



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

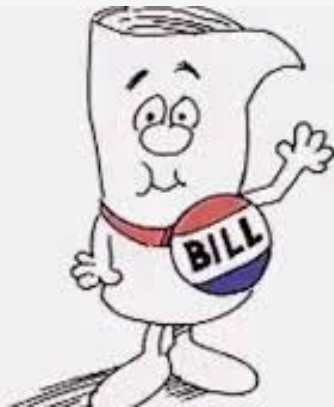


General Assembly

- 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

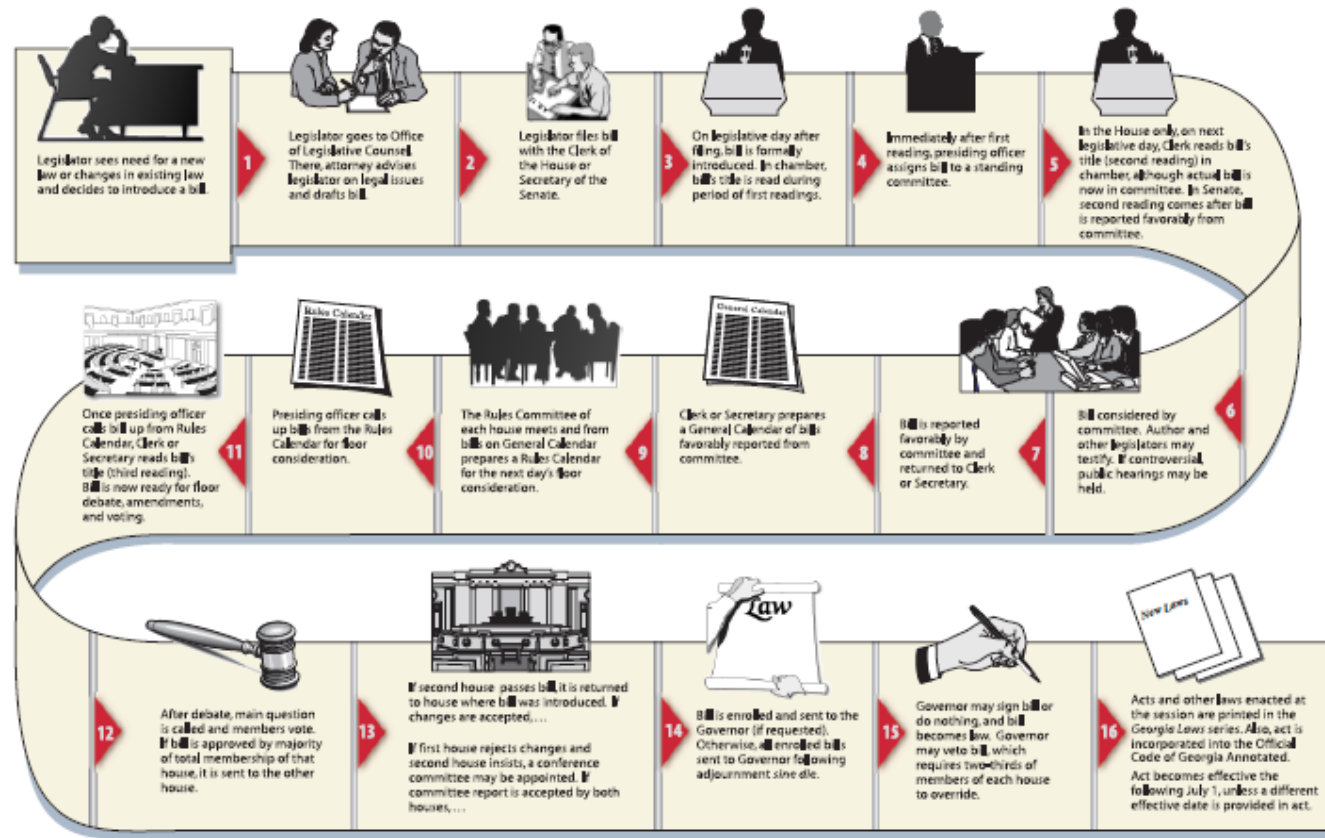


How a Bill Becomes a Law



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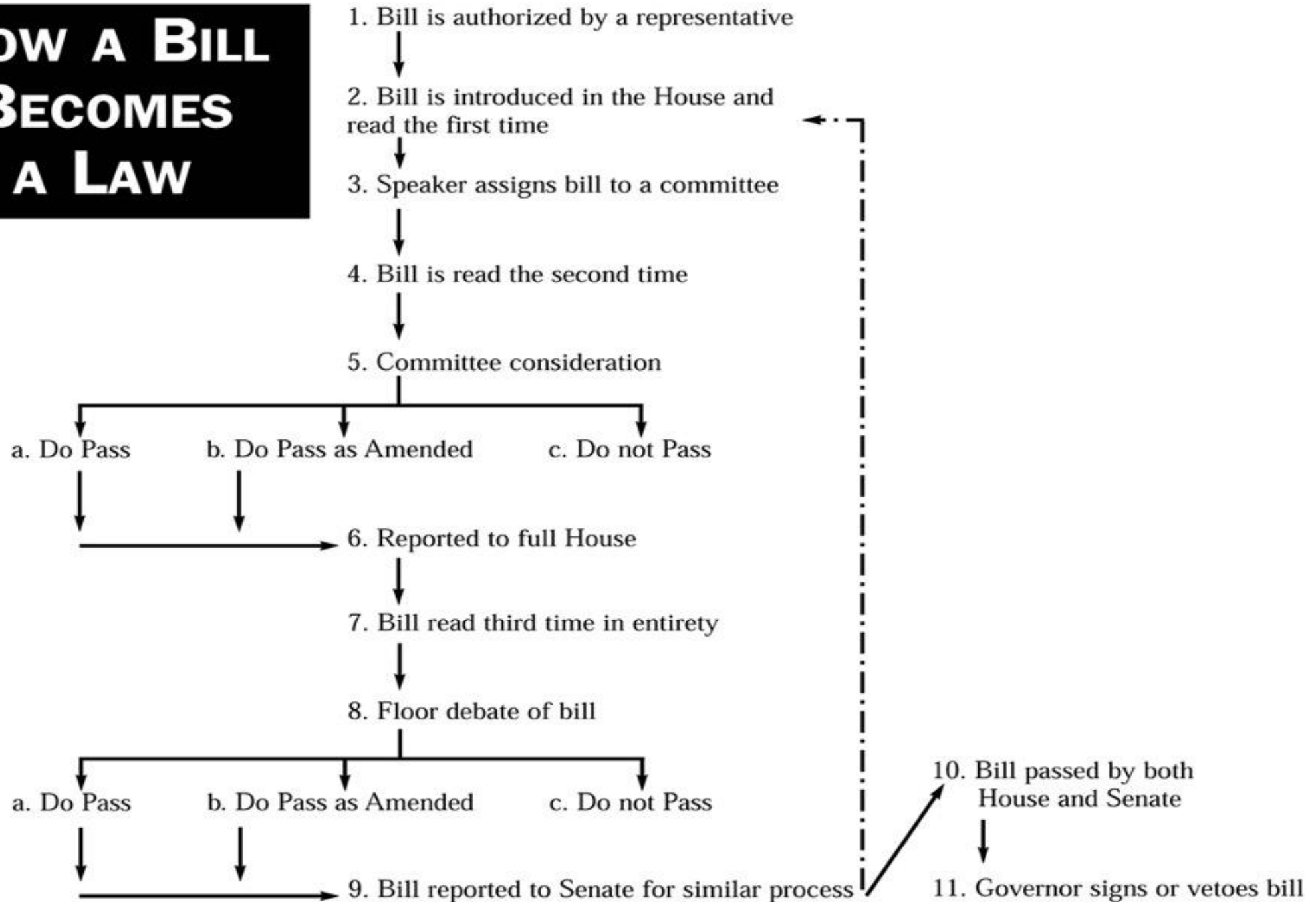
How a Bill is Passed in the Georgia Legislature



