**WEEK FIVE LEGISLATIVE REPORT**

 Four more legislative days flew by in the fifth week of the legislative session. Several big announcements happened Under the Gold Dome dealing with rural broadband access in Middle Georgia and additional funding in the amended budget for state employees. Many agribusiness related bills have come to light as legislators continue to push through the appropriations process and work on their individual priorities.

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|  **2021 VIRTUAL LEGISLATIVE**  **BREAKFAST**

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|  The Georgia Agribusiness Council switched to a fully virtual format to present our annual legislative breakfast this year. The Legislative Breakfast was released Wednesday and is available for viewing for all GAC members. Please watch to hear from **Agriculture Commissioner Gary W. Black**,**Senate Ag Chairman Larry Walker III**, and **House Ag Chairman Robert Dickey**.  |

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| 2021 GAC Virtual Legislative Breakfast |

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| **KEMP, DUNCAN, RALSTON ANNOUNCE $1,000 BONUS FOR STATE EMPLOYEES IN FY21 BUDGET** Governor **Brian P. Kemp** joined Lt. Governor **Geoff Duncan**, Speaker **David Ralston**, Speaker Pro Tempore **Jan Jones**, Majority Leader **Jon Burns**, House Appropriations Chairman **Terry England**, and Senate Appropriations Chairman **Blake Tillery** to announce that the amended FY21 budget for the State of Georgia will include a $59.6 million expenditure for a one-time bonus of $1,000 to state employees making less than $80,000 per year. ﻿“Georgia is rich with good soil, but we must continue to keep planting” said Governor Kemp. "Despite a deadly, global pandemic, our state employees have gone above and beyond to continue delivering essential services to our most vulnerable, help keep businesses open and deliver financial assistance to those who were tempted to lose hope. Like so many hardworking Georgians, they juggled jobs, school, and navigating the new normal. With a $1,000 supplement for state employees who make less than $80,000 a year, we can do our part as state leaders to say 'thank you' and prioritize the people who make it possible for Georgia to be the top state for business and who have done the hard work to ensure Georgia's best days are still to come."  |

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**CHAIRMAN WALKER HOLDS SECOND AG COMMITTEE MEETING**Chairman **Larry Walker** convened the second Senate Agriculture and Consumer Affairs committee meeting on Monday afternoon. The only action taken was from Chairman Walker as he presented, Senate Bill 86. **SB 86**, also known as the Fair Business Practices Act of 1975, is aimed to protect consumers by clearly identifying when solicitations are sent disguised as official government letters. "Any written solicitation for services related to corporate filing shall include, in at least 16 point Helvetica font at the top of any solicitation, that it is not an official government document. Failure to comply with these requirements will result in civil penalties." The bill passed with unanimous consent and the committee adjourned until Thursday, February 11th.  |

