



## House of Representatives

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**STANDING**  
**COMMITTEES:**  
CODE REVISION  
HUMAN RELATIONS & AGING  
INSURANCE  
SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

April 4, 2018

Georgia's Budget for Fiscal Year 2019 is **\$26 Billion** representing a **\$1 Billion increase** over the previous year.

I am happy to say Georgia has been ranked the state with the #1 business climate and the #1 state for major film production. We have improved our state's rainy-day fund and grown our booming tourism industry, but not all of our budget news is positive as we need to support workers, families, and children even more.

Georgia is the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest ranked state for individuals without health insurance. If trends continue at the current pace 25% of Georgians will not have healthcare by 2026. There are an astounding 600,000 Georgians currently living in the coverage gap however it would take *only one half of one percent* of the 2019 budget to rectify this. Georgia also compares poorly to our peer states in educational and healthcare outcomes in which we rank 38<sup>th</sup> and 33<sup>rd</sup> respectively. I am proud to have asked questions on the House floor about our budget.

Below I have pulled out several items of particular importance: good and bad. I am pleased to say that there are many more positive items than harmful ones and I hope we may continue to allocate our resources in a way that recognizes that our state's prosperity can only be measured by how we care for our *most vulnerable*.

### Major Items:

- \$790,801 to prevent opioid abuse as recommended by Commission on Children's Mental Health
- \$1,092,000 for Suicide Prevention as recommended by Commission on Children's Mental Health
- Provide additional \$1,791,141 to increase the triage payment rate by \$10 for urban hospitals and \$20 for rural hospitals
- A much-needed **\$2,000,000** to address maternal mortality in Georgia. Georgia has the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest maternal mortality in the nation
- Provide \$150,000 for the Sickle Cell Foundation of Georgia for outreach offices to improve access to care and reduce unnecessary emergency room costs
- Funding increase of \$626,545 for the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program pursuant to the passage of HB 249 in 2017
- \$215,700 to improve perinatal hepatitis C surveillance, linkage to care, and testing to address the statewide increase of hepatitis C virus due to the opioid epidemic

### Attempted Items:

- Allocate \$389K to a pilot program for Georgians experiencing opioid use issues who are at risk of HIV with HB 755 which will return next year since it only died in the Rules Committee (one step from the floor vote!)
- Democratic Caucus placed an amendment that would expand Medicaid, fiscally, that was rejected



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### The Good:

- An appropriation I personally spearheaded: Provide \$50,000 for Grady Hospital retention in care efforts for patients with HIV/AIDS as “Patient Care Navigators”
- Provide \$2M for reversing our WORST in the nation maternal mortality rank in Georgia
- Fully fund Quality Basic Education Funding Formula for K-12 schools for the first time since the recession
- \$5000 for Georgia Council of the Arts benefitting non-profits like Dad’s Garage in the Old Fourth Ward
- Additional \$50,000 for Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, total \$150,000
- Provide \$1.4M for statewide availability of a mental health crisis service and suicide prevention mobile app in coordination with Georgia Crisis and Access Hotline
- Reduce funds for a regional planning organization whose audit showed improper use of taxpayer monies
- \$66,371 increase to Healthcare for the Homeless grant program
- Provide \$586,057 to increase reimbursement rate for Marcus Autism Center for children with significant needs
- Provide for 99 new residency slots in primary care medicine including Morehouse School of Medicine as HBCU
- \$143,784 for pay parity for frontline Narcotics agents preventing abuse of opioids and prescription narcotics
- \$735,961 increase in employer share of Teachers Retirement System
- Direct the Department of Education to provide a report on the number of counselors and nurses per school
- Increase the *per diem* rate for relative foster care families by \$3.75
- \$250,000 for Department of Labor to collaborate with other state agencies like libraries and technical schools to maintain a physical presence where career centers have closed and to continue expansion of online services
- \$700,000 for 9 additional juvenile public defenders

### The Bad:

- Eliminates one-time \$130,000 in funds for MLK Jr Advisory Council
- Increase funds for current private prison correctional officer pay adjustments by \$2,194,250
- Provide \$227,570 for Chief Turnaround Officer for “Turnaround Schools Rural Character Education Grant” (a program Georgians overwhelmingly opposed)
- Increase funding for State Commission on Charter Schools by almost \$5,000,000 although 2 charter schools closed in the past year

Cordially,

Representative Park Cannon