



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

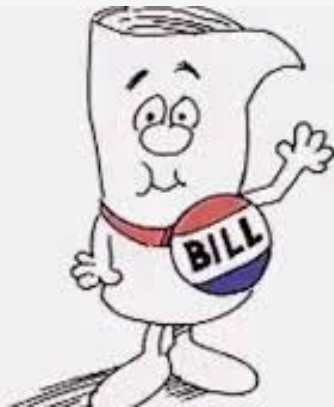


General Assembly

- 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

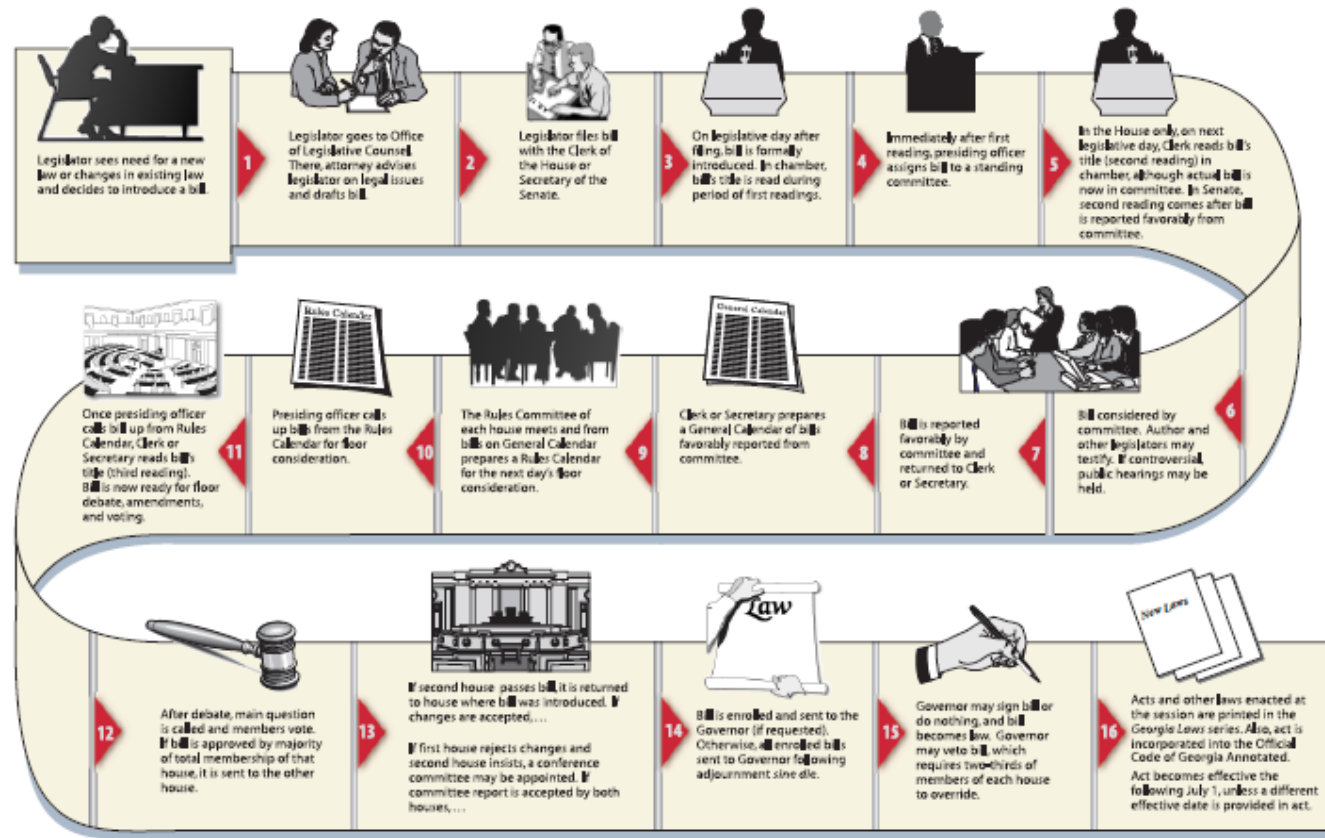


How a Bill Becomes a Law



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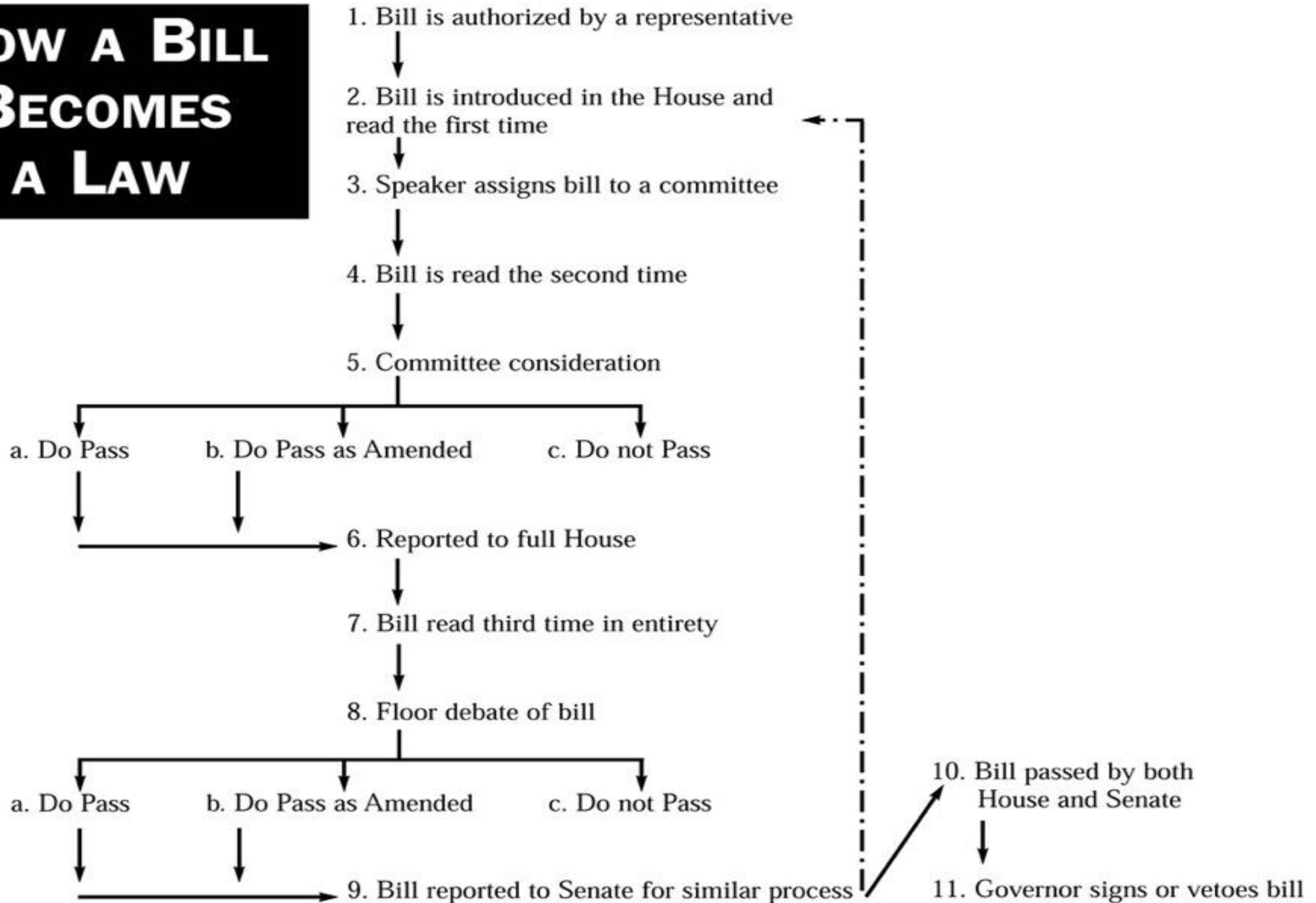
How a Bill is Passed in the Georgia Legislature



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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](#)



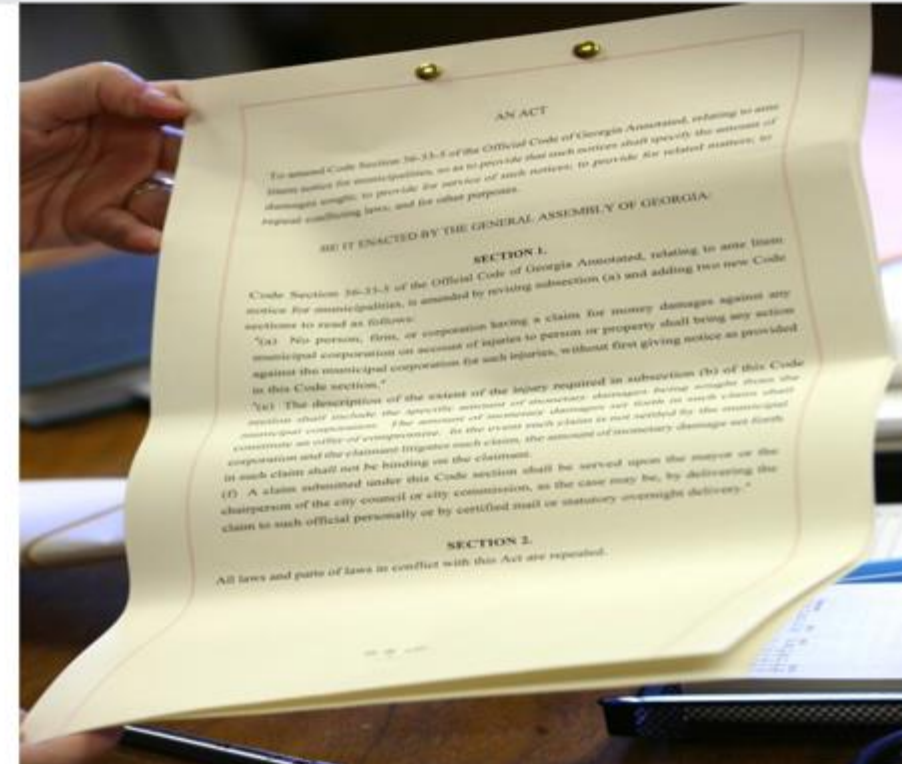
Floor Consideration



Bill Signature or Veto

Governor may...

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



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.



7

HOUSE



SENATE

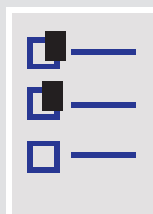


APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEES



8

HOUSE

**Legislative Appropriations Process:**

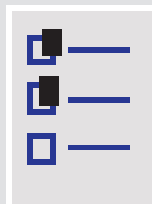
The Appropriations committees in the Georgia House of Representatives and Senate hold budget hearings for the current and upcoming fiscal year.

House Approves Its Budget

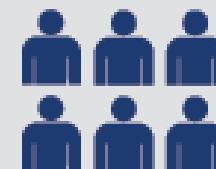
The House votes on changes to governor's budget proposals, Passes its version to the Senate.

