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Public Affairs & Government Relations

Final Legislative Update

The General Assembly adjourned sine die at midnight on Friday, April 4. Legislators reached agreement on the FY '09 \$21.2B budget a few hours before adjournment, but did not pass several major items they had been working on all session: a constitutional amendment that would allow regional local option sales tax for transportation purposes, trauma care funding, and tax reform legislation.

Following is legislation from client tracking sheets that was still pending on Day 40 and received final passage on Friday. This legislation includes five percent salary increases for appellate and superior court judges and DA's (HB 119), the charter school commission (HB 881), credit freeze legislation (HB 130), on-line driving courses (HB 1027), the Georgia Lemon Law (HB 470), "good funds" for real estate closings (SB 355), corporation code amendments (SB 436), income tax credits for broadcasting (HB 1246), changes in indigent defense (HB 1245), a constitutional amendment allowing taxes raised for education to be spent on community redevelopment projects/programs (SR 996), eligibility requirements for HOPE scholarships and in-state tuition (SB 492), several changes in CON one of which allows CTCA to build a hospital near the Atlanta airport (SB 433), water reservoirs (SB 342), motor vehicle rental company fees (SB 181), probate courts and probate judges (SB 508), a tax cap on energy used in manufacturing (HB 272), telecom franchise legislation (originally SB 408, passed as SB 379), tax breaks for high-deductible insurance policies with health savings accounts (HB 977), and a house study committee on judicial election reform (HR 470). Also passed on the last day was HB 89 that had been in conference committee since the '07 session; this bill will expand the location where one can carry a permitted concealed weapon (restaurants, parks, MARTA), but requires employer permission to keep it at work or in workplace parking lot. Many bills and resolutions of interest to individual clients were passed this session and are in the client-specific tracking sheets in a separate attachment.

Final versions of many bills are not yet available on-line, but should be available within the next week at the state's legislative web site: www.legis.state.ga.us. Please do not hesitate to call us if you have questions about any bill.