

CASA  **DAY**
AT THE CAPITOL



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 Details



Legislative Advocacy 101

General Assembly



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 2nd Monday in January
 - Day 28 is Crossover Day
- Only legislation required to pass each year is the state budget
 - Governor-strong state

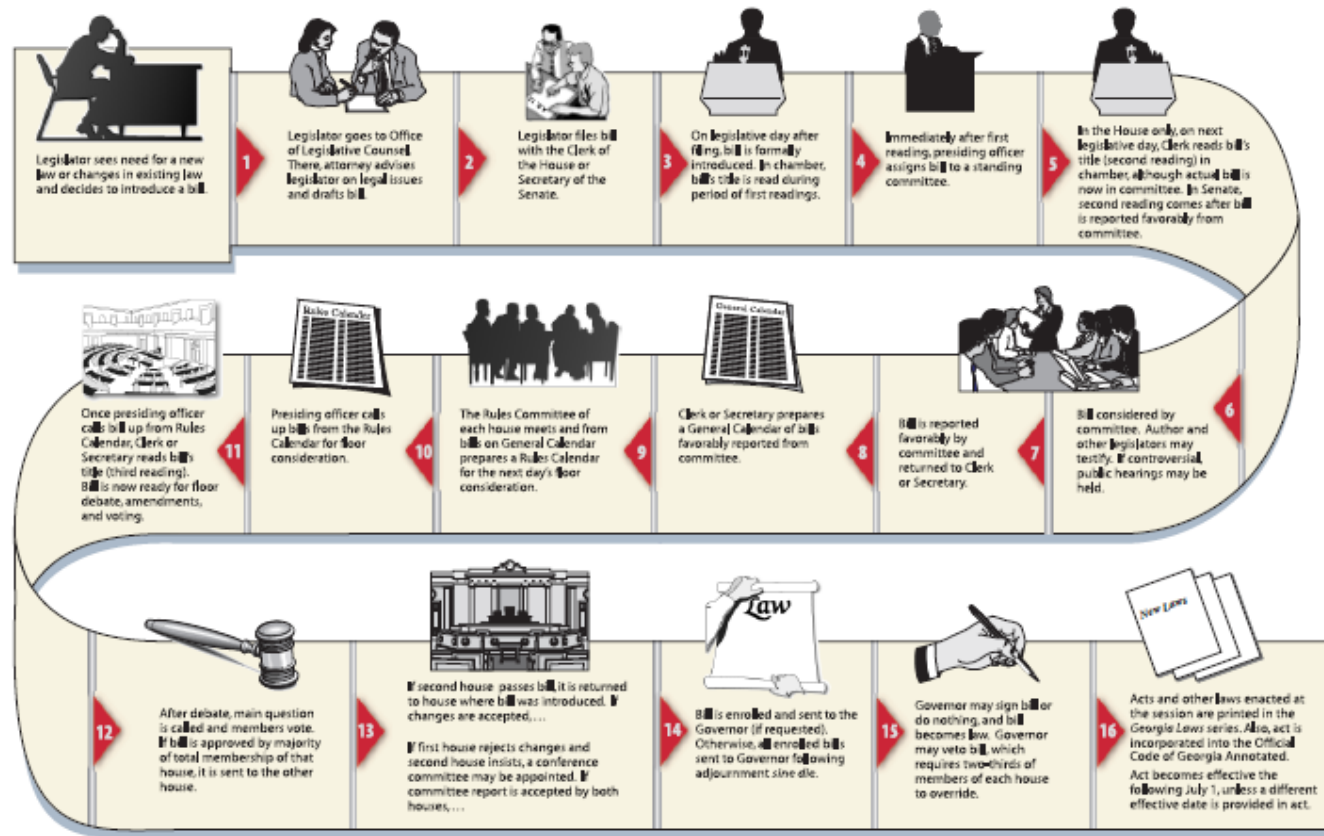


How a Bill Becomes a Law



