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## February 23, 2016

### Georgia Legislative Update Legislative Days 21-25 (of 40)

- **Presidential Politics**
- **GE Labeling Bill- Action Needed!**
- **GA Politics**

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#### Presidential Politics

After tonight's Nevada elections, the attention will turn to GA and the other states participating in the March 1 primary. Get ready for the calls and commercials to take over! The latest GA polls released by Landmark Communications/Rosetta Stone shows **Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton strongly in first, but the second place Republican numbers get interesting.**

Marco Rubio is polling four points ahead of Ted Cruz for the runner-up position, 22.7 percent to 18.7. The poll was conducted on Sunday, even before a [Ted Cruz spokesman was forced to resign over a false retweet concerning Rubio.](#) With the polls showing 11 percent still undecided in the Republican race and the primary only weeks away, any misstep can cause a candidate major problems.

[See results for the Republican poll:](#)

[See results for the Democratic poll:](#)

## Federal Update

### [Federal Labeling Standard Bill in the Agriculture Committee on Thursday, February 25!](#)

The chain retailers have weighed in. Independent retailers- We need your voice!

Senator David Perdue and the Senate Agriculture Committee will consider a proposal this Thursday, authored by the Committee Chairman, Senator Pat Roberts (R-KS) on [federal labeling standards](#). The proposal would include reforms to biotechnology labeling that would create one federal labeling standard for all foods made with genetically engineered (GE) ingredients and genetically modified organisms (GMOs), require the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to create a voluntary national food labeling standard for GE foods, and require USDA to develop an education program to provide consumers with information on foods made with GE ingredients.

It is critically important that this bill be passed out of the Agriculture Committee so it can be considered by the Senate soon, before Vermont's GMO labeling bill kicks in on July 1, 2016. The Vermont bill would create massive supply chain disruptions, and will cause an incredible amount of confusion for those consumers who shop in stores in Vermont and other neighboring states that do not have the same Vermont standards. The need for one federal labeling standard is of the upmost important to the food retail industry, and we need your help to show Senator Perdue our support of this bill.

[Click Here](#) to take action.

Georgia General Assembly

**Legislative Days 21-25 (of 40)**

**Today is the 26th Legislative Day out of our 40- day session. Legislators and lobbyists are working hard as we approach an important deadline to keep legislation alive for the session.** Monday, February 29th is Crossover Day (the last legislative day that all bills must pass from one chamber to the other in order to continue to be viable) and Thursday, March 24th is the last day of Session.

- Food Bank Bill passed House yesterday, 2/22/16.
- Senate merged and then passed the First Amendment Defense Act with the Pastor Protection Act, [HB 757](#). Governor weighs in saying the issue is not over
- House passed the 2017 budget
- Supplemental Budget signed by the Governor

### **Tobacco**

Representative Paulette Rakestraw (R-Dallas) introduced [HR 1427](#) creating a study committee on electronic cigarettes, e-liquids, and other vapor products.

### **Alcohol**

Representative Caldwell introduced [HR 1345](#) creating a study committee on Craft and Distillery Competitiveness.

### **Food**

[HB 763](#), dealing with the tax exemptions on food donated to food banks, passed committee last week and passed the full House on Monday.

### **Gaming/Gambling/COAM**

Senator Lucas introduced [SB 388](#) making it a misdemeanor to remove or deface a COAM permit.

### **Pharmacy**

#### *New Bills*

- [HR 1376](#) Creates a study committee on Pharmacy Benefit Managers
- [HB 1043](#) provides for an exemption for a hospital or health system from certain vaccine administration requirements.

## *Committee/ Floor Action*

- [HB 588](#), the Georgia Meth Check bill, passed the House
- [HB 34](#), The Right to Try act, passed the House
- [HB 813](#), expedited partner therapy, passed the House
- [HB 886](#), related to Mail Order Pharmacy, passed the House

## ***General Business***

### *New Bills*

[SB 391](#), introduced by Senator Hunter Hill (R-Atlanta), amends language related to the definition of discrimination as it relates to equal opportunity in the workplace. The bill adds language increasing the types of acts that could be considered discriminatory by suggesting an employer could not make decisions related to hiring, firing, promoting, advancing etc. any employee for "any reason other than that of individual merit, performance, qualifications, or noncompliance with the standards of presentation."

[SB 411](#), introduced by Senator Horecena Tate (D-Atlanta) is known as the Georgia Family Medical Leave Act provides a 1.5% tax paid jointly by an employee and employer to provide income during medical leave.

[HB 996: Regulated Metal Sales](#), introduced by Representative LaRiccia, would allow metal recyclers to pay cash for transactions less than \$20. Metal theft related crimes have declined under the strict "no cash" policies adopted by lawmakers in recent years. *Bill was tabled in House Regulated Industries committee on 2/18*

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