9

SENATE



10



CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

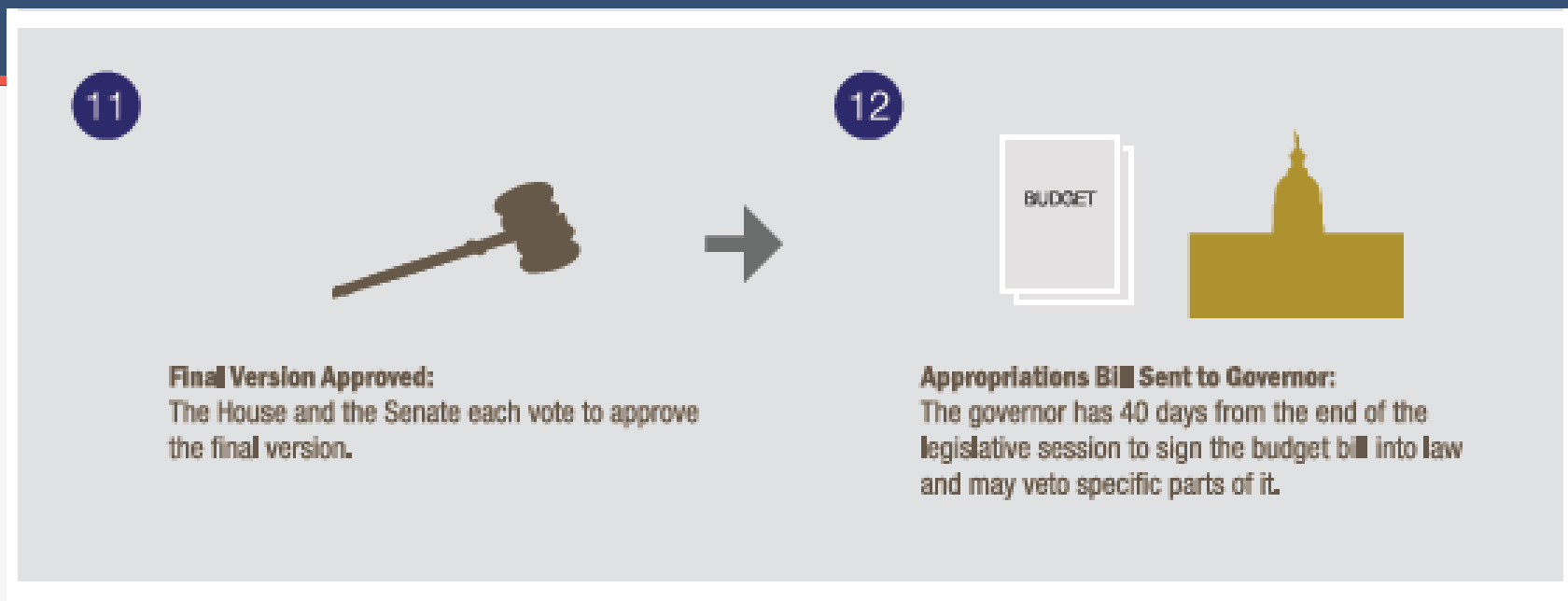
Senate Approves Its Budget:

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
- 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
- Face-to-face & Text



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](http://www.gopb.org) | [Governor's Office of Planning and Budget \(georgia.gov\)](http://www.gopb.org)
 - 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

2024

- Today is Legislative Day 15, second year of session
- Substantive legislative issues to watch
 - SB 376 - Time to permanency
 - SB 377 – Qualified Residential Treatment Program licensure
 - SB 387 – ID cards for youth in care
 - SB 401 – requires juvenile courts to collect and report additional data and eliminates service on parents at adjudication
 - SR 474 - Quality Legal Representation (OCA) calls for cooperation between OCA, DHS, and county commissioners to maximize IVE funding opportunities
 - Legitimation – making biological fathers parties to the case



AFY 24 & SFY 25 Budget

Governor's Budget -

- AFY24 items include salary enhancements, capital/maintenance projects, one-time funding, and one-year projects
 - DHS – upgrade SHINES, establish application and inspection process for QRTPs, increased funding for Gwinnett Commercial Sexual Exploitation Recovery Center
 - OCA – data collection for QLR project
- FY 25 items include cost of living adjustment
 - DHS enhancements include continuation of the AFY initiatives