COURTESY: MISSY THOMPSON/STATE HOUSE

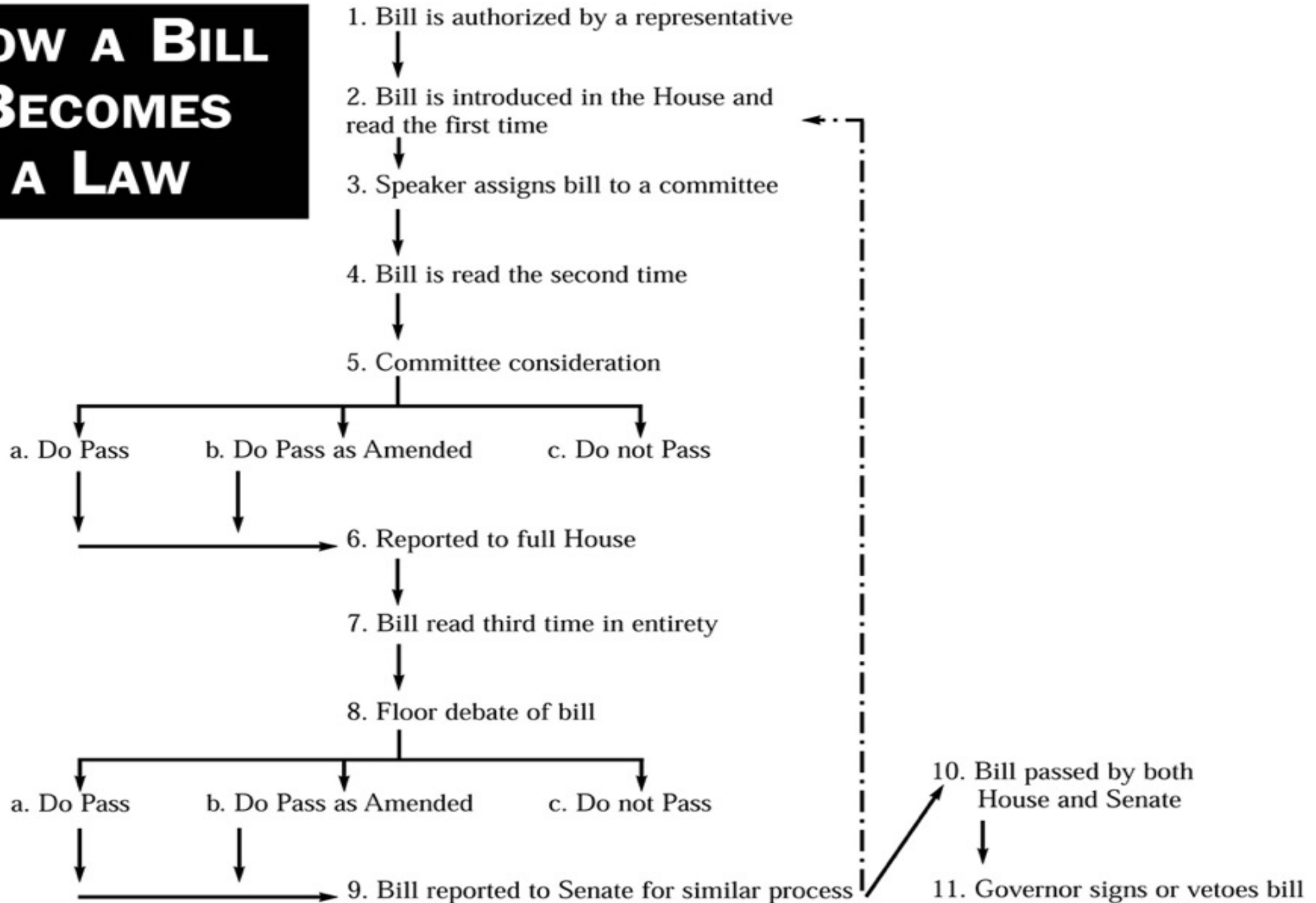
How a Bill is Passed in the Georgia Legislature



© 2007 Carl Vinson Institute of Government University of Georgia



HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW



The Rules Committee

“The daily legislative agenda on the floor of each chamber is governed by a rules calendar prepared by each chamber’s Rules Committee.”