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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](#)



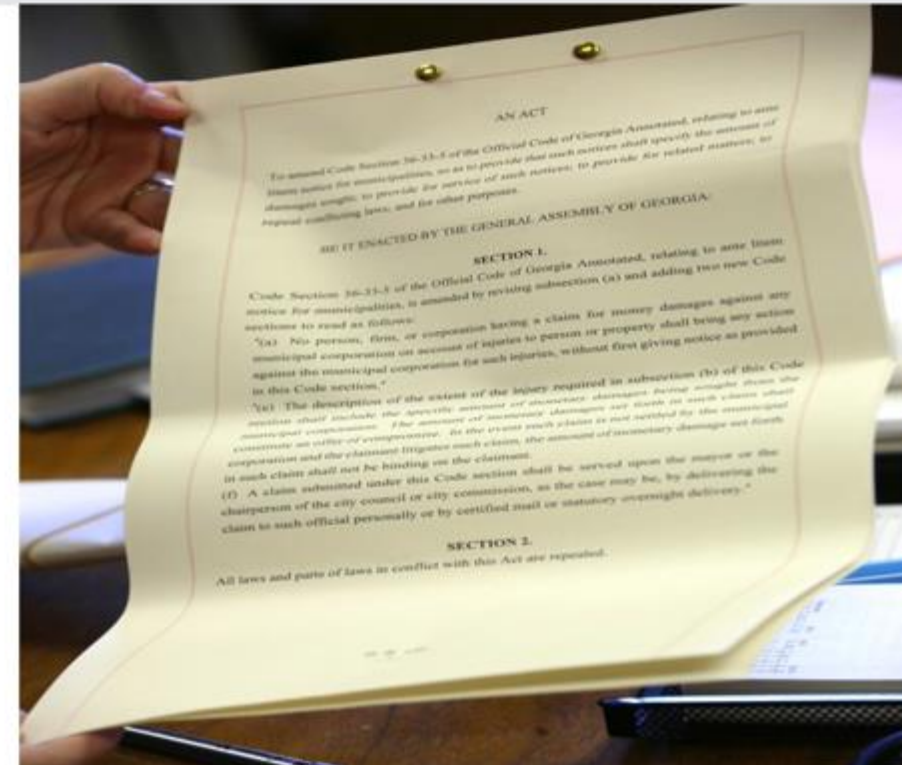
Floor Consideration



Bill Signature or Veto

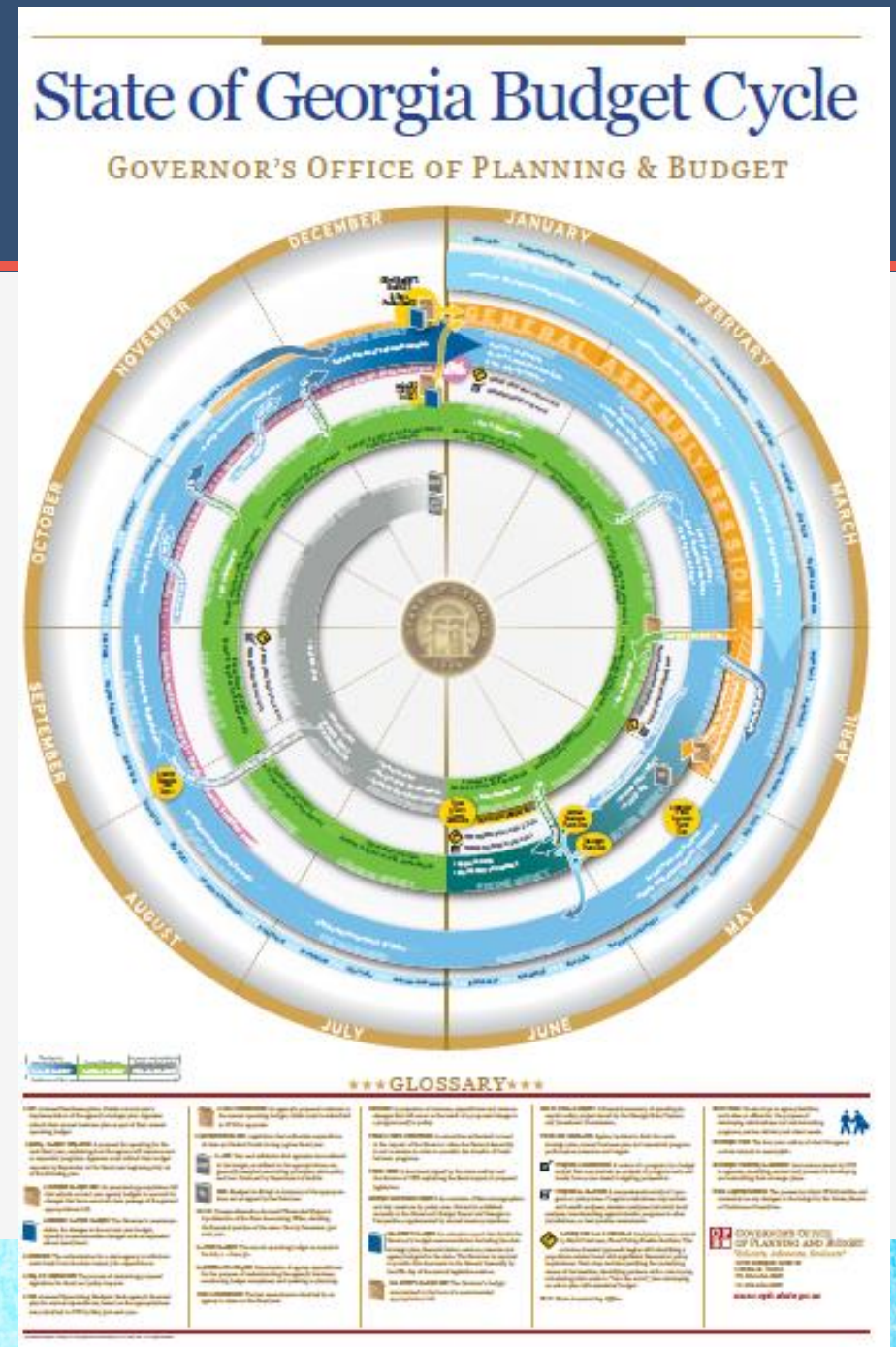
Governor may...