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| **JANUARY NET TAX REVEUNUE UP 7.5%** **Atlanta, GA** - The State of Georgia's net tax collections for January totaled $2.53 billion, for an increase of $175.6 million, or 7.5 percent, compared to January 2020, when net tax collections approached $2.36 billion. Year-to-date net tax collections totaled $15.10 billion, for an increase of $898.1 million, or 6.3 percent, compared to the previous fiscal year, when net tax revenues totaled almost $14.21 billion. The changes within the following tax categories help further explain January's overall net tax revenue increase:**Individual Income Tax:** Individual Income Tax collections increased by a total of $85.7 million, or 6.3 percent, compared to last year when Income Tax collections totaled $1.35 billion. The following notable components within Individual Income Tax combine for the net increase. Individual Income Tax refunds issued (net of voided checks) declined by $29.7 million, or -40.8 percent. Individual Withholding payments for the month increased by $8.9 million, or 0.8 percent. Individual Income Tax Estimated payments were up $25.6 million, or 11 percent, over FY 2020. All other Individual Tax categories, including Tax Return payments, were up a combined $21.5 million. **Sales and Use Tax:** Gross Sales and Use Tax collections for the month totaled $1.35 billion, for an increase of $108.9 million, or 8.8 percent, over January 2020. Net Sales and Use Tax increased by $63.8 million, or 10.2 percent, over FY 2020 when net sales tax totaled $626.7 million. The adjusted Sales Tax distribution to local governments totaled $657.4 million, for an increase of $49.5 million, or 8.1 percent, compared to the previous year. Lastly, Sales Tax refunds decreased by nearly $4.4 million, or -54.1 percent, compared to FY 2020. **Corporate Income Tax:** Corporate Income Tax collections during the month totaled $75.7 million for an increase of $25.6 million, or 51.2 percent, over FY 2020 when Corporate Tax collections totaled $50.1 million. The following notable components within Corporate Income Tax make up the net increase. Corporate Income Tax refunds issued (net of voids) were down $17 million, or -60.1 percent. Corporate Income Tax Estimated payments for the month increased by $16 million, or 45.1 percent. All other Corporate Tax types, including Tax Return payments, were down a combined $7.4 million. **Motor Fuel Taxes:** Motor Fuel Tax collections increased by $2 million, or 1.3 percent, compared to FY 2020. **Motor Vehicle - Tag & Title Fees:** Motor Vehicle Tag & Title Fees in January decreased by $8.7 million, or -21.6 percent, whereas Title Ad Valorem Tax (TAVT) collections increased by $5.4 million, or 10.1 percent, compared to last year's total of $53.5 million.  |

