

2020



We're Here Because Georgia's Children Deserve More

# Overview

- Legislative Advocacy 101
  - Legislative Process
  - Budget Cycle
  - Communications with Legislators
- Under the Gold Dome
  - Current Session
  - GA CASA Advocacy Strategy & Messaging
- CASA Day at the Capitol Logistics and Details
  - Know Before You Go



# Legislative Advocacy 101

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General Assembly



2020

**CASA DAY**  
AT THE CAPITOL

Georgia Casa | Changing Lives for Georgia's Children in Foster Care

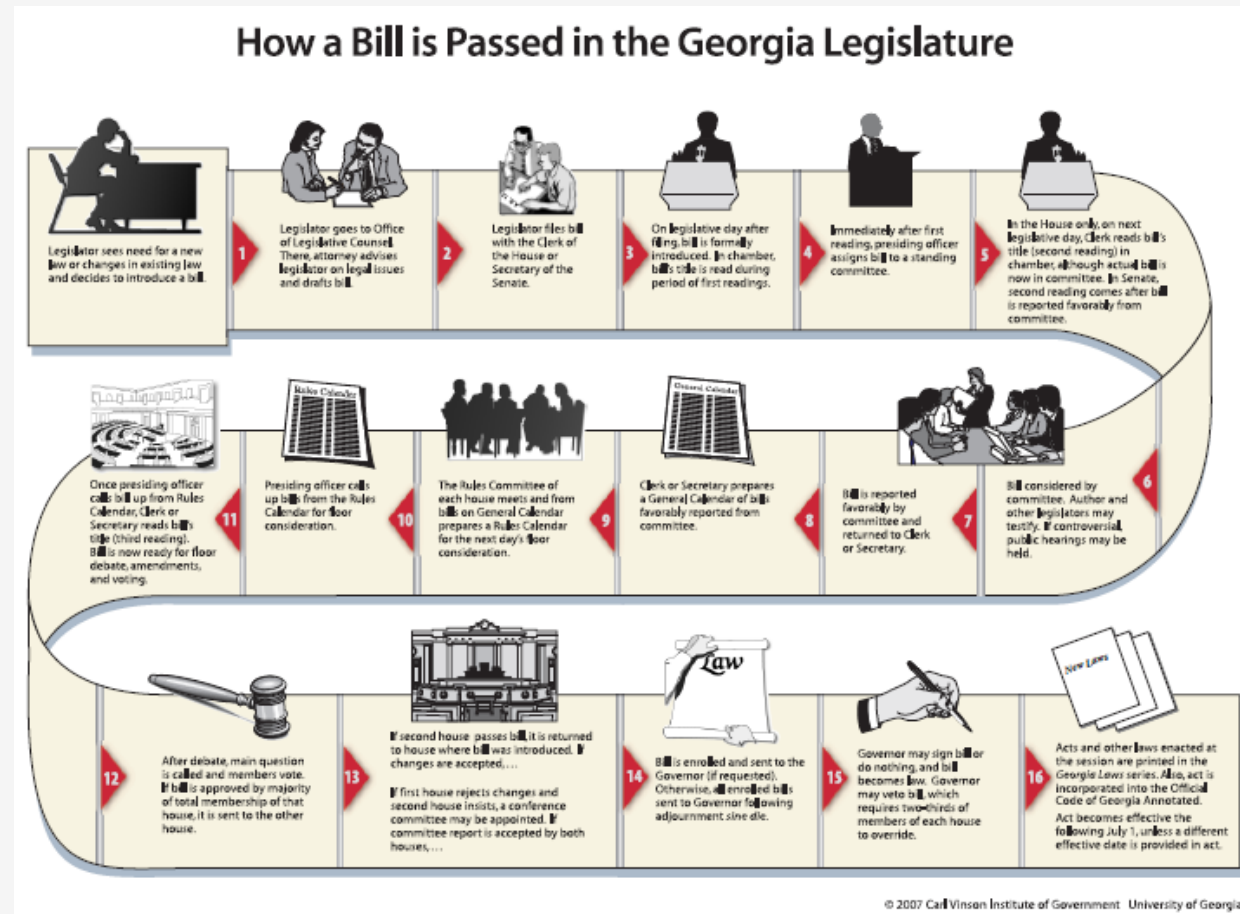


# General Assembly

- Bicameral
  - 56 Senators and 180 Representatives
  - Lt. Gov. presides over Senate
  - Speaker presides over House
- Citizen Legislators
- Biennial Session
- Meets for 40 Days, beginning 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday in January
  - Day 28 is Crossover Day
- Only legislation required to pass each year is the state budget
  - Governor-strong state



# How a Bill Becomes a Law



# Budget Cycle

[https://opb.georgia.gov/sites/opb.georgia.gov/files/imported/vgn/images/portal/cit\\_1210/44/31/162982494ga\\_budget\\_cycle.pdf](https://opb.georgia.gov/sites/opb.georgia.gov/files/imported/vgn/images/portal/cit_1210/44/31/162982494ga_budget_cycle.pdf)

## State of Georgia Budget Cycle GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF PLANNING & BUDGET



\*\*\*GLOSSARY\*\*\*

<b>AGENCY</b> - A government department or organization that is responsible for a specific function or service.	<b>BUDGET</b> - A financial plan that shows the expected income and expenses for a specific period of time.	<b>EXPENDITURES</b> - The amount of money that is spent on a specific project or program.	<b>REVENUE</b> - The amount of money that is received from a specific source, such as taxes or fees.