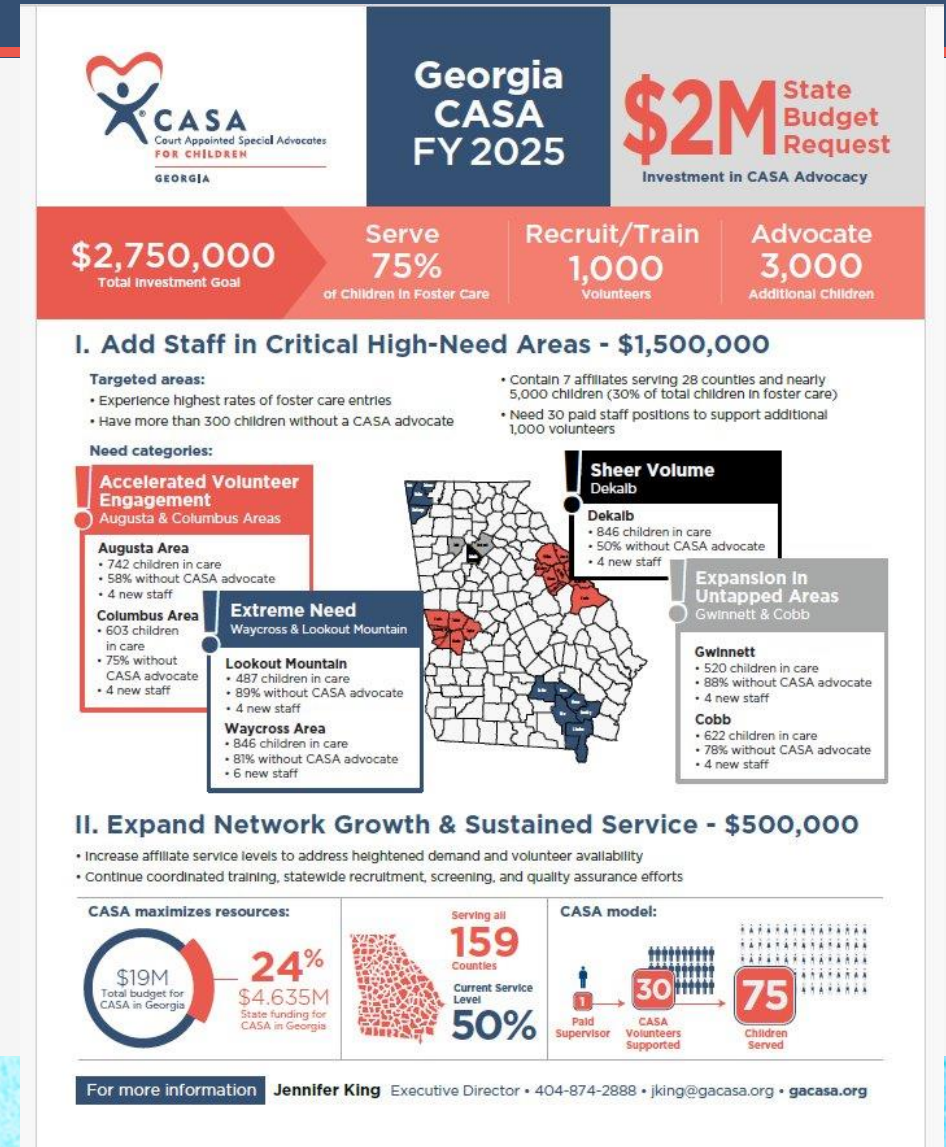
Georgia CASA Legislative Strategy

- Tell your CASA story
- Engage legislators in the CASA movement
- Share budget-increase request
- Bring attention to needs of children in foster care in your community and tie into current legislative activity



Budget Messaging

- State funding supports recruitment, screening and training of CASA by providing 1 staff to supervise 30 volunteers
- CASA network's current operating budget is approximately \$19 million, including state appropriations of \$4.635 million
- CASA is an exemplary public-private partnership that demonstrates a 75 to 1 return on investment
 - State funding represents approximately 24% of the annual budget in GA
- Past increases have provided significant investment in network expansion



Budget Increase Request - \$ 2M

\$2.75 Million Total Investment

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

Add Staff in Critical High-Need Areas - \$1,500,000

- 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 30% of total children in foster care
- Result: 30 additional paid staff positions to support an additional 1,000 volunteers

Sustain Network Growth & Expanded Service - \$500,000

- 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



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 50% 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 ****Look for Action Alerts****
- Outreach to full House Appropriations Committee members and members at large
- Mirrored 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 15



CASA DAY
AT THE CAPITOL

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

2022 & 2023 Days at the Capitol



Website



2024
CASA DAY
AT THE CAPITOL

WHEN
Thursday, February 15
10:00AM

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

Join CASA advocates from around the state for this interactive opportunity to meet legislators, bring awareness to the needs of children in foster care, and spread CASA cheer.

CASA Directors: Call your representatives and senators to arrange a visit for February 15.

\$15 Registration Fee

QUESTIONS?
EMAIL
Shauna McCullough-Hightower at
shightower@gacasa.org
CALL
404.200.2344

JOIN THE CASA MOVEMENT
Wear a pop of red!

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS
10:00AM
Capitol Photo
10:30AM
Legislative Briefing
11:30AM
Boxed Lunch
12:00PM
Office Visits & Appointments
**Bring your ID to enter the Capitol*

REGISTRATION
Opens January 15 and closes
February 1

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER:
www.gacasa.org/casa-day-capitol-2024
Post snapshots on social media
using #GACASADayatCap

CASA
Court-Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN
GEORGIA

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 2024 - Georgia CASA](http://www.gacasa.org/casa-day-capitol-2024)
 [\(gacasa.org\)](http://gacasa.org)