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**GEORGIA EMCs HOST RURAL CAUCUS**Georgia EMCs hosted the Rural Caucus luncheon this week. Georgia Agribusiness Council board member **Jason Bragg**, presented on behalf of EMC and their local EMC members across the state. He informed rural legislators about the ongoing efforts in Georgia for rural broadband, solar energy, and other cutting edge technologies aimed at lowering energy costs to rural Georgians. **APPROPRIATIONS GENERAL GOVERNMENT SUBCOMMITTEE SUMMARY**During this week at the capitol, the Appropriations General Government Subcommittee convened to discuss the 2022 fiscal year budget for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program projects. **DNR Commissioner, Mark Williams**, relayed that the largest amendment to the budget was a $4 million increase in funds to the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program. The program was established in 2018 and became effective in 2019 and will provide specified funding to support parks to protect and acquire lands critical to wildlife, clean water, and outdoor recreation across the state of Georgia. **Chairman of Appropriations General Government Subcommittee**, **Sam Watson**, along with the rest of the subcommittee approved the amended budget.**There were no new bills of interest to the veterinary community brought forward this week.****SENATE BILLS**[**SB 29**](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001x9-IBu7sTS7xmlPKv25pkonOfCiU2O2S4rdIV-LOldu5Nv4d-CY0Rr_tAkszrGNNa5dQpUzffZt2fJiQGnEU5DxFxgcJNGcDIULny0rHfloQYBcvEMScC8nCT7J8cN3YABp0x0gXwfXaapMcddyfWrPY2mGu5DcXnjRhyzi-_a0TmcLidGvJUgAH1RGHwuJiQG4WGdzq7-I3GbzQ0zVUogYBZC5wsjZAC-R1ZOK3v2Ev_hpNGb019KZTcIetjGm9i0xmRJ4i66dY1nA0LB-capJLXS4yClCfuRSNGqa1e8vfQYccvTrh4LoZfHQwPtzNbOK96lgIKUXsHIVVCbof0VjkMn6Q9RJk_4t8ymbdEkVPO8aqiGerbo-qKKnQN47rAJhSEK0og6drJhP2um8j3fHenPxjJ0TKIbWYaq3S5dtqHlrPaXJXJpixPcPESOM-XaClJzrAqcD1NsfA7o2ftJrzMaoWDbcvASbZ6UPstXdf3f8-csTW7fr9elq5WODycAnKwgSgQDKmvM7pmYJs75iZtZganl9llCv0MmIlnjJjXceyK95wUm7NrLtbUwt35O_cQIOfdIOxGdtsNftjxzErUpi0r9XFb4yMgqpuUmArrCQ2Sw3uHJDYWId-5T-Yg0xUCTF-_Ri-apwGthlnWgFK6ySJ-sxOkTXIcpqGWgyBrCYyxHk_QLJ6N1JI_9MqO2jhfUJYcr_DnrbTvFrQr46Q45p_C7C99Jq0Y7gkye805y-Um9hWQgN6bryTVLw2PlrcGZGoZYwU9e3fMmqGwz2hxLWf_O-lF2LOOZUmjMHNaWQRl0euBy9ApORFwYbAKycwpbbhqIBjHoOZlN62XdjnVs0ufmgxtbpud8IGUe58vRED3m6kbNvL1ffSwhOcVdkpUWRHpZ-U5sgmCL6TDDAe41cm2DdD&c=N-jgNgUXC5FnkhmYo6hwjYTFhl0v3JZYUO6N8qurc3gZjUbhDKnxEw==&ch=doqdNJyKgI1oTYxdNf-zlXAriFwkjtg5_GqqwlLqzzFxf80sa_qE5Q==): **Sen. Anavitarte** - Bill would require citizens who want to vote in a Georgia election by absentee ballot to include a copy of their driver's license, voter