<b>APPROPRIATION</b> - The amount of money that is allocated to a specific project or program.	<b>BUDGETARY CONTROL</b> - The process of monitoring and controlling the budget to ensure that it is being followed.	<b>EXPENDITURE PLAN</b> - A document that outlines the expected expenses for a specific project or program.	<b>REVENUE PLAN</b> - A document that outlines the expected income for a specific project or program.
<b>COMMITMENT</b> - The act of agreeing to spend money on a specific project or program.	<b>BUDGETARY DEFICIT</b> - The amount of money that is spent in excess of the budget.	<b>EXPENDITURE REPORT</b> - A document that reports on the actual expenses incurred for a specific project or program.	<b>REVENUE REPORT</b> - A document that reports on the actual income received for a specific project or program.
<b>CONTRACT</b> - A legal agreement between two or more parties that outlines the terms and conditions of a specific project or program.	<b>BUDGETARY SURPLUS</b> - The amount of money that is received in excess of the budget.	<b>EXPENDITURE STATEMENT</b> - A document that provides a summary of the expenses incurred for a specific project or program.	<b>REVENUE STATEMENT</b> - A document that provides a summary of the income received for a specific project or program.



# Steps in Georgia's Budget Process

1



2



**Budget Request Instructions Sent to Agencies:**

In early summer, the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget (OPB) sends guidelines to agencies for budget requests.

**Agencies Prepare Budget Request:**

Agencies prepare requests and get board approval (if applicable).

3



4



**Budget Request Submitted:**

Agencies submit all requests for current and upcoming fiscal year to OPB by September 1.

**Budget Request Analyzed:**

The governor, OPB staff, and agency leaders review and assess current and new budget requests.

5



6



**Governor Finishes Budget:**

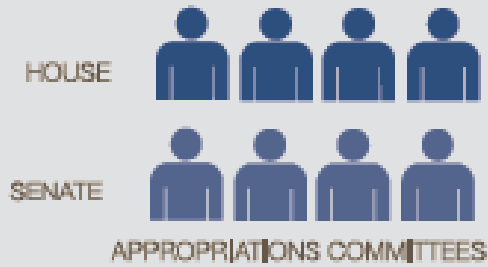
By the end of the calendar year, the governor finalizes the budget proposals.

**Budget Documents Sent to the General Assembly:**

In January, within the first five days of the General Assembly session, the governor presents budget proposals.