- 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



Steps in Georgia's Budget Process

1



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.

2



Agencies Prepare Budget Request:
Agencies prepare requests and get board approval (if applicable).

3



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

4



Budget Request Analyzed:
The governor, OPB staff, and agency leaders review and assess current and new budget requests.

5



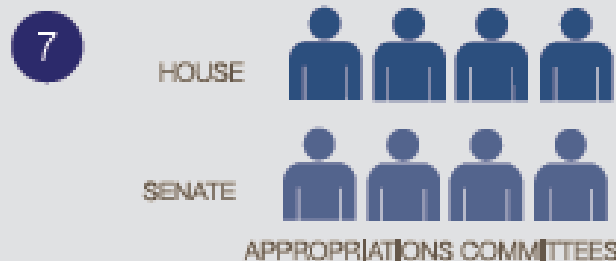
Governor Finishes Budget:
By the end of the calendar year, the governor finalizes the budget proposals.

6

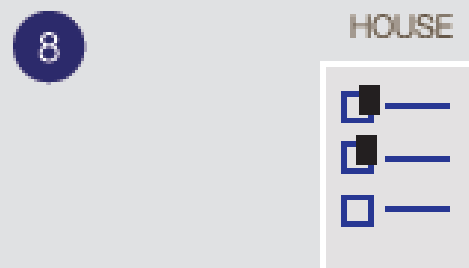


Budget Documents Sent to the General Assembly:
In January, within the first five days of the General Assembly session, the governor presents budget proposals.

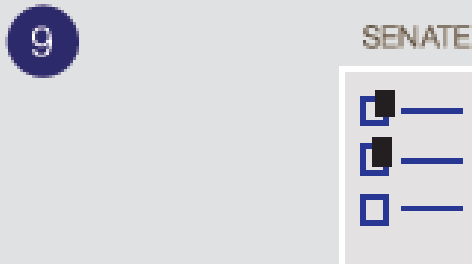




Legislative Appropriations Process:
The Appropriations committees in the Georgia House of Representatives and Senate hold budget hearings for the current and upcoming fiscal year.



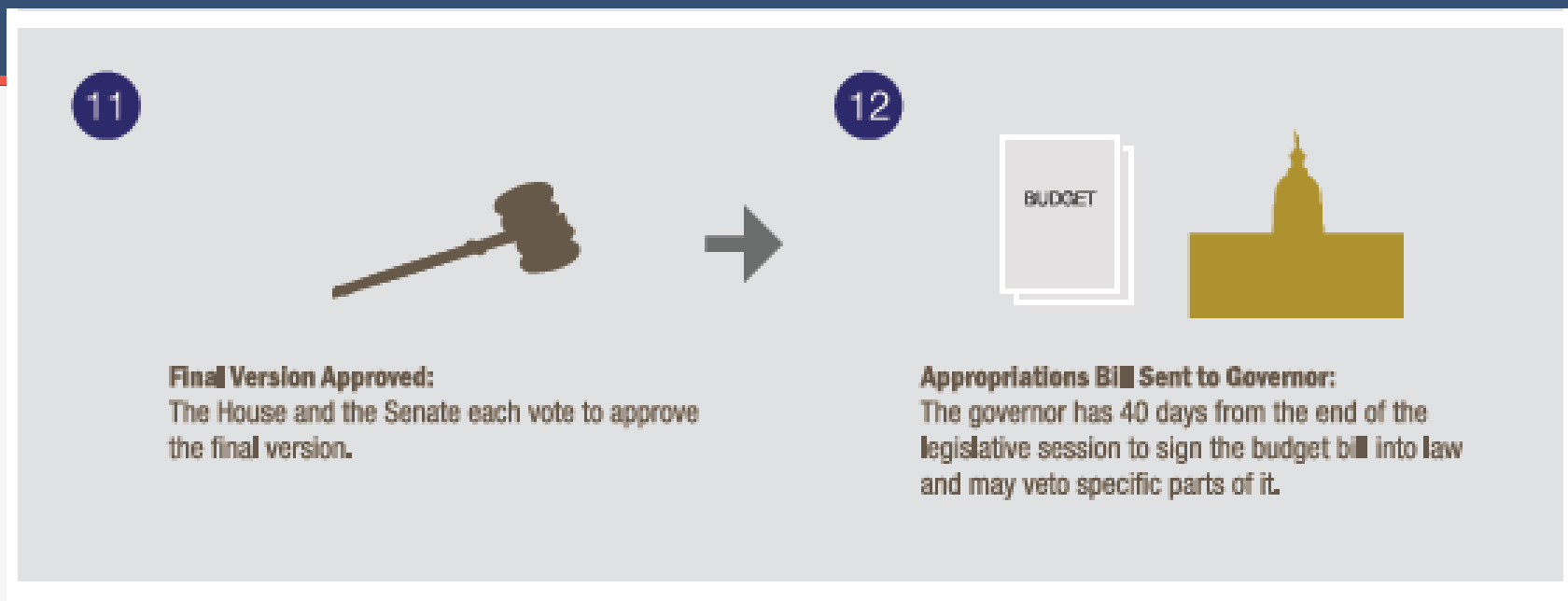
House Approves Its Budget
The House votes on changes to governor's budget proposals, Passes its version to the Senate.