ID card, passport, or other official form of US identification when they apply for the absentee ballot and at the time of submittal. Assigned to **House Ethics Committee**  [**SB 30**](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001x9-IBu7sTS7xmlPKv25pkonOfCiU2O2S4rdIV-LOldu5Nv4d-CY0Rr_tAkszrGNNgbsP5NaweM0ehRBv-PCT1e9D2_jDw8S0Dp26NPUkVddMapCUimrpoSPc0mRt9j-YKXSH2AE0TBp1NC20e0y0g7dEChu3YzwHqP-ON-SWodm73mhzztNgm7O0ojVIAxrvkiSlOYWh9Y3QrzHwowZlMMBZlOxUnBuOTdJB9Uas0zu1FozKJ02gueq7VgSj3ayU3JWDPE_S-Wwtgok9CwOuKJEuZt0oZ2O6Ytz7SePN1k_8U-Q0Va-taKvn6y0TVwViCUND22dEa4t14qD2e4XyKxG2jabWaihBcib4oZm3XD_hhHlDIPO8rkHSLS9j2t1umVDJXkXUdtGgWNZNLhiwo2e0aYAlFpNWqXzqpH8O6UmEaTSsXU07DQpwwnomOXT2pfgxOajKF1wgsDiv3U-RJuVNGvzHOeKOd08nzpwmD8VaWawr8MXNIYiPajQRkAdw3BxCq8vYKHD59Mzvglly0nwC8FebaTzZjEKpFUEi68UBnqMLUXwQeybnx9JbtU-cYf-t8Dmi4QzJIej89jWJRayaF7y1MyWIwXsr29VTaD-dex7ro78C1moIW70l-OUUfU-Qu3n1cFQra5mmaAlghCm-2Tjb4_kWxeg2n50FJ7mJsZnM--iVe3gQjpgqpVyMIi-E33Gz7X4jqwd2CGBQDr6OXbbkDZR7I28S_JNmXiFvwLCqjhuTyRXVNKonOp2-oi8afEepKUE2LFIMDON4p3weoJb4uQ3PzMrccqRWwe1kztEkX9-ipPn0K8l9_bNI2PjJlozht3Ep8A57JLDNwHBZcnpr286TlwwIrzHtA5WaN0y8RD60xC5v2tdgQJgYC_rYwRzg5PF7JqFubtZ4QA==&c=N-jgNgUXC5FnkhmYo6hwjYTFhl0v3JZYUO6N8qurc3gZjUbhDKnxEw==&ch=doqdNJyKgI1oTYxdNf-zlXAriFwkjtg5_GqqwlLqzzFxf80sa_qE5Q==)**:** **Sen. Beach** - SB 30 would provide for pari-mutuel horse racing in Georgia and would establish Georgia Horse Racing Commission. Assigned to **House Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee** **HOUSE BILLS**[**HB 98:**](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001x9-IBu7sTS7xmlPKv25pkonOfCiU2O2S4rdIV-LOldu5Nv4d-CY0Rr_tAkszrGNNUIWrjMh1OpRHFlQ4C6cRplVQBHwbZBPDHyTyFeXAINGh81Zsozj9tCMEp1PJSRMUgRJ35UKfGUBkilmv78rJqL0rHWwf-5HE3bbhGtD_zJU=&c=N-jgNgUXC5FnkhmYo6hwjYTFhl0v3JZYUO6N8qurc3gZjUbhDKnxEw==&ch=doqdNJyKgI1oTYxdNf-zlXAriFwkjtg5_GqqwlLqzzFxf80sa_qE5Q==) **Rep. Eddie Lumsden** - bill would authorize counties and cities to conduct “public hearings” by teleconference during emergency conditions (e.g. pandemics). The policy would acknowledge that participation by teleconference would be equal to full in person participation as if those conducting the public hearing are physically present and members of the public must be afforded the means to participate fully in the same manner as if they were physically present. The legislation comes from several instances around the state where local municipalities struggled to conduct the business of their boards as quorums where not met because of health concerns of in person meetings. Assigned to **Government Affairs Committee.