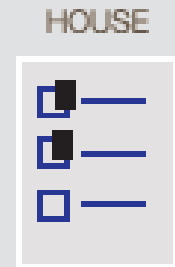
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**Legislative Appropriations Process:**

The Appropriations committees in the Georgia House of Representatives and Senate hold budget hearings for the current and upcoming fiscal year.

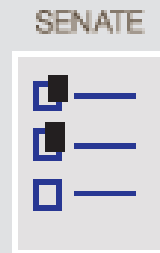
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**House Approves Its Budget**

The House votes on changes to governor's budget proposals, Passes its version to the Senate.

9



**Senate Approves Its Budget:**

The Senate reviews the House-passed budget for the current and upcoming fiscal years, can make changes, then votes on latest versions.

10

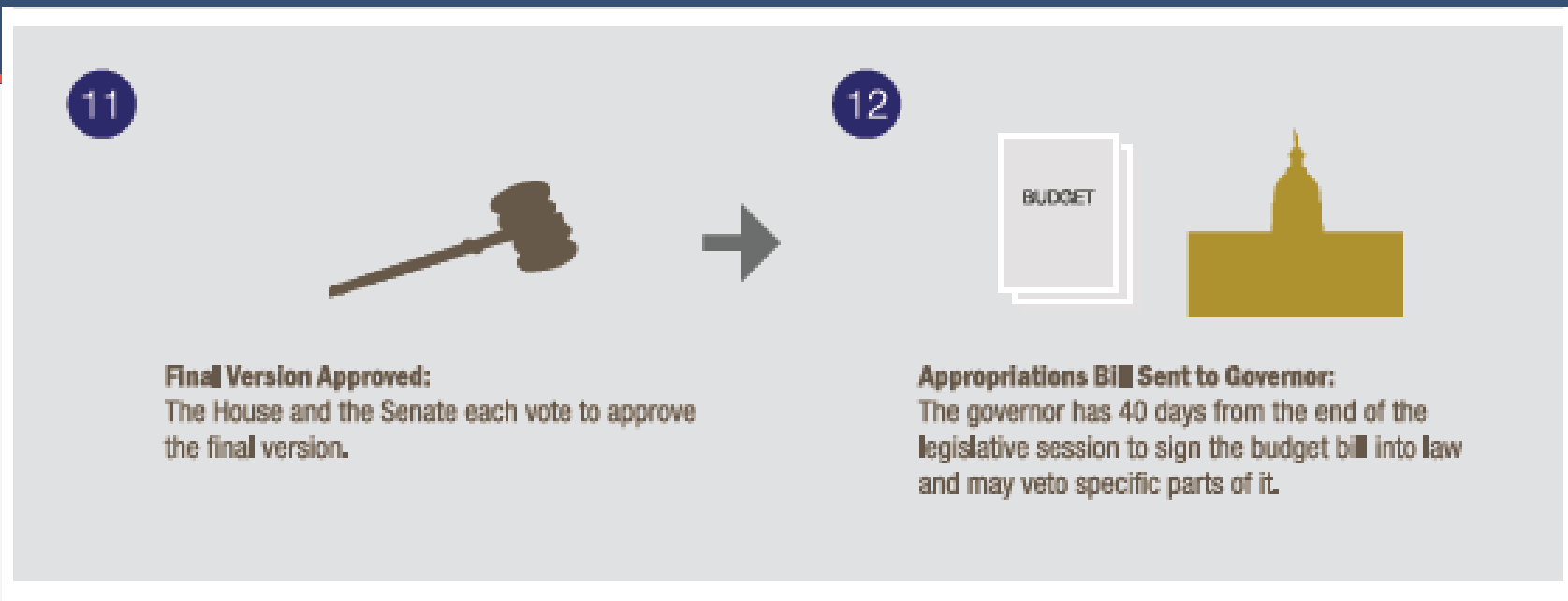


**Conference Committee Meets:**

The lieutenant governor and Speaker of the House appoint a conference committee to negotiate a single version of the budget.