-Carl Vinson Institute of Government - University of Georgia, *Handbook for Georgia Legislators*



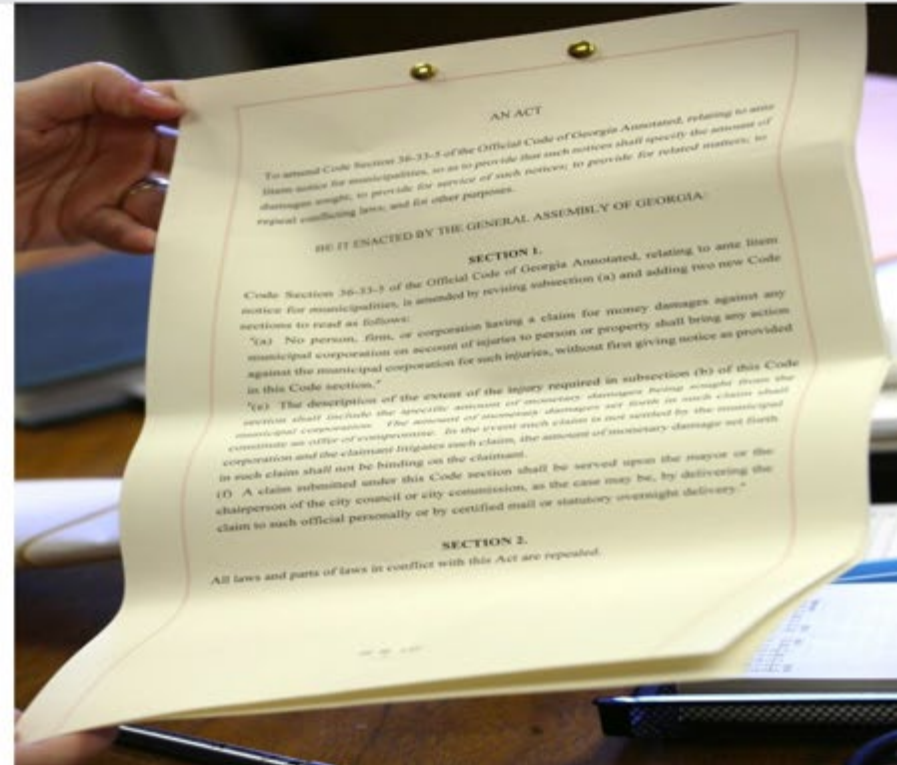
Floor Consideration



Bill Signature or Veto

Governor may...

- Sign the bill
- Do nothing
- Veto (requires two-thirds of members of each chamber to override)