**  [**HB 104:**](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001x9-IBu7sTS7xmlPKv25pkonOfCiU2O2S4rdIV-LOldu5Nv4d-CY0Rr_tAkszrGNNYtx7AR7N0TdeHN6OqerjmyqsKfi3GFHnucAJzxgvQP9sMrAcQVAlo-adF7Y2C7WxW1b3O6ob5491y9qRtJPg51k-73xXqTaGgA_5vD1bMvoYOsVOpDvkpnOmsjm_s34Ch5YhoJu8GgMTp-ZenQa7rb59XC2bUjxIkGdpmKaNY4Ng28lWYW15HBYzj-LrZDbyY4-b13EIZrNNIety7YAmgC4FDxl9-7WF_TyXN_FgMFaQm7LWs5x3lN_MCbFopd3H-RobjSehsMWpHq8VsKvl-6kxSGcUX1g0QwHnzIixGwVU2imQ-A_IigvzX2tXGVv0wJbW34-OaM9dCvUZIo3dZ7fNXg4c58cDo4VrtolGe_ZRiU3QvuCH_RWru5rPEpW4AxDnHeQJ65nDk67o1Wp0ZO9fTzA1ATS_qU_uJxysHOn4oOI1KlA-TbWXYEm3Jjp7MjzaettktCA5CamVDfFjafQQfSdNIemJc9J7DrcZBhB6t9G-2yC7gzmAl8ENbETy5J8NA7rsl427vFV9QJBe-m9GFI63qcSaYZaADM7D6MPqy3jYwSVk2v2kWu7PUlqdPq1zSFmZlVa2X7s21cCTGxWrT-2o57Jq4RjuRGt5gbQcbdAzKR_cBqoFz22rloKgAkUc3WW1Xunw6F8Mtf9Sv1Z6sjKSIykj4miYyVKyI81csDin5JGFPO3LCUj7r5F9SjoJkFSl341ax9WKGCa2sHKEmVeNUCXafKmLHF10HCfod7VCDaRwcmdSNOOcocxy24hKglhYzG0NEyAZI0kFtVxqGY5wEcmSyrPqmH9zXXj89D7kAYwfdrbEOWRHOFiw_0jS2wzdW5d5TYswyvCye0Z-vBepG8A5&c=N-jgNgUXC5FnkhmYo6hwjYTFhl0v3JZYUO6N8qurc3gZjUbhDKnxEw==&ch=doqdNJyKgI1oTYxdNf-zlXAriFwkjtg5_GqqwlLqzzFxf80sa_qE5Q==) **Rep. Stevens** - relating to specific, business, and occupation taxes, so as to levy and impose a tax on persons who enter certain rental agreements with certain equipment rental companies within a certain period of time; to require such equipment rental companies to collect such taxes and remit them to county tax commissioners for credit against such company's ad valorem tax liability for certain equipment; to provide that county tax commissioners shall retain excess fees; to provide for the reporting of certain statistical data related to such tax; to provide for rules and regulations; to provide for definitions; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes. Assigned to **Ways and Means** [**HB 112:**](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001x9-IBu7sTS7xmlPKv25pkonOfCiU2O2S4rdIV-LOldu5Nv4d-CY0Rr_tAkszrGNNYtx7AR7N0TdeHN6OqerjmyqsKfi3GFHnucAJzxgvQP9sMrAcQVAlo-adF7Y2C7WxW1b3O6ob5491y9qRtJPg51k-73xXqTaGgA_5vD1bMvoYOsVOpDvkpnOmsjm_s34Ch5YhoJu8GgMTp-ZenQa7rb59XC2bUjxIkGdpmKaNY4Ng28lWYW15HBYzj-LrZDbyY4-b13EIZrNNIety7YAmgC4FDxl9-7WF_TyXN_FgMFaQm7LWs5x3lN_MCbFopd3H-RobjSehsMWpHq8VsKvl-6kxSGcUX1g0QwHnzIixGwVU2imQ-A_IigvzX2tXGVv0wJbW34-OaM9dCvUZIo3dZ7fNXg4c58cDo4VrtolGe_ZRiU3QvuCH_RWru5rPEpW4AxDnHeQJ65nDk67o1Wp0ZO9fTzA1ATS_qU_uJxysHOn4oOI1KlA-TbWXYEm3Jjp7MjzaettktCA5CamVDfFjafQQfSdNIemJc9J7DrcZBhB6t9G-2yC7gzmAl8ENbETy5J8NA7rsl427vFV9QJBe-m9GFI63qcSaYZaADM7D6MPqy3jYwSVk2v2kWu7PUlqdPq1zSFmZlVa2X7s21cCTGxWrT-2o57Jq4RjuRGt5gbQcbdAzKR_cBqoFz22rloKgAkUc3WW1Xunw6F8Mtf9Sv1Z6sjKSIykj4miYyVKyI81csDin5JGFPO3LCUj7r5F9SjoJkFSl341ax9WKGCa2sHKEmVeNUCXafKmLHF10HCfod7VCDaRwcmdSNOOcocxy24hKglhYzG0NEyAZI0kFtVxqGY5wEcmSyrPqmH9zXXj89D7kAYwfdrbEOWRHOFiw_0jS2wzdW5d5TYswyvCye0Z-vBepG8A5&c=N-jgNgUXC5FnkhmYo6hwjYTFhl0v3JZYUO6N8qurc3gZjUbhDKnxEw==&ch=doqdNJyKgI1oTYxdNf-zlXAriFwkjtg5_GqqwlLqzzFxf80sa_qE5Q==) **Rep. Trey Kelley** - COVID-19 liability protections for Georgia businesses and hospitals would be extended until July 14, 2022, under a bill introduced in the General Assembly. Since August, the liability protections have shielded businesses and health-care facilities in Georgia from lawsuits brought by people