Source: Georgia Budget and Policy Institute Budget Primer

<https://gbpi.org/georgiabudgetprimer/>



# Effective Advocacy Strategies

- Plan ahead
- Be honest and direct, concise
- Be passionate, persistent, polite, positive
- Personalize issues
- Show appreciation
- Seize opportunity
- Work both sides of the aisle



# Communicating with Legislators

- Phone Calls
  - Likely will speak with an assistant, intern, or staffer who will relay your message
  - Identify yourself, organizational affiliation, and mention if you live in the legislator's home district
  - Explain why you're calling and make your ask, have 1-2 concise points to support your position
  - Provide any local or personal examples of why it matters
  - Thank the person for their time
- Email
  - Convenient, but may be less effective because less personal, may be preferred method for some
  - Put your position in the subject line (e.g., Please support HB\_\_)
  - Form letters won't have same weight as personalized ones
  - One issue per letter
  - State purpose in first paragraph
  - Include personal stories, highlight specific examples that support your position, including local impact
  - May request a response asking whether legislator will support your position



# Under the Gold Dome

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Legislative Session



2020

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# How to Stay Informed:

- Barton Child Law and Policy Center at Emory Law School's Newsletter and weekly Legislative Updates
- Voices for Georgia's Children
  - Georgia CALL "closed door" weekly meetings
  - Legislative Updates
  - Two-minute Take videos
  - Fact-Sheet Fridays
- Legislator newsletters
- Georgia General Assembly page--[www.legis.ga.gov](http://www.legis.ga.gov)
- Budget—Georgia Budget & Policy Institute—[www.gbpi.org](http://www.gbpi.org)



# 2020

- Today is Day 10.
- Second year of session
- Substantive Legislation:
  - HB 440: Raise the Age
  - Governor's package
  - Lt. Governor's package



# Budget

- **Increases:**
  - Teachers' salaries by \$2000
  - Adoption tax credit from \$2000 to \$6000
  - \$1000 raise to all state agency workers making < \$40K annually
- **Decreases:**
  - Eliminate vacant positions at state and regional levels of DFCS
  - Out-of-home care funding, as number of children in foster care declining
  - Reduction in child and adolescent mental health services
  - Cuts to Accountability Courts



# Georgia CASA Legislative Strategy

- Not seeking an increase for FY 21.
- Share your CASA story
- Bring attention to needs of children in foster care in your community
- Engage legislators in the CASA movement





# Messaging

- Ongoing commitment to continue to build relationships with legislators both in the district and in Atlanta throughout the session:
  - Thanking legislators for their continuous support of CASA and sharing progress and growth
  - Engaging legislators in discussions around key issues in child welfare
  - Serving as a sounding board and resource on welfare issues as the session progresses
  - Providing joint opportunities to recruit and engage constituents in supporting youth in care
  - Asking legislators to become CASA ambassadors in the community by sharing local CASA information with constituents and attending local CASA events
  - Inviting legislators to participate in a listening session or to observe CASA in action in court



# Messaging, cont'd.

- CASA advocacy is essential to children who have experienced abuse or neglect in GA
  - Every child in state's custody needs the individualized attention and sense of urgency that a CASA volunteer brings in improving their experience in foster care
  - Studies have consistently shown that a child with a CASA is more likely to find a safe, permanent home; half as likely to re-enter foster care; and less likely to languish in long-term foster care
  - CASA volunteers provide consistency and continuity for a child involved in the child welfare system and help to connect information among DFCS staff, foster placements, providers, schools and many other stakeholders
  - CASA program helps to maximize community resources and support by involving community volunteers in supporting juvenile courts and children/families in foster care, resulting in additional resources, expertise and connections for children, families and services
- CASAs advocate for approximately 55% of children in foster care



# CASA Day at the Capitol

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February 13



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# Website

2020  
**CASA DAY**  
AT THE CAPITOL

**WHEN**  
Thursday, February 13th  
9:30 a.m.

**WHERE**  
Georgia Railroad Freight Depot  
The Freight Room  
65 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive SE  
(across from the Capitol Building)

Join hundreds of CASAs from around the state in this fast-paced, fun opportunity to meet our legislators, bring awareness to the needs of children in foster care, and show the power of CASA advocacy.

