

AGC GEORGIA LEGISLATIVE REPORT - Week 6

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The nineteenth day of the 40-day Georgia General Assembly was completed on Friday, February 20, 2015. Next week, legislators will be in session Monday through Thursday. The General Assembly plans to adjourn on April 2, 2015.

Included are some of the major construction-related legislative issues we are currently engaged in.

Workers' Compensation House Bill 412 – (*Addressing Pitt's Case*) – Sponsor: Representative Hamilton – AGC Georgia Supports www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/20152016/148541.pdf

Current update: AGC Georgia is very proud to report HB 412 was introduced this week. ***It includes our previously developed and agreed upon language to address the Pitts Court decision.*** This very important legislation should receive a committee hearing in the House Industry & Labor Committee the week of February 23. We sincerely appreciate the efforts of all stakeholders to bring this bill forward for consideration. It's rewarding to know our association is credited for working through the appropriate channels, and we are pleased to have the business community squarely behind us as we work to address this very important issue. We are committed to making sure the fix is right!

Background on the issue: AGC Georgia believes the Pitts court decision circumvents Georgia's workers' compensation exclusive remedy provisions! The *exclusive remedy* provisions within our state's workers' compensation laws are a trade off, or quid pro quo, between employer and employee. We believe if the *Pitts* decision is not addressed legislatively, every employer in Georgia must question whether Georgia's no fault workers' compensation coverage will in fact be the exclusive remedy for work place injuries, or will they be subject to additional actions for not providing a safe work place.

Since the end of the 2014 session, AGC Georgia has met with representatives of the state workers' compensation legislative committee to express our desire to work through their committee process to address this issue. The committee has a cross section of representatives from business, trial and defense attorneys, as well as labor. For years, this committee has successfully worked through a consensus process to develop legislation addressing Georgia's workers' compensation needs.

The committee agreed the Pitts decision merited legislative consideration and began working on an appropriate fix. AGC Georgia representatives, including Phil Beck and the late David Hendrick, spent countless hours on our association's behalf and the business community developing an appropriate legislative fix that could be supported by all divergent parties.

Transportation Funding Act of 2015 - House Bill 170 – Sponsor: Representative Roberts – AGC Georgia Supports - www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/en-US/display/20152016/HB/170
www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/20152016/148467.pdf

Below are links to additional information from the Georgia Transportation Alliance regarding HB 170. **View a [summary](#), [FAQs](#), and [background](#) on HB 170.**

On Wednesday, February 18, the House Committee on Transportation passed a Committee Substitute of HB 170. The measure funds nearly \$1 billion a year in statewide transportation projects. Georgia's economic success largely relies on our position as a transportation and logistics hub, along with our ability to safely and reliably move people and goods. Georgia is recognized nationally as the best place to do business; however, it is sure to lose this distinction if we do not address our state's transportation infrastructure needs.

AGC Georgia applauds our state's leadership, specifically Chairman Roberts, for ensuring transportation funding remains a high priority. This legislation continues to evolve as it moves through the legislative process.

Workforce Development - Senate Bill 2 – *Sponsor: Senator Tippins – AGC Georgia Supports*
www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/20152016/146305.pdf

Current update: The Senate unanimously passed SB 2 earlier this session. It will receive a hearing on Monday, February 23 in the House Education Committee. AGC Georgia testified in favor of this measure in the Senate Education Committee prior to the full vote by the Senate. We believe this legislation has the potential to help address the construction industry's skilled workforce needs.

Background on the issue: Lt. Governor Cagle and Senator Tippins are leading the efforts with this legislation. It will allow high school students who have completed the ninth and tenth grade course requirements and assessments to enroll in post-secondary institutions (Technical, Career & Community Colleges). They can work toward an associate degree while counting that coursework toward high school graduation requirements. The business and education community have enthusiastically endorsed this proposal as way to help address our state's workforce needs. AGC Georgia and other members of the business community continue to stress the need for the education community to work in tandem with business to help ensure their training programs are addressing real business needs.

Atlanta Belt Line Urban Redevelopment - Senate Bill 4 – *Sponsor: Senator Gooch – AGC Georgia Supports*
www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/en-US/display/20152016/SB/4

Current Update: SB 4 was passed by the Senate on Friday, February 20 by a vote of 43-3. It now moves to the House for consideration.

SB 4 is an urban redevelopment measure for the Atlanta Belt Line project that is utilizing Public Private Partnerships as a tool to help finance and build the Belt Line. AGC Georgia supports Public Private Partnerships (P3) as a tool to help public owners address their respective infrastructure needs.

Partnership for Public Facilities and Infrastructure Act (P3) - Senate Bill 59 – *Sponsor: Senator Hill – AGC Georgia Supports* www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/20152016/145892.pdf

On Tuesday, February 10 both SB 59 & SB 4 were heard by the Senate Economic Development Committee. AGC Georgia testified in favor of SB 59 and both bills ultimately received "do pass" recommendations by the committee and now move to Senate Rules committee for consideration.

AGC Georgia has been actively engaged with stake holder groups on SB 59 during the off season to address issues of concern from last year. This legislation, which has had input from all impacted groups, was developed to address these issues and create the "Partnership for Public Facilities and Infrastructure Act." It grants board authority to state and local governments to finance design and build all types of infrastructure projects through Public-Private Partnerships.

Other Bills of Interest to Georgia's Construction Community

Establishing Payroll Card Program – Senate Bill 88 – *Sponsor: Senator Jones*
www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/20152016/148451.pdf

On Thursday, February 19, the Senate Insurance and Labor Committee amended and passed SB 88. This measure would give employers an option to pay employees by enrolling them in a payroll debit card program. Payroll cards would give employees who may not have access to traditional bank accounts

another way to receive their wages electronically. This legislation is supported by a number of business groups.

Equal Green Building Credits for Georgia Forest Products – House Bill 255 – Sponsor: Representative Cheokas www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/20152016/147073.pdf

HB 255 was introduced at the request of Georgia Forestry Association and would codify an Executive Order issued by Governor Deal in 2012. The 2012 EO requires Georgia forest products receive equal certification credit when the state uses Green Building Standards in state construction projects. Current LEED Certification standards do not recognize Georgia's wood certification standards. HB 255 is scheduled for hearing the week of February 23 in the House State Properties Committee.

Building Officials Association of Georgia Certification (BOAG) – House Bill 341 – Sponsor: Representative Maxwell www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/20152016/147882.pdf

AGC Georgia has been working with Chairman Maxwell and representatives of BOAG and DCA to help develop appropriate criteria for qualified inspector status under the law. HB 341 would require experience, continuing education and testing for BOAG certification levels II, III, IV & V.

If you have questions about AGC Georgia's positions or advocacy roles on behalf of the membership, please contact me at woodall@agcga.org or 678-298-4116.