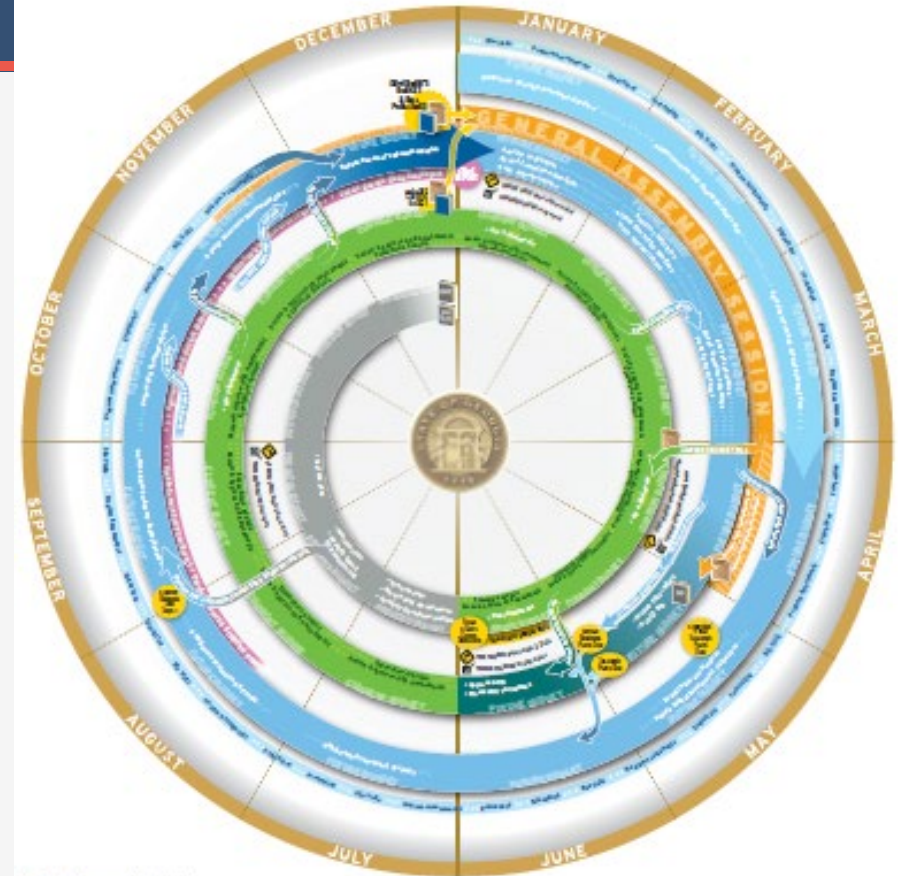


Budget Cycle

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

APPROPRIATION A sum of money that is allocated to a specific program or project.	BUDGET A financial plan that shows the expected revenues and expenditures for a specific period of time.	GENERAL ASSESSMENT A process of evaluating the state's financial condition and determining the need for a budget.	GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF PLANNING AND BUDGET The state agency responsible for developing and implementing the state budget.
BUDGET DEVELOPMENT The process of creating a budget proposal.	BUDGET ADOPTION The process of approving a budget proposal by the legislature.	BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION The process of executing the budget.	LEGISLATURE The state's law-making body.
EXPENDITURE A sum of money that is spent on a specific program or project.	REVENUE A sum of money that is received from a specific source.	STATE The political entity that is governed by a government.	STATE BUDGET The financial plan for the state.
FINANCIAL PLAN A document that outlines the state's financial goals and objectives.	LEGISLATIVE Relating to the legislature.	OPERATIONAL Relating to the day-to-day activities of the state.	PLANNING The process of determining the state's future course of action.



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

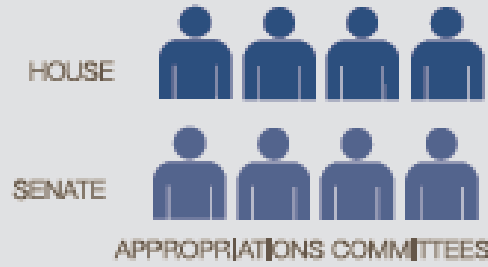


Governor Finishes Budget:
By the end of the calendar year, the governor finalizes the budget proposals.

Budget Documents Sent to the General Assembly:
In January, within the first five days of the General Assembly session, the governor presents budget proposals.

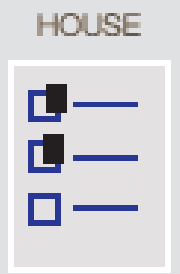


7



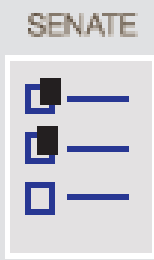
Legislative Appropriations Process:
 The Appropriations committees in the Georgia House of Representatives and Senate hold budget hearings for the current and upcoming fiscal year.

8



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.

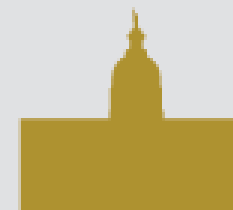
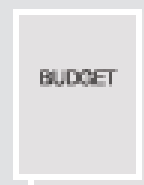


11



Final Version Approved:
The House and the Senate each vote to approve the final version.

12



Appropriations Bill Sent to Governor:
The governor has 40 days from the end of the legislative session to sign the budget bill into law and may veto specific parts of it.

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



Relevant Committees

HOUSE

- Appropriations
- Juvenile Justice
- Education
- Health & Human Services
- Civil Judiciary
- Non-Civil Judiciary
- Rules

SENATE

- Appropriations
- Education & Youth
- Judiciary
- Health & Human Services
- Special Judiciary
- Rules



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 legislator's home district
 - Explain why you're calling and make your ask, have 1-2 concise points to support 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 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 position, including local impact
 - May request a response asking whether legislator will support your position



How to Stay Informed:

- Barton Child Law & Policy Center @ Emory Law Legislative Updates
- Voices for Georgia's Children
 - Georgia CALL “closed door” weekly meetings - virtual
 - Legislative Updates
 - Two-minute Take videos, Fact-Sheet Fridays
- Legislator newsletters
- Georgia General Assembly page--www.legis.ga.gov
- Budget
 - Gov's Office of Planning & Budget - [Budget Documents](#) | [Governor's Office of Planning and Budget \(georgia.gov\)](#)
 - Georgia Budget & Policy Institute—www.gbpi.org
- Lawmakers – www.gpb.org



Under the Gold Dome

Legislative Session



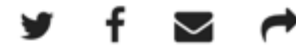


POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

Heading into 2022, Georgia is poised to be at the center of the political universe — again

BY ADAM WOLLNER

UPDATED OCTOBER 29, 2021 11:18 AM



2022

- Today is Day 9, second year of session
- Substantive Legislation
 - Legal Representation
 - DFCS - Right to Counsel 18-22 (Ballinger)
 - OCA - HB 322 (Wiedower)



FY 23 Budget

Department of Human Services

- \$13.5 million added for full time, benefits eligible, child welfare employees to receive a \$5,000 salary increase.
- \$28 million added to provide a 10% provider rate increase for Child Caring Institutions, Child Placing Agencies, foster parents, and relative caregivers.
- \$1.5 million added for community action team pilot program to address children who are in or are at risk of entering foster care.