**CASA Directors:** Call your Representatives and Senators to arrange a visit and invite them to the drop-in luncheon.

\$10 Registration Fee


**QUESTIONS?**  
**EMAIL**  
Regina Roberts at  
roberts@gacasa.org  
**CALL**  
404.874.2888

**JOIN THE CASA MOVEMENT**  
Wear a splash of blue!

**SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:**


**9:30AM**  
Remarks from Judge Peggy Walker & Legislative Briefing

**10:30AM**  
Group Photo & Capitol Visit



**11:45AM-1PM**  
Drop-in Luncheon  
(Bring your ID to enter the Capitol)

**FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER:**  
gacasa.org/casa-day-capitol-2020/  
#GACASADayatCap



- Flyer
- Schedule of Events
- Directions and maps
- Packet Contents
  - Paging slips
  - Legislator contact info
- Sample letter to invite legislator
- Registration link
- Hotels

For more details and to register, visit:  
<https://www.gacasa.org/casa-day-capitol-2020/>



# Parking

- Depot Lot -pay with exact cash or credit @ station-closest to the Capitol
- Underground Decks-pay with cash or credit
- Memorial Dr. Lot-pay w/ exact cash or credit-know license tag
- Pete Hackney Garage-convenient to Floyd Building, \$10 pay on entry
- MARTA: Georgia State E-1 on the Blue Line. Trains every 15 minutes. Station at Floyd Building.
- **Allow ample time!!!**
- **<http://www.atlantadowntown.com/guide/getting-around/parking>**



