed a transportation bill and the FY 2010 amended budget and has begun the conference on the FY 2011 budget.

You can help!

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

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