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.



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



Relevant Committees

HOUSE

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

SENATE

- Appropriations
- Children & Families -- NEW
- Education & Youth
- Judiciary
- Health & Human Services
- Special Judiciary
- Rules



Communicating with Legislators

- Phone Calls
 - Likely 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
- 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



CASA DAY
AT THE CAPITOL

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

2023

- Today is Legislative Day 7, first year of session
- Substantive Legislative issues to watch
 - Raise the Age
 - Responses to hoteling
 - Legal representation
 - DFCS - Right to counsel 18-22
 - OCA – Quality legal representation
 - Legitimation
 - Aggravated circumstances



FY 24 Budget

Across-the-board cost-of-living increase of \$2,000 for all full-time, benefit-eligible state employees to address recruitment and retention needs

Department of Human Services

- AFY23: Most recommended changes the DHS budget relate to the impending deadline for the agency to redetermine eligibility for all people who currently receive Medicaid or PeachCare.
- FY24:
 - \$3.375 million added in the Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Children Fund Commission to assist in the rehabilitation of children and youth victims of trafficking
 - \$3.2 million added to hire 300 additional Medicaid eligibility caseworkers to process Medicaid redetermination cases.



Fy 24 Budget

Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities

- \$13 million to expand behavioral health and substance abuse crisis capacity with three additional behavioral health crisis centers.
- \$10 million to annualize 513 slots for the New Options Waiver (NOW) and Comprehensive Supports Waiver Program (COMP) for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- \$4 million for 250 additional slots for the NOW and COMP waiver.
- Nearly \$6.3 million for additional mobile crisis teams



Georgia CASA Legislative Strategy

- Bring attention to needs of children in foster care in your community
- Share your CASA story
- Engage legislators in the CASA movement

- Budget-increase request
- Support Governor's budget priorities
- Support substantive legislation



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 \$18 million, including state appropriations of \$3.885 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



Budget Increase Request

\$2.75 million

**Goal: 3,000 Additional Children Served
1,000 Additional Volunteers
75% of Children in Foster Care**

Add Staff in Critical High-Need Areas - \$2,000,000

- Target jurisdictions that experience the highest rates of foster care entries; service area exceeds 300 children without a CASA volunteer.
- Areas represent 7 affiliates serving 28 counties with nearly 5,000 children (or 30% of total children in foster care)
- Result: 40 paid staff positions to support an additional 1,000 volunteers

Sustain Network Growth & Expanded Service - \$750,000

- Increase affiliate service levels in response to heightened demand and volunteer availability
- Continue provision of coordinated training, statewide recruitment, screening, and quality assurance efforts



Messaging

- Ongoing commitment to continue to build relationships with legislators both in the district and in Atlanta throughout the session:
 - Thank legislators for their continuous support of CASA and share progress
 - Engage legislators in discussions around key issues in child welfare
 - Advocating for youth with complex needs, resource challenges, etc.
 - Serve as a sounding board and resource on welfare issues as the session progresses
 - Provide joint opportunities to recruit and engage constituents in supporting youth in care
 - Ask legislators to become CASA ambassadors in the community by sharing local CASA information with constituents and attending local CASA events
 - Invite legislators to participate in a listening session or to observe CASA in action in court
 - ****Don't forget the Social Media Toolkit****



Messaging, cont'd.

- CASA advocacy is essential to children who have experienced abuse or neglect
 - 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
 - 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

February 2



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, visit:

[CASA Day at the Capitol 2023 - Georgia CASA](https://gacasa.org)
[\(\[gacasa.org\]\(https://gacasa.org\)\)](https://gacasa.org)

2023

CASA DAY
AT THE CAPITOL

WHEN
Thursday, February 2
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.

\$15 Registration Fee

QUESTIONS?
EMAIL
Shauna McCutlough-Hightower at shightower@gacasa.org
CALL
404.874.2888

JOIN THE CASA MOVEMENT
Wear a pop of red!

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

9:30AM
Welcome Remarks & Legislative Briefing


10:30AM
Group Photo & Capitol Visit*

11:45AM-1PM
Drop-in Luncheon

*Bring your ID to enter the Capitol

SAVE THE DATE
Registration opens January 3 and closes January 19

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER:
www.gacasa.org/casa-day-capitol-2023/
Post snapshots on social media using #GACASADayatCap