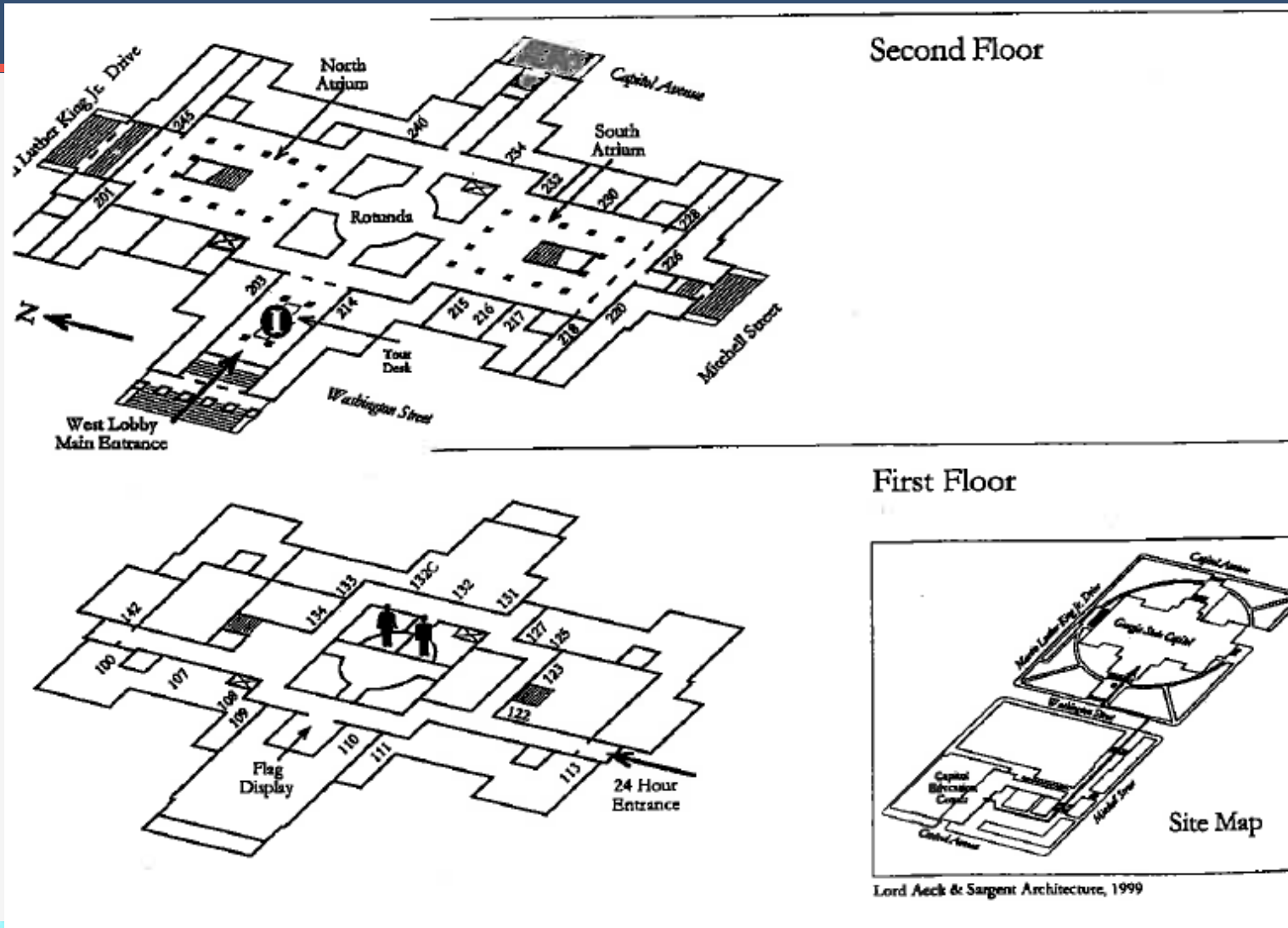


# Security

- Bring your driver's license or state-issued photo ID.
- You will be required to show it at the Capitol.
- Metal detectors located at the Capitol.