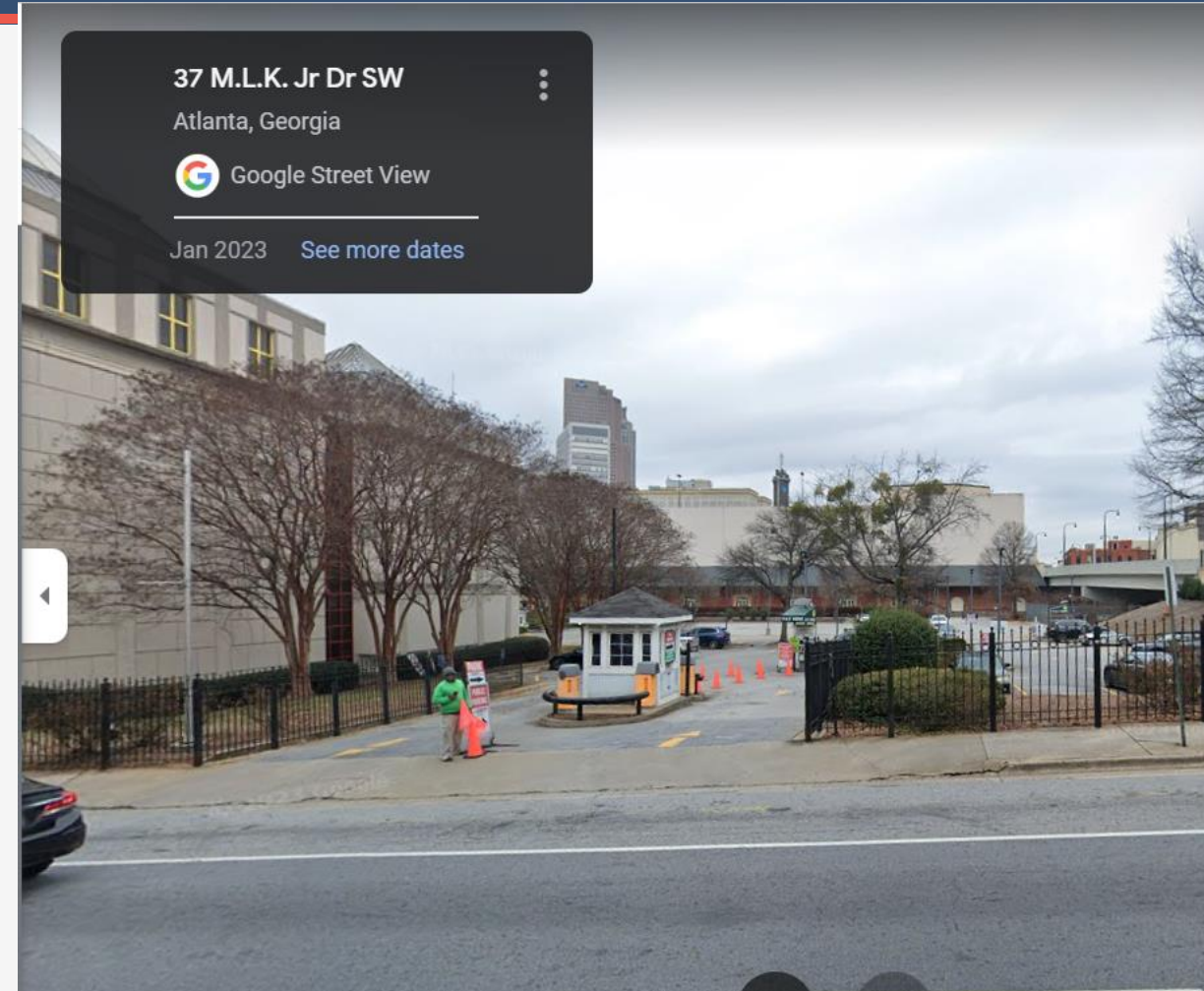




Parking – Option 1

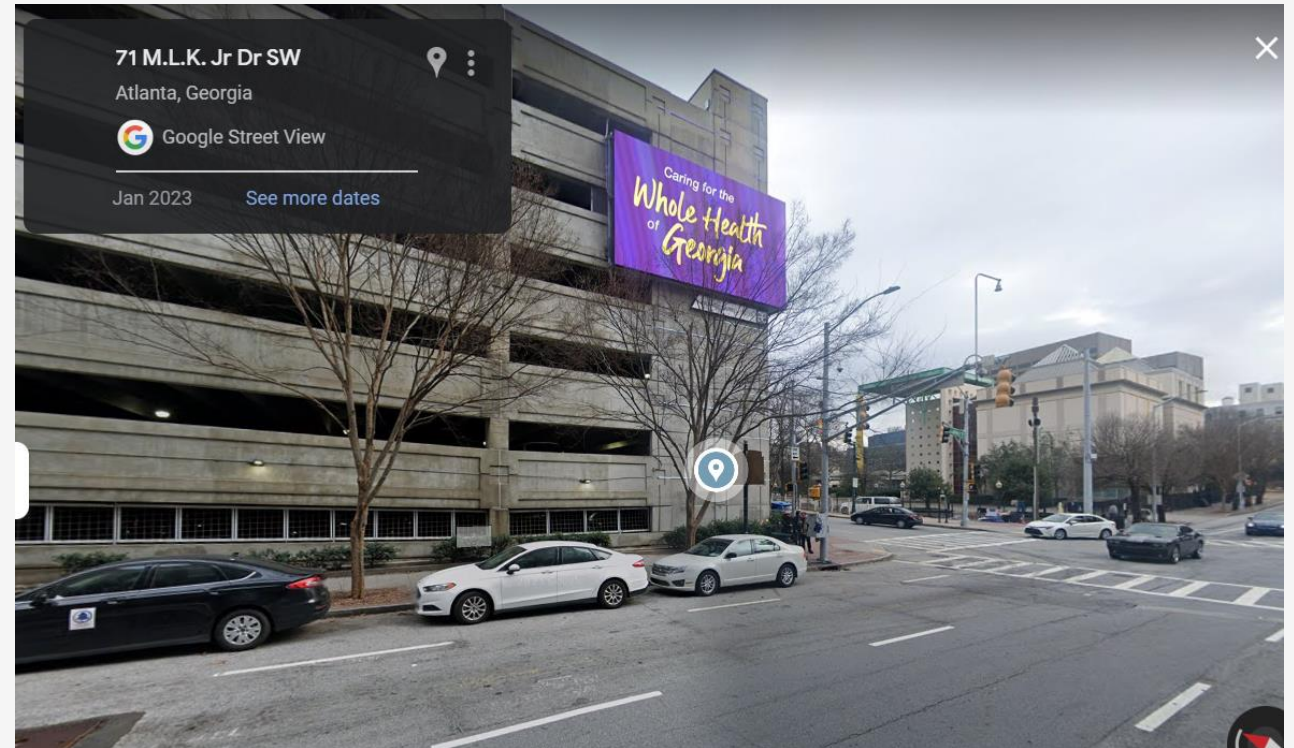
The Georgia Freight Depot is a long brick building on the right between Washington Street / Courtland Street and Central Avenue, next to Underground.

- 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.



