



2022 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

PRESENTED BY THE
GEORGIA MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION

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On Monday, April 4, the General Assembly adjourned sine die. Many of GMA's policy priorities for Georgia's cities were accomplished when the gavel finally fell.

This biennial session saw the introduction of **over 4,000 bills and resolutions**. GMA's advocacy team tracked hundreds of bills that could impact municipal operations and revenues. This Gold Dome Update will provide you with an update on the final actions of the 2022 Legislative Session.

In the waning days of the 2022 session two major pieces of legislation impacting cities crossed the finish line. **The LESS "Law Enforcement Strategic Support" Crime Act** (Senate Bill 316) and the **Mental Health Parity Act** (House Bill 1013) were both adopted by the legislature.

LESS CRIME ACT

The **[LESS Crime Act \(SB 361\)](#)** allows for a dollar-for-dollar income tax credit for individuals and corporations that make donations to a qualified law enforcement foundation. A law enforcement foundation is a domestic nonprofit corporation with the sole function of supporting one local law enforcement unit.

Fiscal estimates place the impact to local governments at **upwards of \$70 million annually**. These dollars will be marked as discretionary funds for police departments and may be spent on officer compensations, trainings, equipment, or cost incurred for operation of emergency response teams (ERTs) with LEO and behavioral health specialists support.

MENTAL HEALTH PARITY ACT

The **[Mental Health Parity Act \(HB 1013\)](#)** is a comprehensive bill to reform Georgia's mental health care delivery system and improve client outcomes by requiring providers to cover the mental ailments in the nature that they do for physical conditions.

The legislation authorizes a community service board or private provider to be awarded funds to implement assisted outpatient treatment grant program initiatives to assist local communities in keeping people with serious mental illness out of county and municipal jails and detention facilities.

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PASSED

The *Georgia Municipal Association's* governmental relations team identified and supported the following proactive measures to help city governments this session. We are happy to announce the following bills and resolutions **passed**.

Public Safety and Mental Health Support

- Increased funding for local law enforcement - SB 361 (LESS Crime Act)
- Assistance to local communities in the treatment and rehabilitation of individuals with mental illnesses - HB 1013 (Mental Health Parity Act)

Annexation and Land Use

- Clarification to zoning appeals (HB 1405) and the annexation dispute resolution process (HB 1461)

Revenue and Finance

- Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit (HB 469)
- Revisions to single county T-SPLOST (HB 934)
- Local Government Tax Relief After Natural Disasters (HR 594)

Government Oversight and Accountability

- Whistleblower Protections for Sexual Harassment Complaints (HB 1390)

Budget Allocations

- \$379,500 in new funds to support the Georgia Department of Public Safety's Office of Public Safety Officer Support.
 - Enhanced access to treatments for first responders.

DID NOT PASS

GMA's team identified a number of onerous legislative proposals. We are happy to announce the following bills **failed** to find passage.

- Preemption on Regulating Corporate "Build to Rent" Subdivisions (HB 1013, SB 494)
- Restrictions on regulatory fees (HB 302)
- PTSD coverage for law enforcement officers through a workers comp model (HB 855, SB 494)
- Limiting cities' ability to address homelessness camps (HB 713, SB 535)
- Increased truck weights (HB 496, SB 118)
- Preemption of local design standards
- Creation of Buckhead City (HB 854, SB 324)
- Unnecessary and costly procedures for deannexation objection (HB 1439)

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STUDY COMMITTEES

Among the many study committees agreed to by the General Assembly, GMA staff anticipates being involved in several, including the following:

- *House Resolution 1149 - House Study Committee on Regulation, Affordability, and Access to Housing*
- *Senate Resolution 659 - Senate Study Committee on Unsheltered Homelessness*
- *Senate Resolution 741 - Senate Study Committee on the Creation of a Georgia Cybersecurity Force*
- *Senate Resolution 809 - Senate Development Authorities and Downtown Development Authorities Study Committee*

FOUR NEW CITIES PENDING

Proposals to turn unincorporated areas of Cobb County into the cities of Vinings, East Cobb, Mableton, and Lost Mountain have each passed through the legislative process, and will now go to the November ballot.

- *HB 826 - City of Lost Mountain, Rep. Ginny Erhart (R-Marietta)*
- *HB 839 - City of Mableton, Rep. Erica Thomas (D-Austell)*
- *HB 840 - City of Vinings, Rep. John Carson (R-Marietta)*
- *HB 841 - City of East Cobb, Rep. Matt Dollar (R-Marietta)*

STAYING CONNECTED

Upon delivery of this report, primaries for the 2022 general election will be just 49 days away. With a number of members of the General Assembly seeking higher office, retiring, or facing a primary challenge, GMA expects the legislature to see a fair deal of turnover come next January. With this in mind, now more than ever city officials need to be establishing a **Hometown Connection** with their representatives under the Gold Dome.

We need our legislators to see what cities are doing to better understand their achievements and challenges and be more connected to the welfare of our cities. If we don't make these Hometown Connections, the General Assembly will continue to legislate without knowing the real-life ramifications of their decisions on your city. Learn more about GMA's Hometown Connection program [here](#), or contact GMA's Legislative Outreach Associate, Noah Roenitz. nroenitz@gacities.com.