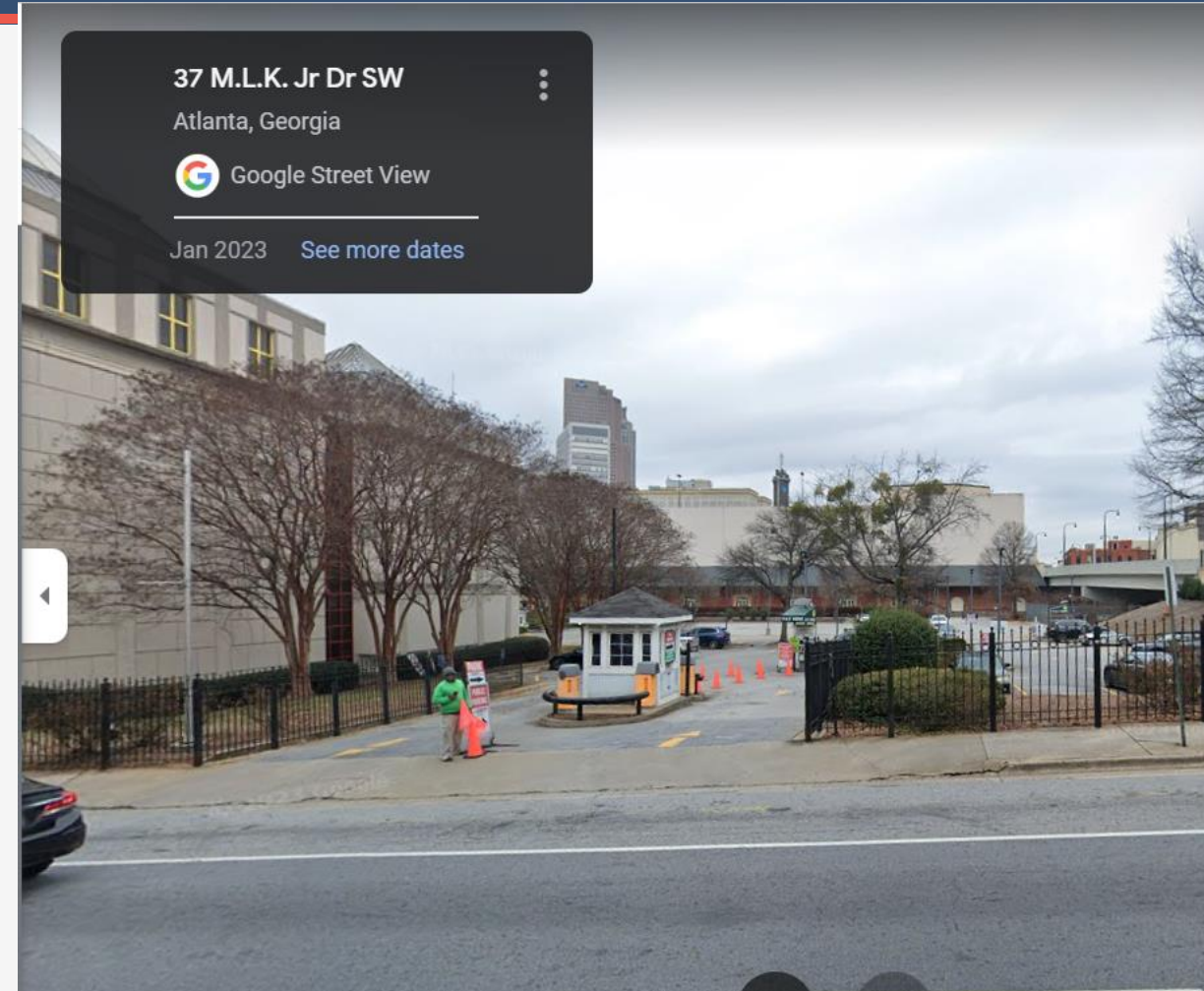




Parking – Option 1

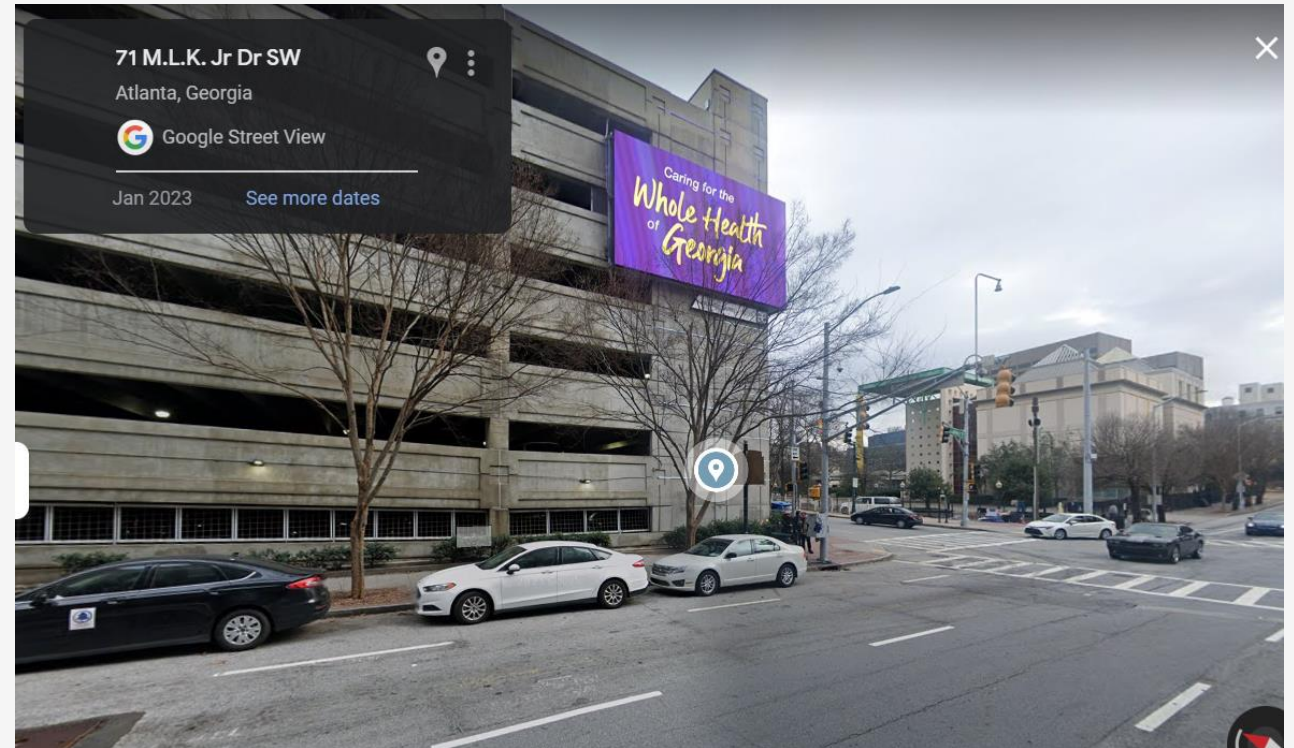
The Georgia Freight Depot is a long brick building on the right between Washington Street / Courtland Street and Central Avenue, next to Underground.