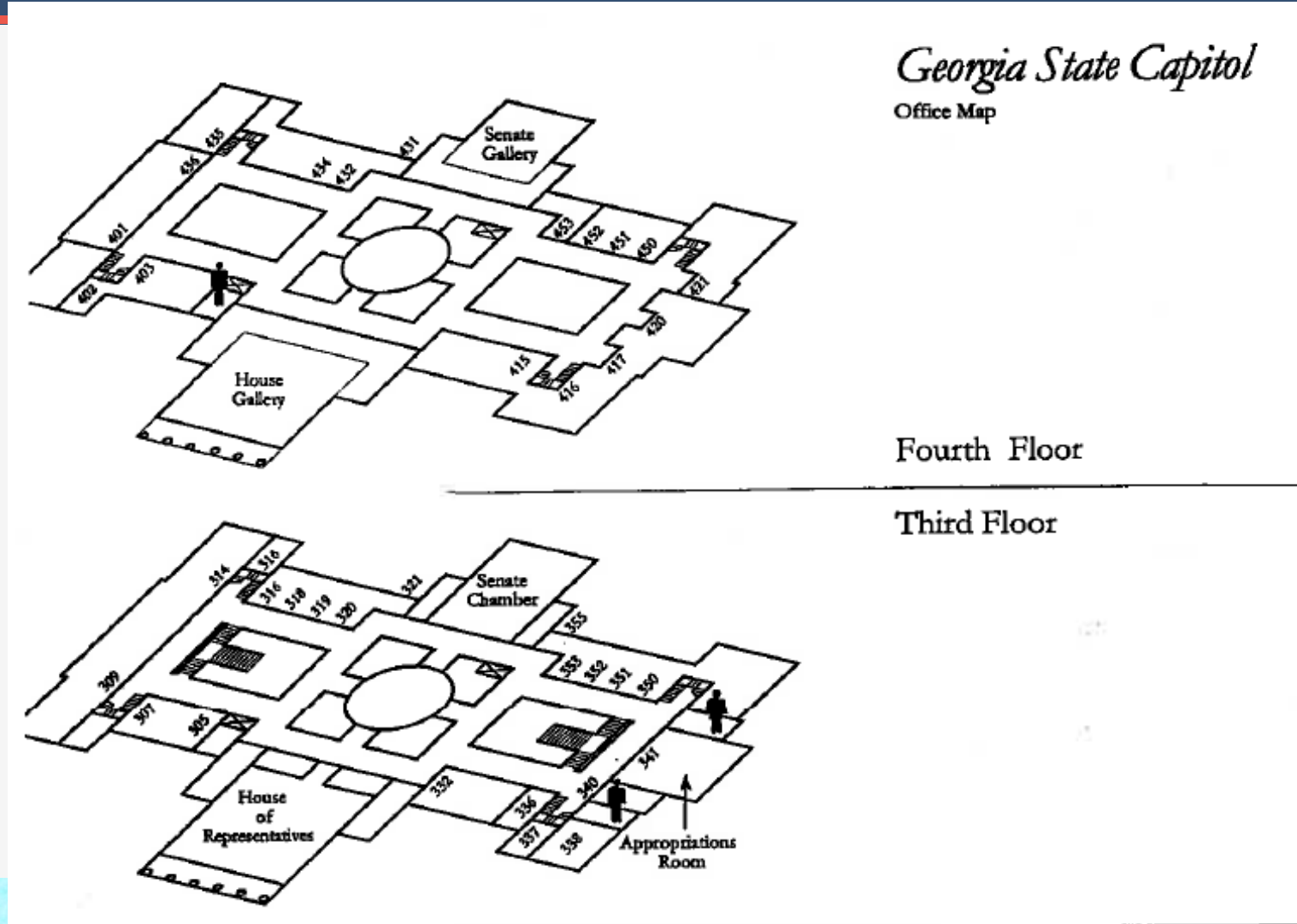


# 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Maps





# 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Maps



# Schedule

- Beginning at 8:45 am--Coffee and pastries in the Depot
- 9:30--Program begins
  - Miss Georgia, Musical Interlude
  - Judge Walker, Welcome Address
  - Wendi Clifton, Legislative Briefing
- 11:00ish--Group photo
- 11:00--11:45--\*Capitol Visit
- Luncheon--11:45-1 pm
- 1:00— Optional Capitol Visit



# \*Capitol Visit

- Observe from Gallery (4<sup>th</sup> floor):
  - Have been known to be strict with the use of phones, cameras, etc.
  - No drinks.
- \*Page your legislator (3<sup>rd</sup> floor)
- Stop by legislative office.
- Tour the capitol.
- Afternoon: Attend a committee hearing



# \*Paging

- Know your legislators in advance.
- Complete the paging slips before you get to the ropes on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor.
  - Luncheon reminder
  - Come out to speak
- Proceed to page desk.
- Remember what your Page looks like.



# Legislative Appointments

- Make in advance
- Stop by office and talk to Aide

## LEAVE BEHINDS

- S'mores



# Luncheon

- 11:45-1, The Depot
- Make sure someone is there the entire time.
  - Go through the buffet in shifts.
- Cheer for all legislators.
- Come greet your legislator; fix their lunch; make room at table.
- There will be set seating for programs situated geographically close to be near each other to accommodate shared representatives and senators.



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AT THE CAPITOL

# 2019 Day at the Capitol



# Know Before You Go:

- Invite your legislators.
  - If you haven't already done so, do! (sample language on website)
  - If you haven't heard back, send a reminder.
- Who is my legislator?
  - Find your district number and use the charts.
  - Or, enter your street address online at <http://votesmart.org/>
- Prepare your volunteers.
  - Have a call in advance for those attending
  - Provide info about all legislators in your program's service area
    - Photo, biographical info, committees, relevant sponsored legislation





# See you on the 13<sup>th</sup>!

- Don't forget:
  - Know your legislators
  - Wear a splash of **blue**
  - Allow plenty of time for travel
  - Bring your phone and use #GACASADayatCap
  - Have fun!



# Questions?

[atyner@gacasa.org](mailto:atyner@gacasa.org)

404-874-2888



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