

## **Georgia Utility Contractors Association (GUCA)**

January 12, 2024

**GUCA's very important and annually well attended Lobby Day is on the morning of February 6 in the Empire Room on top of the Twin Towers across from the Capitol. Please make sure you attend to represent your industry, hear from Georgia's political leadership about what is going on at the Capitol, and talk about issues important to you with your local legislators.**

The 2024 Georgia General Assembly had its first day of session on January 8, 2024! They were in for five days this week from January 8 - January 12. Georgia's Legislature operates on a biennial process, so 2024 is the second year of the process for 2023-2024. All bills that were not signed or vetoed by the Governor in 2023 are "alive" for passage and they begin in 2024 in the last committee from which they came in 2023.

This was a very busy week at the Capitol with meetings occurring all day every day, and the Governor giving his State of the State address to both chambers on January 11. The week of January 1 - 5 was also extremely busy with fundraisers occurring January 2-5 in Atlanta and throughout the State for legislators and statewide elected officials. Legislators cannot accept contributions once session starts.

Next week, January 15 - 19, will have no official legislative days, because the House and Senate Appropriations Committees will have joint budget hearings Tuesday - Friday. There will be a lot of action also with meetings occurring with legislators the entire week. The Legislature will come back in for official session again on January 22.

Thrash-Haliburton has been in constant communication with GUCA leadership about issues and legislation coming up for our industry in the 2024 session. In 2023:

GORCC was done away with in HB 76. The Georgia Occupational Regulation Review Council (GORRC) was statutorily established in 1986 to "ensure that no programs of licensure and certification are imposed on any profession or business unless required for the safety and well-being of the citizens of this state". It has turned into a headache for many industries attempting to change, create, or delete licensing requirements in Georgia.

HB 193 was vetoed by the Governor. This bill's topic was of great interest to GUCA last year. Our lobbying team understands all of the contractor industry groups were good with the bill after the changes that were made. It relates to public works contracting and bidding requirements, so as to increase the dollar values of certain public works construction contracts exempt from bidding requirements.

There was legislation regarding licenses for transitioning members of the armed forces and expediting licenses by endorsement for spouses of active or transitioning members of the armed forces and enacting statutes to facilitate licensure of transitioning service members, military spouses, and other qualified individuals who have certifications from or work experience in the military or licenses from or work experience in another state. It is SB 195 from Senator Larry Walker.

There is also a licensing bill from Senator Brian Strickland dealing with those who have had criminal convictions in the past, SB 157, that is mentioned below also. It passed the Senate and is in the House.

There is also a lot of discussion about licensing boards in general in Georgia, and GUCA is on top of this.

This past week:

HB904 was introduced changing certain provisions relating to electrical contractors, plumbers, conditioned air contractors, low voltage contractors, and utility contractors, and HB 880 was introduced relating to licenses for transitioning members of the armed forces, so as to allow military spouses to use an existing license in good standing from another state to obtain employment in this state

Here’s to another great year for our industry in 2024 at the State Capitol!

**Thrash-Haliburton is diligently watching and working to stop any detrimental legislation to our industry and push the legislation we support. Our governmental affairs team continues every day to work on, look out for and answer requests, needs and interests, as we act at the direction of the group's leadership. Please find legislation affecting our industry below:**

**2023-2024 Regular Session**

*We are monitoring the following legislation, and watchful for any bills that may impact our industry.*

| <b>Bill</b> | <b>Summary</b>   | <b>House Comm</b>                      | <b>Sen Comm</b>   | <b>House Sponsor</b> | <b>Sen Sponsor</b> |
|-------------|--|--|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| HB 193      | Relating to public works contracting and bidding requirements, so as to increase the dollar values of certain public works construction contracts exempt from bidding requirements; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes   | <b>Vetoed by the Governor</b>          | Passed            | Anderson             |                    |
| HB 436      | Relating to surface mining, so as to revise maximum criminal penalties for violations  | Passed                                 | Natural Resources | Corbett              |                    |
| HB 438      | To prohibit governmental entities from adopting any policy that prohibits the connection or reconnection of any utility service or sales of certain fuels based upon the appliance to be used by a customer;   | Energy, Utilities & Telecommunications |                   | Anderson             |                    |
| SB 195      | Relating to licenses for transitioning members of the armed forces, and Code Section 43-1-35, relating to expedited license by endorsement for spouses of active or transitioning members of the armed forces, and to enact statutes to facilitate licensure of transitioning service members, military spouses, and other qualified individuals who have certifications from or work experience in the military or licenses from or work experience in another state under certain conditions | Regulated Industries                   | Passed            |                      | Walker             |

|        |  |                         |        |         |            |
|--------|--|-------------------------|--------|---------|------------|
| SB 157 | To create a preclearance process in the licensing of individuals with criminal records who make an application to or are investigated by certain licensing boards and commissions  | Judiciary<br>Non-Civil  | Passed |         | Strickland |
| HB 810 | Change certain provisions to buildings and housing, commerce and trade, local government, professions and businesses, and public utilities and public transportation, respectively, so as change certain provisions relating to certain professions practicing in this state | Regulated<br>Industries |        | Vance   |            |
| HB904  | Change certain provisions relating to electrical contractors, plumbers, conditioned air contractors, low voltage contractors, and utility contractors  | Regulated<br>Industries |        | Vance   |            |
| HB 880 | Relating to licenses for transitioning members of the armed forces, so as to allow military spouses to use an existing license in good standing from another state to obtain employment in this state  | Regulated<br>Industries |        | Ballard |            |