Georgia CASA Legislative Strategy

- Budget-increase request \$200,000
 - Support Governor's budget, DFCS, CJCC request
 - Support substantive legislation
-
- Bring attention to needs of children in foster care in your community
 - Share your CASA story
 - Engage legislators in the CASA movement



Budget Messaging

- State funding supports the recruitment, screening and training of CASA by providing 1 staff to supervise 30 volunteers
- CASA network's current operating budget is approximately \$17 million, including state appropriations of \$3.65 million
- CASA is an exemplary public-private partnership that demonstrates a 75 to 1 return on investment
 - State funding represents approximately 21% of the annual budget in GA
- Past increases have provided significant investment in network expansion





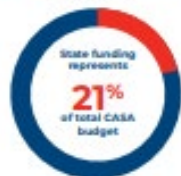
Over 55% of children in state custody & an additional 500 children at-risk entering state custody are paired with a CASA volunteer

2,700+ CASA volunteers currently advocate for children in foster care

800 - 1,000 new CASA volunteers trained annually

3,000+ advocates comprise the statewide CASA network including volunteers, staff & board members

State funding for CASA in Georgia \$3,650,000



Total budget for CASA in Georgia \$17,000,000 (approx.)

Georgia CASA

FY2023 State Funding Budget Request

\$200,000

Recognizes increases in foster care population, children served, or service-area expansion - \$164,000

Restores FY20 reduction to state CASA network administration - \$36,000

Last year, 60% of CASA affiliates experienced a growth in children served, an increase in overall number of children in foster care, or an expansion in geographic service areas.

Every CASA affiliate's state funding allocation has been held constant for three years. Each year, CASA affiliates serve a greater percentage of children in foster care, especially responsive to new entries.

CASA Advocacy Model:



Juvenile court judges appoint CASA volunteers as lay Guardians ad Litem to offer critical, first-hand information to the court and parties and impartially make and zealously advocate for best-interest recommendations.

CASA volunteers remain one of the few consistent individuals in the lives of children despite placement and school moves, DFCS staffing changes, and other significant adjustments.



\$200,000

Recognizes increases in foster care population, children served, or service-area expansion - \$164,000

Restores FY20 reduction to state CASA network administration - \$36,000



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



Messaging Outreach Opportunities

- Email message about CASA's budget request and significance of CASA's involvement in child welfare system
- Targeted outreach to House Human Resources Subcommittee of Appropriations members
- Outreach to full House Appropriations Committee members
- Similar outreach to Senate (Human Dev. & Public Health)
- Conference Committee member outreach as needed
- Testifying before committees
- CASA Day @ the Capitol face-to-face networking and relationship building



CASA Day at the Capitol

Hybrid Event

February 10



CASA DAY
AT THE CAPITOL

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

2020 Day at the Capitol



Website

Flyer
Schedule of Events
Legislator contact info
Sample letter to invite legislator
Registration links
Talking Points

For more details and to register, visit:
<https://www.gacasa.org/casa-day-capitol-2022/>



2022
CASA DAY
AT THE CAPITOL

Hybrid Event

WHEN
Thursday, February 10
10:30 a.m.

WHERE
Central Presbyterian Church
Fellowship Hall
201 Washington Street SW
(across from the Capitol Building)
OR Virtual Access via Zoom

All participants will kick off the day with a legislative briefing, providing all the details to inform legislative appointments. Onsite attendees will then visit offices - distributing CASA materials, speaking with elected officials and legislative staff, and spreading CASA cheer.

CASA Directors: Call your Senators and Representatives to arrange in-person or virtual visits on or after February 10.