- 33 MLK DR. SW/Steve Polk Plaza Pkng
- Will fill up fast!
- Instead of waiting in line to pay for parking - [Zone 70302 | Find Parking | ParkMobile](#). When you get there, the zone number is 70302. You don't need a printed parking ticket! Or, you can pay by card at one of the machines located on-site.



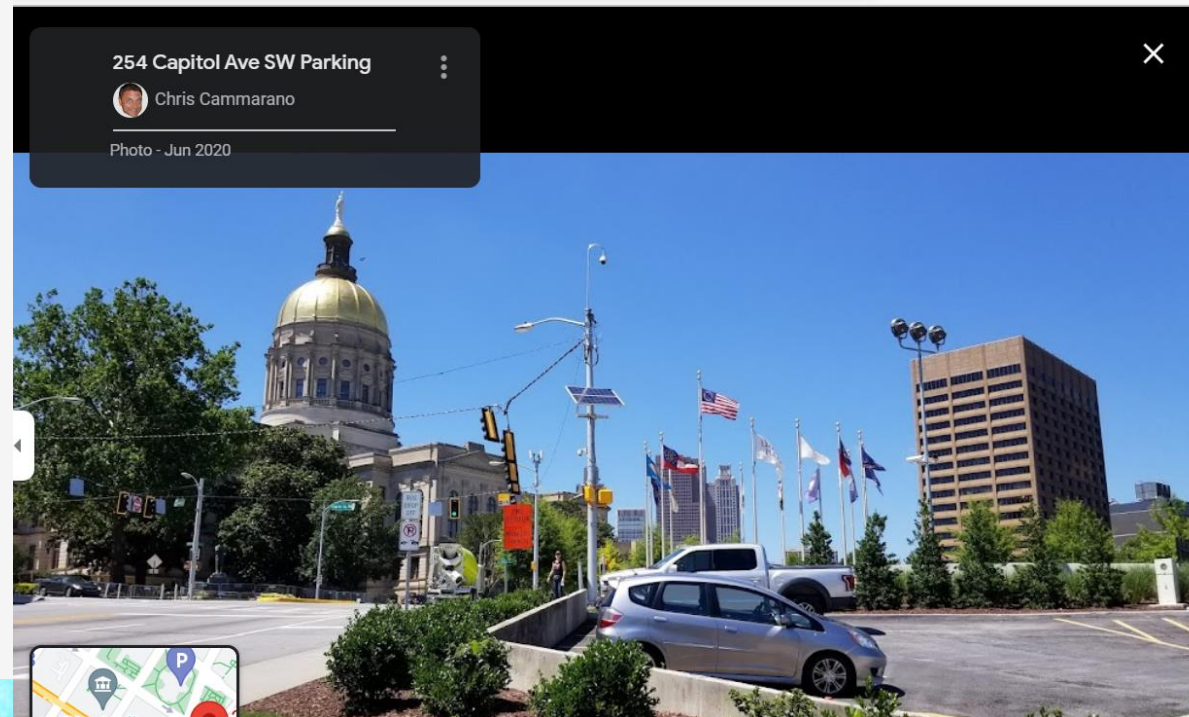
Parking – Options 2 & 3

- 71 MLK DR. SW/Underground Pkng
- First deck on the right after you pass Central Ave
- There is another Underground deck on the right after you pass Pryor St.