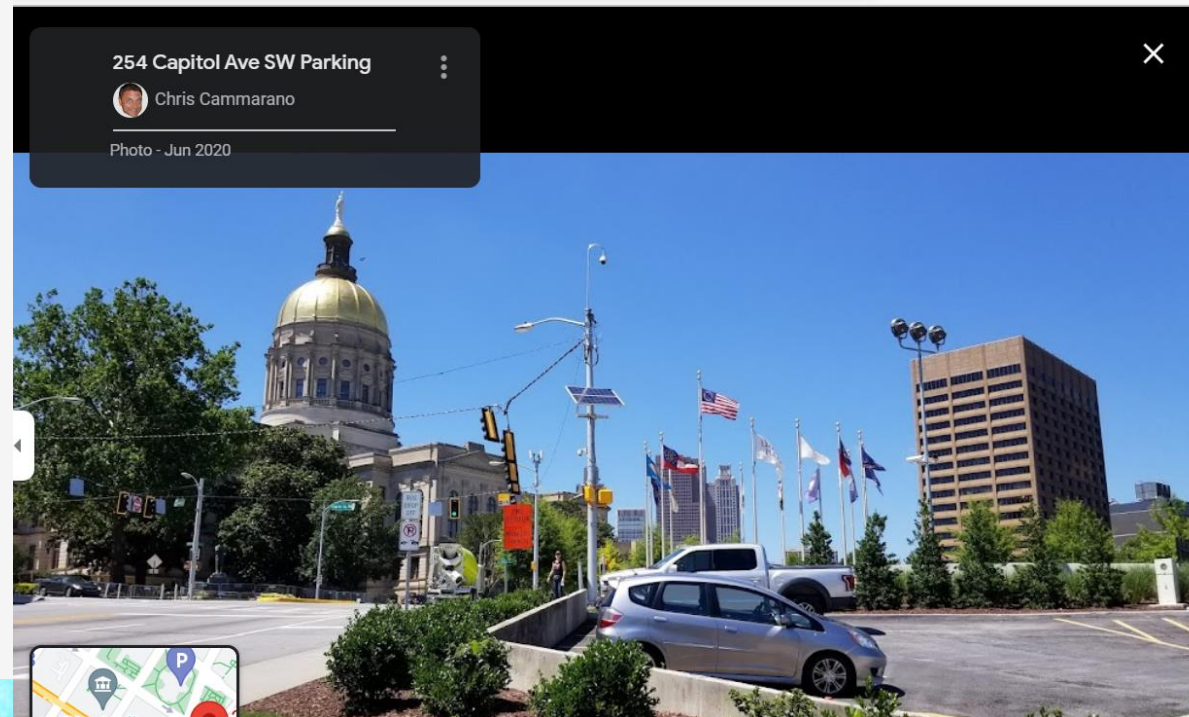
Parking – Options 2 & 3

- 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.



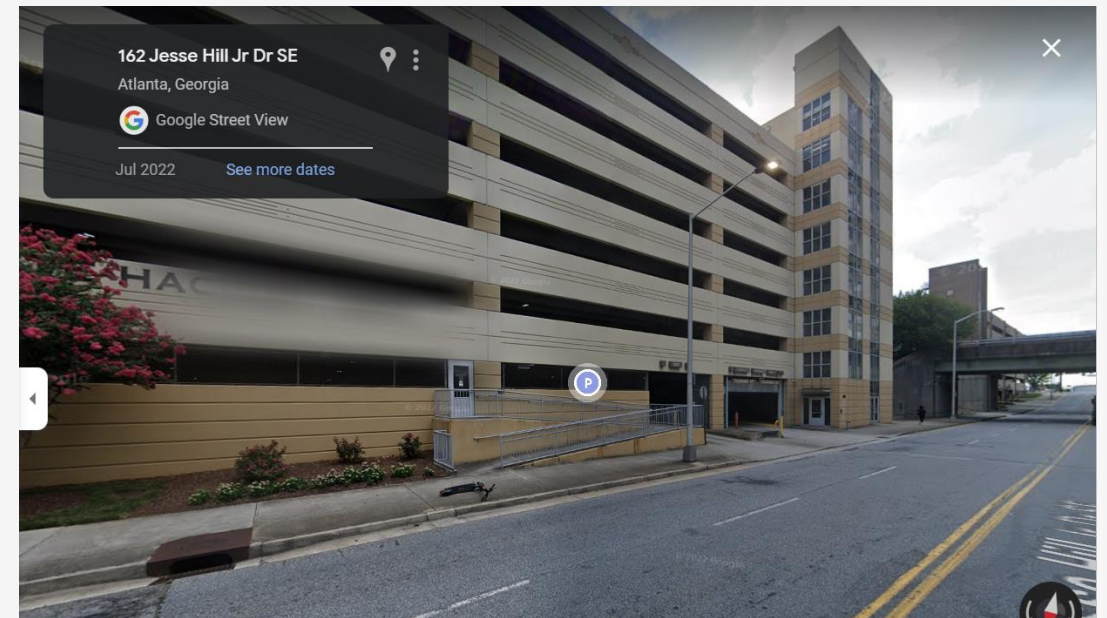
Parking Option 4

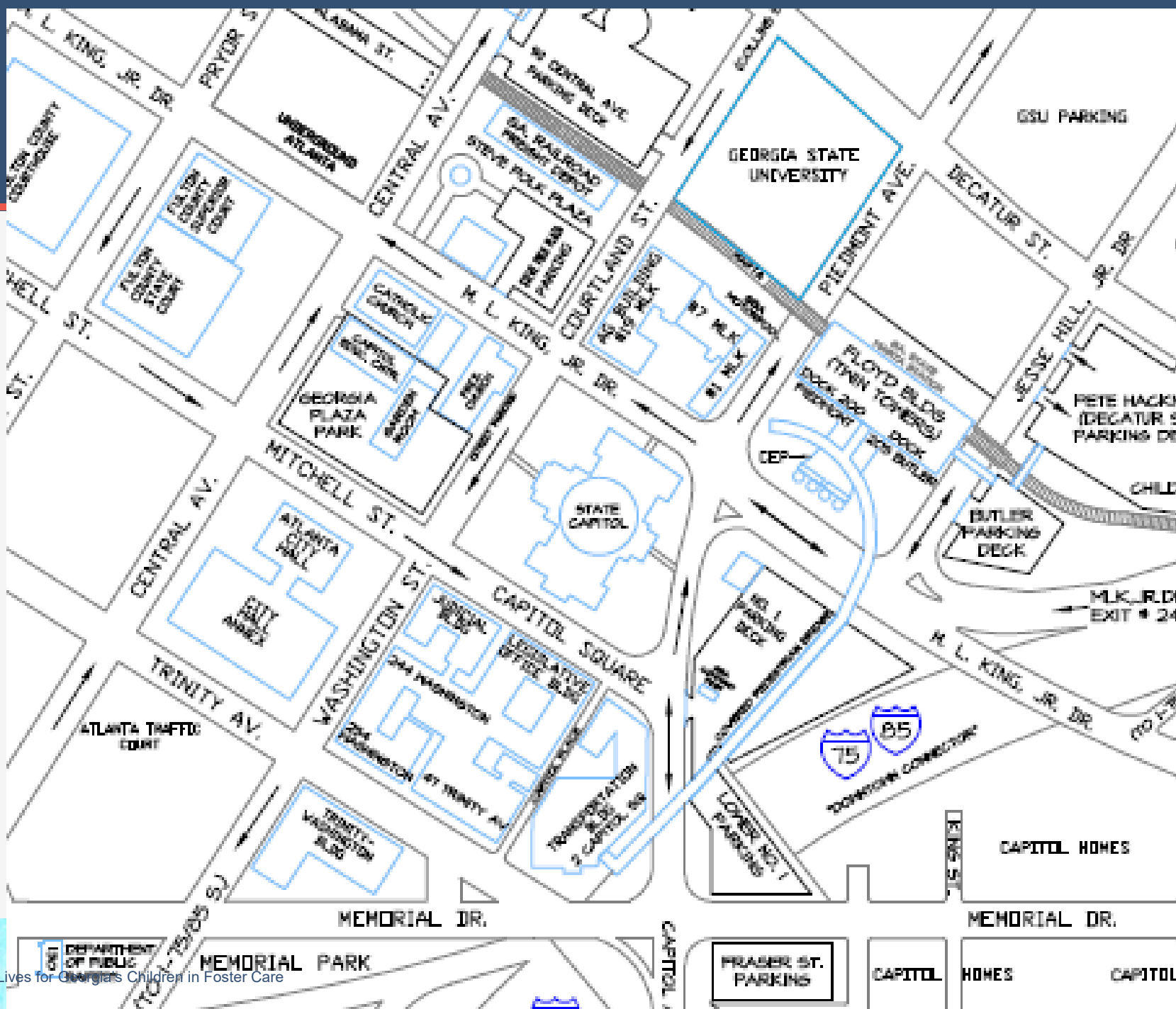
- Memorial Dr. Lot-pay w/ exact cash or credit-know license tag
- 254 Capitol Ave SW Parking
- Located at the corner of Memorial Drive and Capitol Avenue.