QUESTIONS?
EMAIL
Shontel Wright at
swright@gacasa.org

CALL
404.200.2344

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

10:30AM
Welcome Remarks &
Legislative Briefing

Legislative Appointments
(in-person & virtual)

Office Visits

-Bowed lunches provided

2:00PM
Day concludes

-Remember to bring your ID to
enter government buildings

**JOIN THE
CASA
MOVEMENT**
**Wear a pop
of red!**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION
AND TO REGISTER:**
gacasa.org/casa-day-capitol-2022/

Post pictures on social media using
#GACASADayatCap


CASA
Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN
GEORGIA

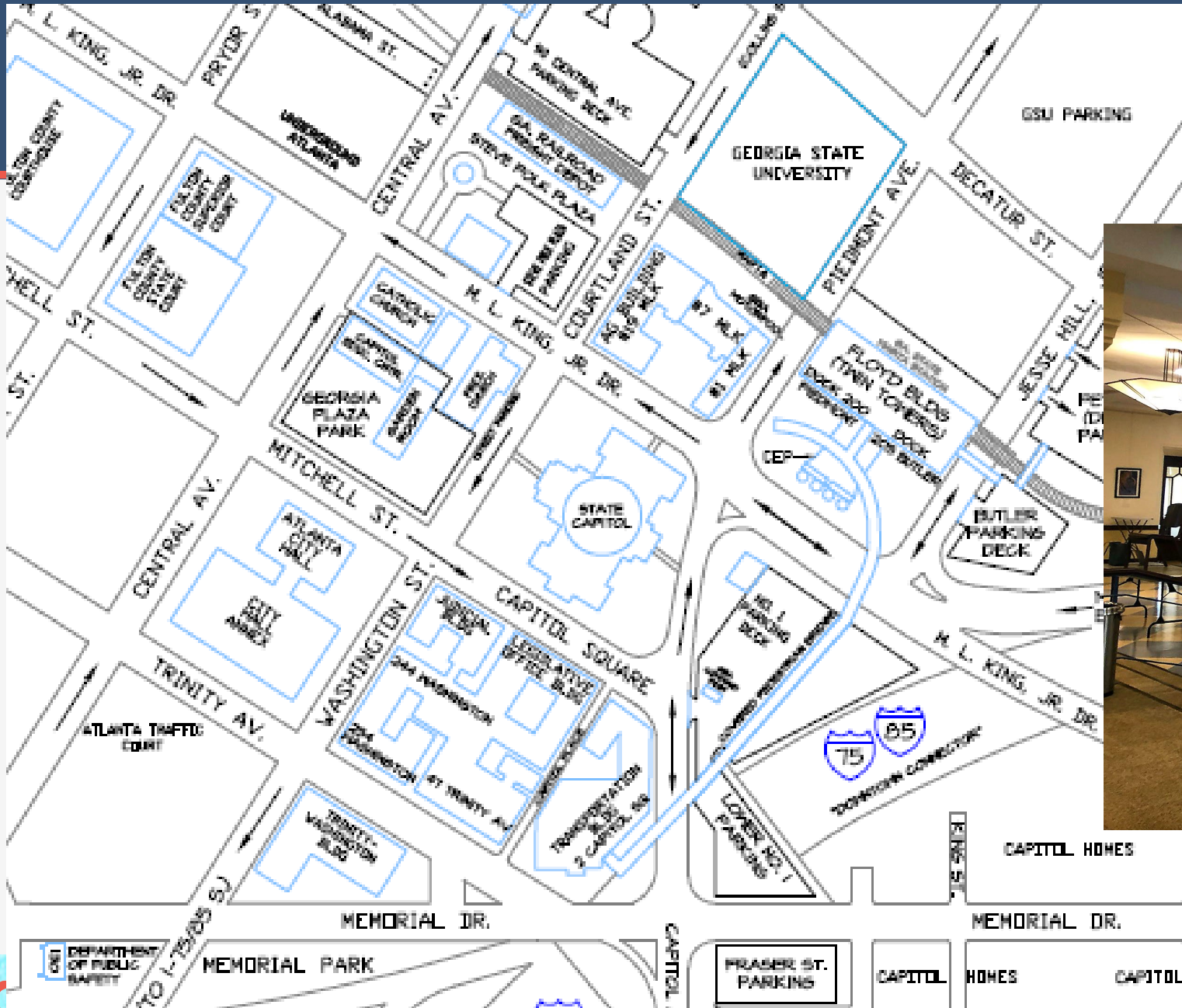




Parking

- 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>**



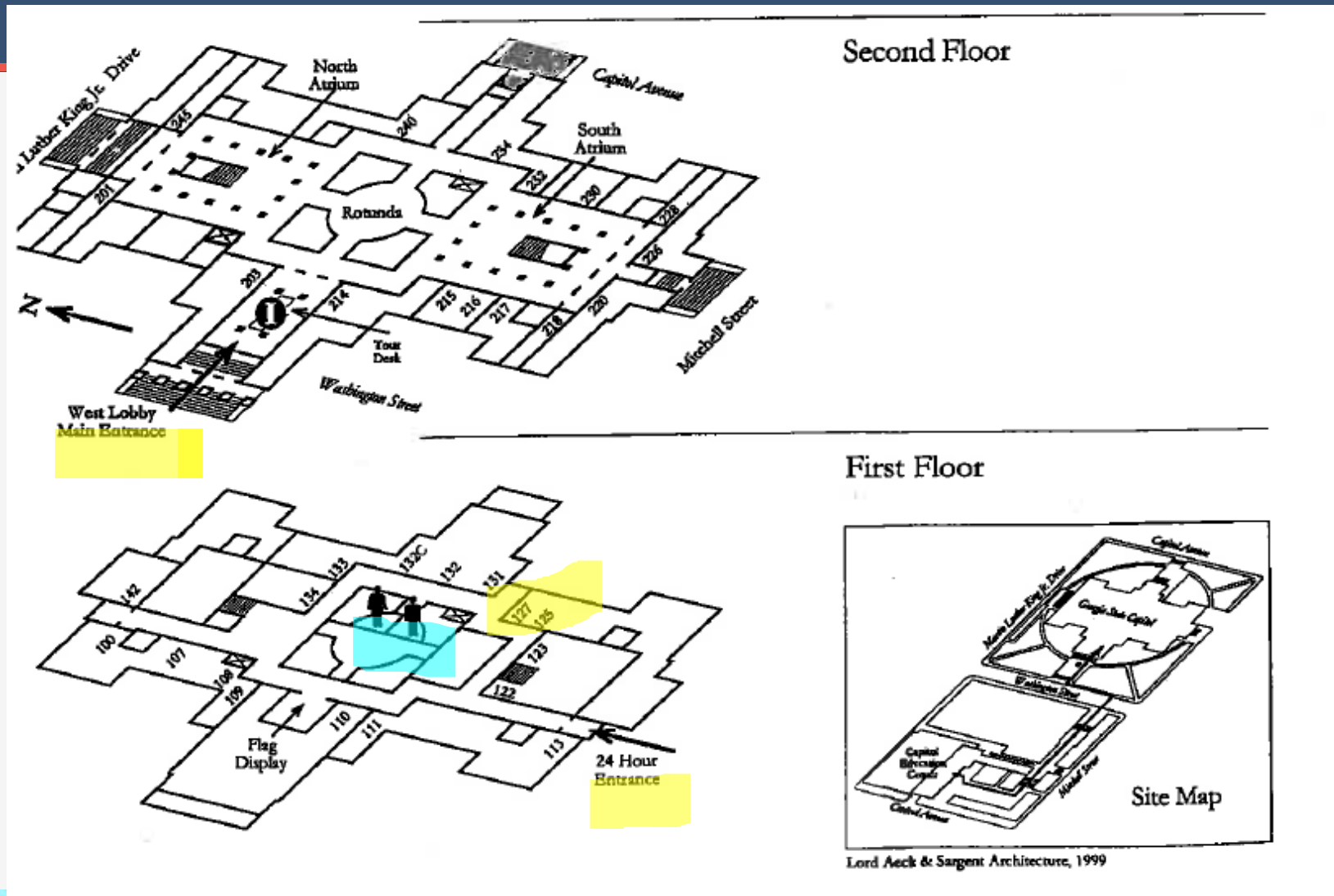


Security

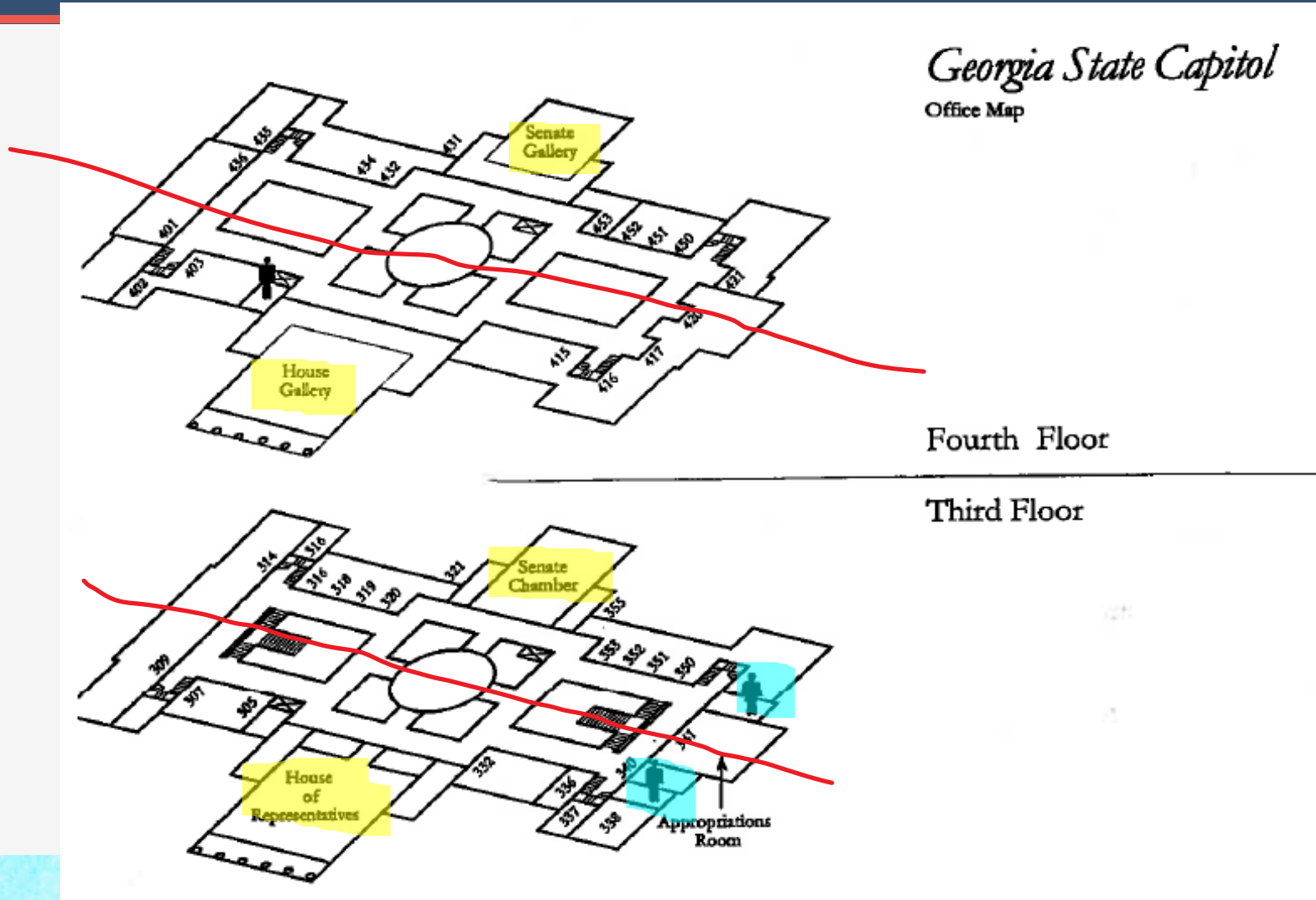
- Bring your driver's license or state-issued photo ID.
- You will be required to show it at the Capitol and Coverdell Legislative Office Building.
- Metal detectors



1st and 2nd Floor Maps



3rd and 4th Floor Maps



Schedule

- 10:30 – Program Begins
- Welcome
- Legislative Briefing
 - Under the Gold Dome
 - Call to Action
- Boxed Lunch
- Capitol Visits or Appointments
 - Deliver leave-behind and CASA Cheer
- Adjourn by 2:00



Legislative Appointments:

- Who is my legislator?
 - Find your district number and use the charts.
 - Or, enter your street address online at <http://votesmart.org/>
- Make an appointment with your legislators.
 - Sample language on website.
 - If you haven't heard back, send a reminder.
- 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 10th!

- Don't forget:
 - Wear a **pop of red!**
 - Use #GACASADayatCap
 - Schedule appointments



Questions?

atyner@gacasa.org



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

CASA DAY
AT THE CAPITOL