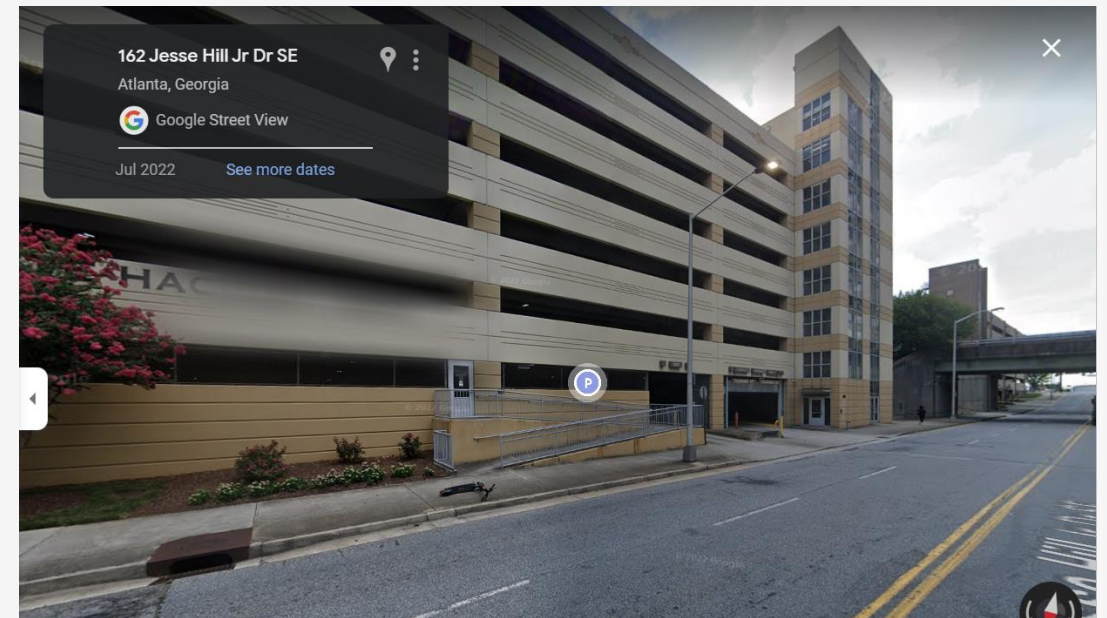
Parking Option 4

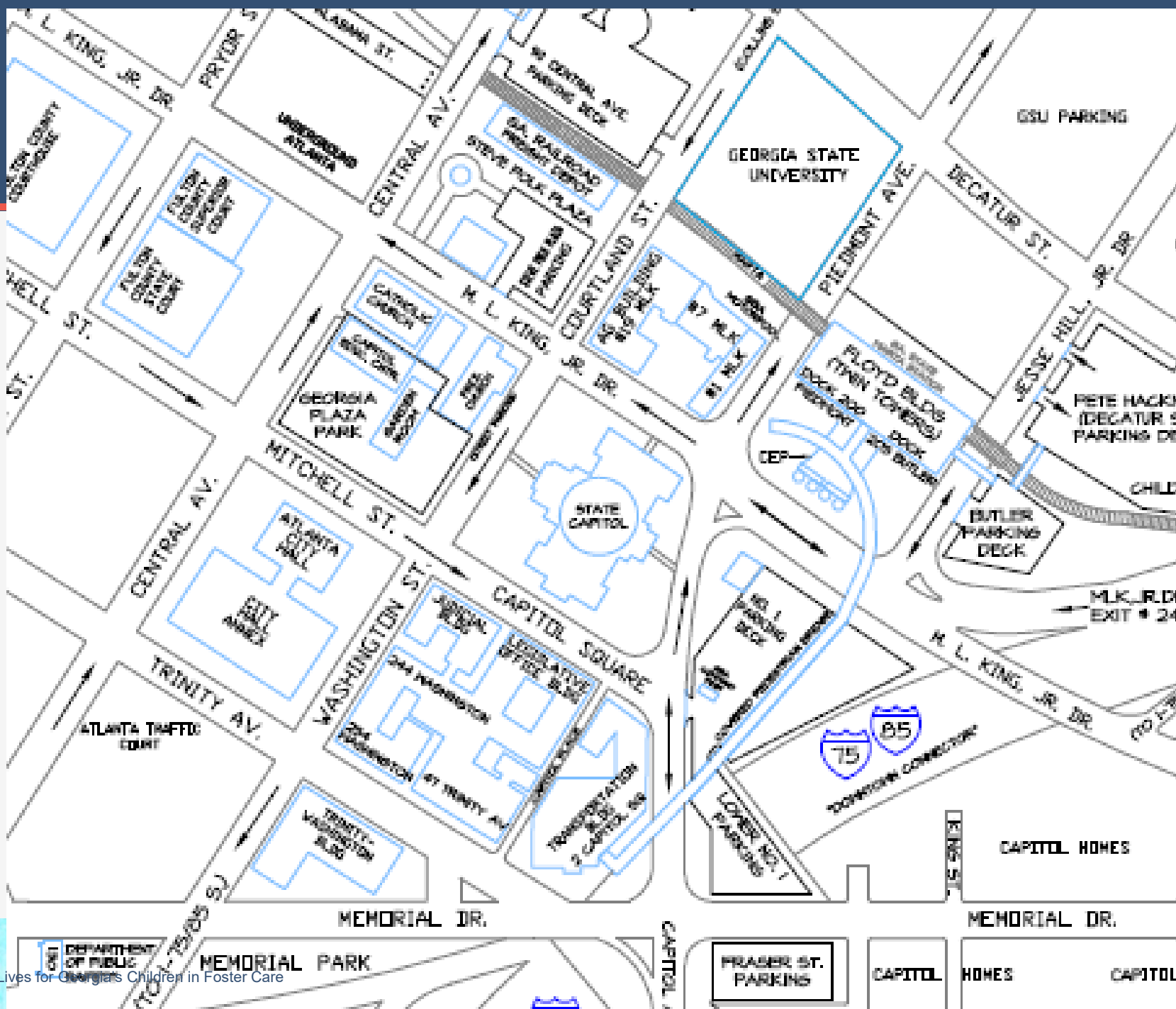
- Memorial Dr. Lot-pay w/ exact cash or credit-know license tag
- 254 Capitol Ave SW Parking
- Located at the corner of Memorial Drive and Capitol Avenue.



Parking Option 5 & MARTA

- Pete Hackney Garage-convenient to Floyd Building, \$10 pay on entry
- 162 Jesse Hill Jr., Dr.
- Located at the corner of Jesse Hill Jr. Drive and Decatur Street.
- MARTA: Georgia State E-1 on the Blue Line. Trains every 15 minutes. Station at Floyd Building.
- **Allow ample time!!!**



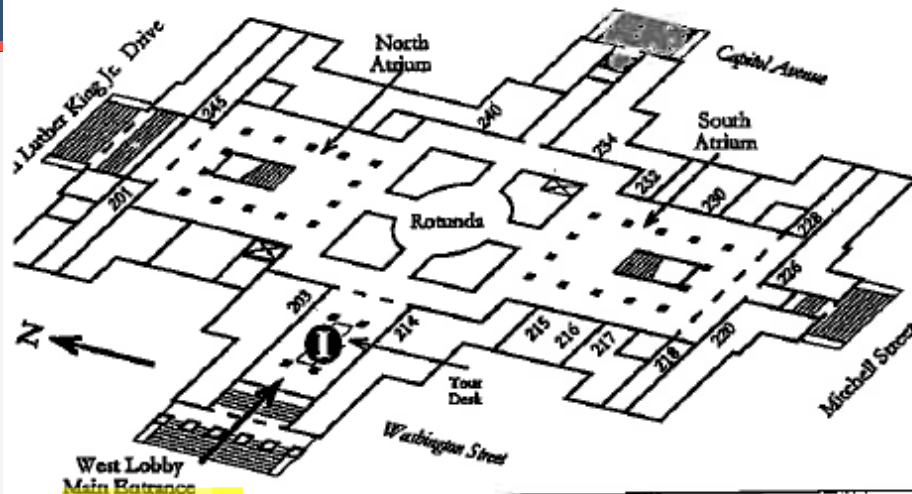


Security

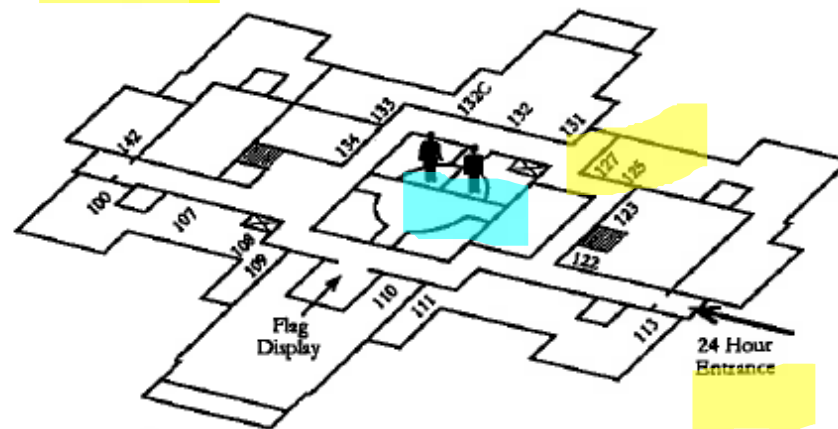
- Bring your driver's license or state-issued photo ID.
- You will be required to show it at the Capitol and Coverdell Legislative Office Building.
- Metal detectors