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!!!**







STATE GOVERNMENT COMPLEX

CAPITOL HILL Parking Map

GEORGIA BUILDING AUTHORITY

- PT** 2 Peachtree
- CT** 90 Central
- AB** Agriculture Building
- BD** Butler Deck
- HE** Health Deck
- LB** Law Building (old Judicial Building)
- JS** Nathan Deal Judicial Center
- PP** Plaza Park
- PH** Pete Hackney
- SD** South Deck
- SP** Steve Polk
- TW** Trinity Washington

Underground Parking

Multi-Level Deck Parking

Surface Parking Lot

Public Parking

Accessible Loading and Unloading Zone

Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

Bicycle Racks

- 1 MLK (Piedmont Ave)
- 2 Peachtree Building (Inside-Main Level)
- Butler Deck (Inside-Level 1)
- Coverdell Legislative Office Bldg/CLOB (Capitol Sq)
- Floyd Building/Twin Towers (Piedmont Ave)
- Law Building (Capitol Sq)
- South Deck (Inside-Level 2)
- TW Building (Trinity Ave)

Rev 12/2020

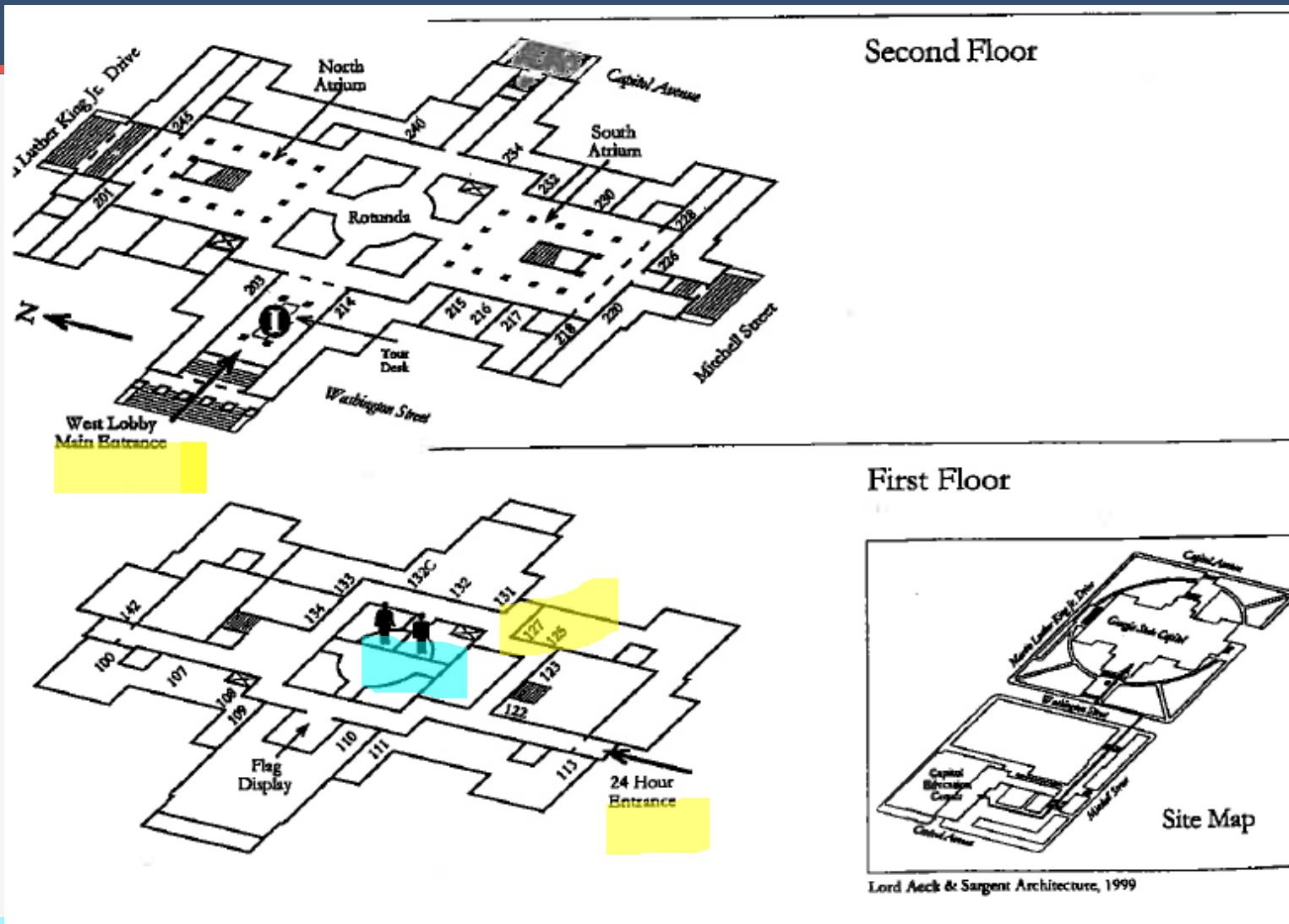


Security

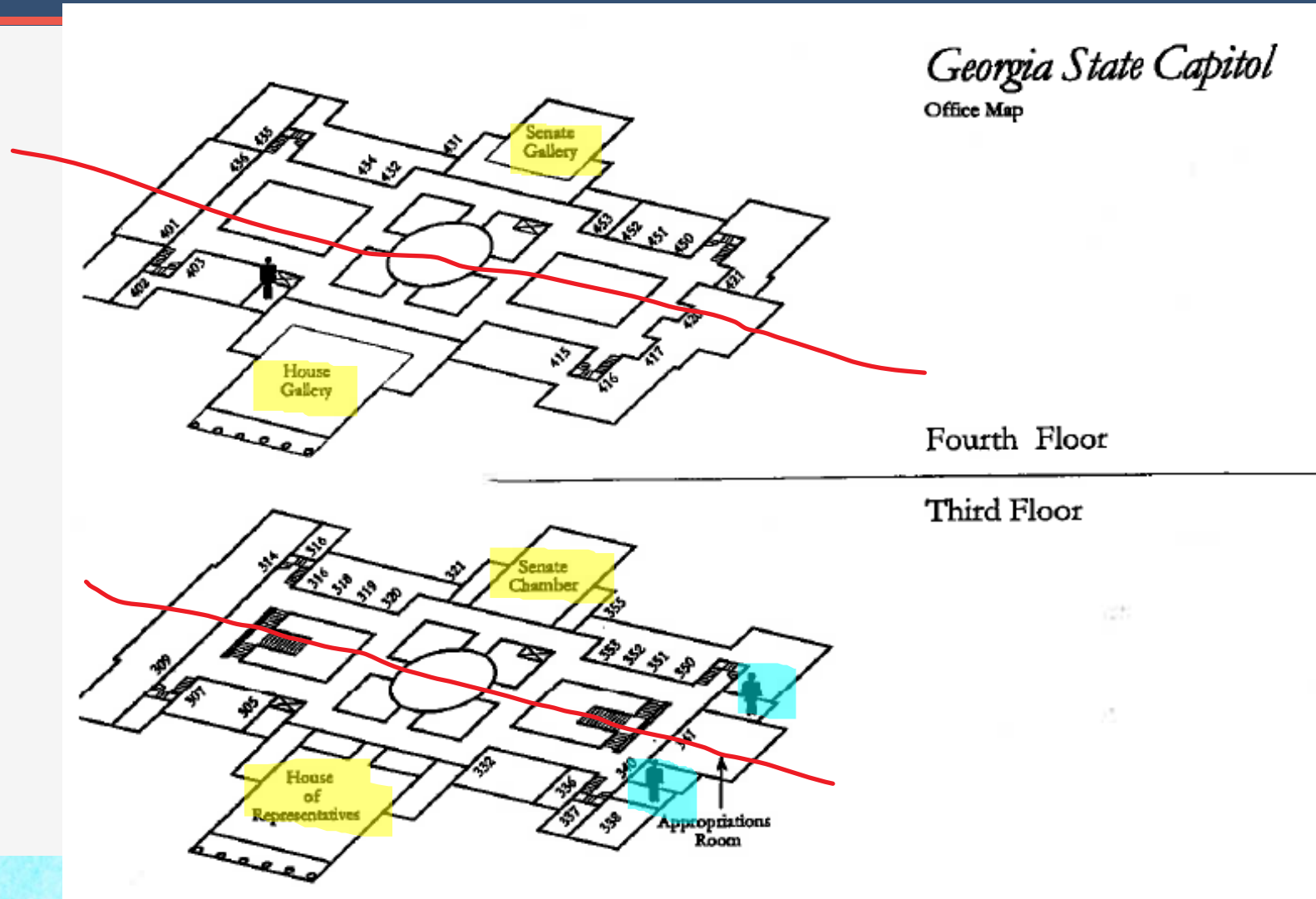
- Bring your driver's license or state-issued photo ID.
- You will be required to show it at the Capitol and Coverdell Legislative Office Building.
- Metal detectors



1st and 2nd Floor Maps



3rd and 4th Floor Maps



Schedule

- 9:45 - Plan to arrive at the North Wing Steps
- 10:00 – Group photo with Governor Kemp
- 10:30 – Program Begins
 - Legislative Briefing
 - Under the Gold Dome
 - Call to Action
- 11:30 – Boxed lunch
- 12:00 - Office Visits & Appointments
- Come back and say goodbye before 2!



Office Visit

- Visit legislative office suites in the Capitol or Coverdell Legislative Office Building
 - Deliver s'mores and spread CASA cheer!
- *Page your legislator (3rd floor)
- Tour the capitol.
- Afternoon: Attend a committee hearing



Paging — *if they're still in session*

- Know your legislators in advance.
- Complete the paging slips before you get to the ropes on the 3rd floor.
 - Send a note
 - Come out to speak
- Proceed to page desk.
- Remember what your Page looks like.



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 and plan to reach out to your legislators
- Prepare for your meetings
 - Review info about all legislators in your program's service area
 - Photo, biographical info, committees, relevant sponsored legislation



See you on the 15th!

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