who contract COVID-19 in all but the worst negligence or recklessness cases. The bill only calls for a one-year extension. Assigned to **Judiciary Committee** [**HB 139**](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001x9-IBu7sTS7xmlPKv25pkonOfCiU2O2S4rdIV-LOldu5Nv4d-CY0Rr_tAkszrGNNYtx7AR7N0TdeHN6OqerjmyqsKfi3GFHnucAJzxgvQP9sMrAcQVAlo-adF7Y2C7WxW1b3O6ob5491y9qRtJPg51k-73xXqTaGgA_5vD1bMvoYOsVOpDvkpnOmsjm_s34Ch5YhoJu8GgMTp-ZenQa7rb59XC2bUjxIkGdpmKaNY4Ng28lWYW15HBYzj-LrZDbyY4-b13EIZrNNIety7YAmgC4FDxl9-7WF_TyXN_FgMFaQm7LWs5x3lN_MCbFopd3H-RobjSehsMWpHq8VsKvl-6kxSGcUX1g0QwHnzIixGwVU2imQ-A_IigvzX2tXGVv0wJbW34-OaM9dCvUZIo3dZ7fNXg4c58cDo4VrtolGe_ZRiU3QvuCH_RWru5rPEpW4AxDnHeQJ65nDk67o1Wp0ZO9fTzA1ATS_qU_uJxysHOn4oOI1KlA-TbWXYEm3Jjp7MjzaettktCA5CamVDfFjafQQfSdNIemJc9J7DrcZBhB6t9G-2yC7gzmAl8ENbETy5J8NA7rsl427vFV9QJBe-m9GFI63qcSaYZaADM7D6MPqy3jYwSVk2v2kWu7PUlqdPq1zSFmZlVa2X7s21cCTGxWrT-2o57Jq4RjuRGt5gbQcbdAzKR_cBqoFz22rloKgAkUc3WW1Xunw6F8Mtf9Sv1Z6sjKSIykj4miYyVKyI81csDin5JGFPO3LCUj7r5F9SjoJkFSl341ax9WKGCa2sHKEmVeNUCXafKmLHF10HCfod7VCDaRwcmdSNOOcocxy24hKglhYzG0NEyAZI0kFtVxqGY5wEcmSyrPqmH9zXXj89D7kAYwfdrbEOWRHOFiw_0jS2wzdW5d5TYswyvCye0Z-vBepG8A5&c=N-jgNgUXC5FnkhmYo6hwjYTFhl0v3JZYUO6N8qurc3gZjUbhDKnxEw==&ch=doqdNJyKgI1oTYxdNf-zlXAriFwkjtg5_GqqwlLqzzFxf80sa_qE5Q==): **Rep Mainor** - This bill would prohibit trains from restricting traffic crossing for longer than 15 minutes except in emergency situations. Assigned to **House Transportation Committee**  [**HB 150**](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001x9-IBu7sTS7xmlPKv25pkonOfCiU2O2S4rdIV-LOldu5Nv4d-CY0Rr_tAkszrGNN7c_Nfju7sq4bRD4N0mq4YHGsXCF384j0z9zYYjS5jPqKarF08-xyXQnQRK14ff0fmDGVglLURplvrKrOHitAAqcmXw7dCPWz01dmk5R8JpWowlNSu_H3stHQosm-4AFccmXGWapjO3oc1ZgKRb8aZet5-_Yi-neSkMCmbGHIKLUfdgarnEx82dP8CdwDXV6OvdkJ376HegYHAuOZbOPS-hg1NotFiJujRLNIEMr42Ci932Q4RSxvjFOtyoEIZS4DuZZGNnqkZPw1_748YzQuwg3l_Sz9XMTh9aZFyQotAtYwtqeaN8F8MLYZjHTYO06V70cHOLJC7zs5McjlkyrP_47Dp58U_62gopb_EQoiciQpipzaoftnqyKtTftXI1WCL0Zp5RYCqMGf6pWYtEBxfweacwRaSEehauQR8SMOWkK3Gg5D3BYjDnIUbagtYY-mp7avkL3zkW4GYySfvInaJQ5TeIGaXJj7AFcaicynW9I57v0mb2hyoctArg1K7JY6LkFFcjCVHSG9bbfUo0-YDTbZ7Dkiejd6Kxg3Tc7BruIkYBe1w0jrWPsJW2adshczeXE1EP2RGw3t_zG9amEpTDcHx5S5jFR3FiqRpanEplomB9ppVth1Z0912YdyOt6WiLmaG3xB5naQAr1HGXYLQMf6Td_wt58-asJZ1wYHaWgjkaILXE4m1C9KmS_VJwFhKBKS7fqGEpBLFT2kQnR8PIsvycslyp-rFijgEAhjE0h_bv8oqqUGyVWUP_Zl5Q1FKzEEn-b01SXY4t9IZ5ADPvBbZ-Rl_GsZb43QIcp0AhoDnHZBR2gThcYGXDVH8ERsnpkiafW57RSM0P99-uPC4Q==&c=N-jgNgUXC5FnkhmYo6hwjYTFhl0v3JZYUO6N8qurc3gZjUbhDKnxEw==&ch=doqdNJyKgI1oTYxdNf-zlXAriFwkjtg5_GqqwlLqzzFxf80sa_qE5Q==)**:** **Reps. Williamson, Hatchett, Kelley, Frazier, Parsons, Smith** - **HB 150** would prohibit local government entities in Georgia from banning the connection of any utility service based on the type or source of fuel. Assigned to **House Energy, Utilities, and Telecommunications Committee** |

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