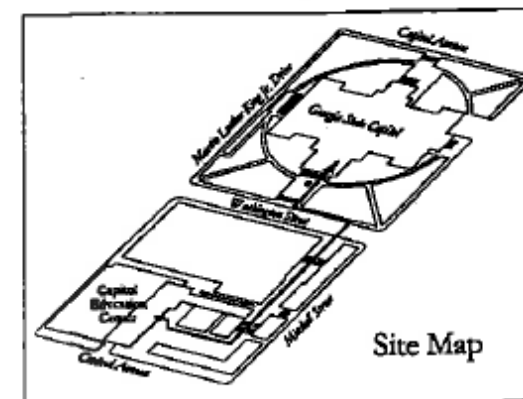
1st and 2nd Floor Maps



Second Floor

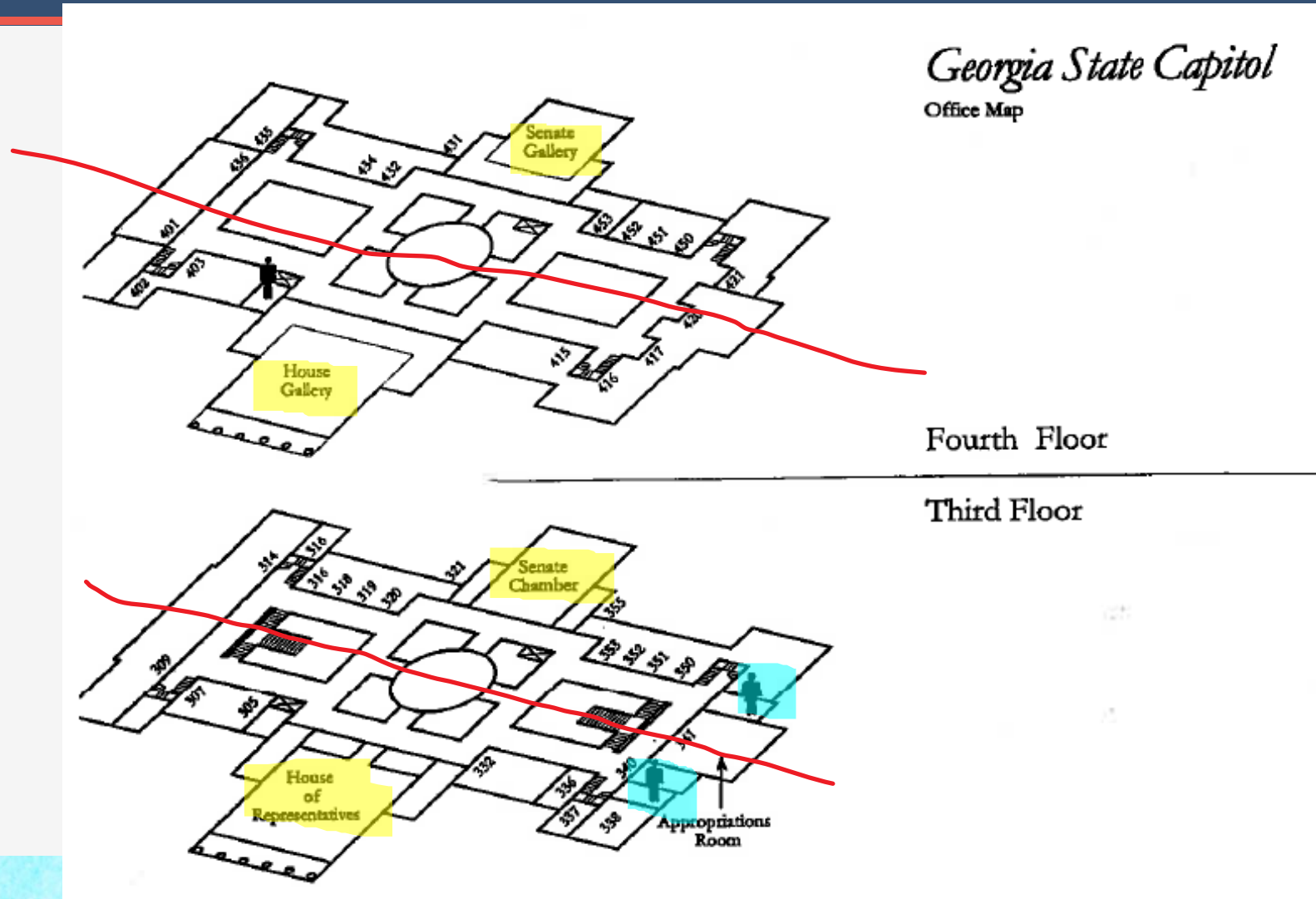


First Floor



Lord Aeck & Sargent Architecture, 1999

3rd and 4th Floor Maps



Schedule

- 8:45 – Coffee and pastries
- 9:30 – Program Begins
 - Welcome & Special Remarks
 - Legislative Briefing
 - Under the Gold Dome
 - Call to Action
- Capitol Visit *
- 11:45 – Luncheon **
- 1:00 – Adjourn



*Capitol Visit

- Observe from Gallery (4th floor):
 - Have been known to be strict with the use of phones, cameras, etc.
 - No drinks.
- *Page your legislator (3rd 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 3rd floor.
 - Luncheon reminder
 - Come out to speak
- Proceed to page desk.
- Remember what your Page looks like.



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.



Before You Go:

- Who is my legislator?
 - ~~Find your district number and use the charts.~~
 - Or, enter your street address online at <http://votesmart.org/>
- Make appointments.
- Invite your legislators to lunch.
 - If you haven't already done so, do! (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 2nd!

- Don't forget:
 - Wear a **pop of red!**
 - Use #GACASADayatCap and Social Media Toolkit
 - Learn your legislators
 - Schedule appointments
 - Leave early and remember coats, umbrellas, and IDs
 - Have fun!



Questions?

atyner@gacasa.org



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CASA DAY
AT THE CAPITOL