

2024 DeKalb County Legislative Agenda

The philosophy of the 2024 State Legislative Agenda is to establish a flexible process for the Board of Commissioners to maximize priority approval and/or progression at the State level and to encourage greater collaboration between Commissioners and the DeKalb State Delegation. Staff has developed the following policy spheres for this year's legislative agenda: Economic Development, Elections, Environmental Reform & Sustainability, Housing, Public Health, Public Safety, Transportation, and Other.

Economic Development

DeKalb County supports efforts that allow local governments more tools to affect positive change in the development of its local market and provide more opportunities of prosperity for its citizens while safeguarding its infrastructure.

Priorities

- DeKalb County requests the General Assembly to address annexation and de-annexation processes within the State of Georgia. DeKalb County has material issues with several specific aspects of the current laws.
 - a. Repeal O.C.G.A. Section 36-31-11.1(f) regarding the sale of parks.
(Sponsor: Commissioner Robert Patrick, District 1)
 - b. DeKalb County supports revisions to the 60% annexation method that creates a minimum time restriction for annexation petitions.
(Sponsors: Commissioner Robert Patrick, District 1; Commissioner Long Spears, District 2; Commissioner Ted Terry, Super District 6)
 - c. Supports legislation on the removal of barriers to the de-annexation process in Georgia.
(Sponsor: Commissioner Long Spears, District 2)

Support Statements

- Supports the ability for Counties to be able to charge a technology fee on certain permitted items.
(Sponsor: Commissioner Robert Patrick, District 1)
- Supports legislation allowing Counties to utilize the County Commercial Property Assessed Conservation, Energy (C-PACE) mechanism.
(Sponsor: Commissioner Ted Terry, Super District 6)
- Supports studies on the impacts of Tax Abatements, Tax Incentives, Tax Allocation Districts (TADs), and Special Service Tax Districts in the state of Georgia.
(Sponsor: Commissioner Michelle Long Spears, District 2)

Elections		DeKalb County supports initiatives that codify our representative democracy and are integral to advancing free and fair elections to enable every eligible DeKalb County citizen the opportunity to vote.
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Requests the State to issue voter precinct cards for all registered voters at least 14 days prior to Election Day. Additionally, anytime there is a change in voting location, precinct, and/or district information, updated precinct cards should be issued to all affected voters. <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Michelle Long Spears, District 2)</i> - Requests the development of a study committee to evaluate the establishment of an independent redistricting commission. <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Lorraine Cochran-Johnson, Super District 7)</i> - Supports extended early voting through the weekend immediately preceding the November General Election Day. Amend state election law to return to the law in effect in 2020 regarding the schedule for early voting, the locations allowed for drop boxes, and the time for certification of elections. <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Mereda Davis Johnson, District 5)</i> 	
Support Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supports the implementation of countywide polling place programs. <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Larry Johnson, District 3)</i> 	
Environmental Reform & Sustainability		DeKalb County supports legislative efforts that provide safe and clean environments for its residents, including initiatives that reduce the risk of poor health outcomes of residents and risks of deterioration to the local natural environment.
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supports legislation to restrict the storage and transportation of coal combustion residuals, or “coal ash” within the State of Georgia. <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Mereda Davis Johnson, District 5)</i> 	
Support Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supports GA House Bill 71; Okefenokee Protection Act <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Ted Terry, District 6)</i> 	

Housing		DeKalb County supports legislative efforts that provide safe, affordable, and equitable housing opportunities for its residents.
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supports legislation establishing a state-wide eviction resolution program and diversion strategies. <i>(Sponsors: Commissioner Robert Patrick, District 1; Commissioner Michelle Long Spears, District 2)</i> - Supports the implementation of broad-based tenant protections. <i>(Sponsors: Commissioner Robert Patrick, District 1; Commissioner Michelle Long Spears, District 2; The DeKalb County Planning, Economic Development, & Community Services (PECS) Committee)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Requests the General Assembly enact legislation that requires property owners to clearly display and disclose all fees, including “junk fees” associated with a tenant’s lease prior to signature of the lease agreements and in all advertisements. b. Requests the General Assembly reduce or eliminate the 7-year credit history for residents who were evicted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. c. Requests the State adjust how landlords receive monies from tenants when apartment units receive application fees but the applicant does not qualify. - Requests the General Assembly enact legislation that establishes a rental registry. <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Cochran-Johnson, Super District 7)</i> - Requests the General Assembly enact legislation that allows the State Court clerk to collect a fee for the removal of personal property and other unremunerated costs incurred by DeKalb County after an eviction. <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Mereda Davis Johnson, District 5)</i> 	
Public Health		DeKalb County supports legislative efforts that provide appropriately funded health resources to DeKalb County residents.
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Requests that the General Assembly convene a study committee to review public health taxation reform. <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Larry Johnson, District 3)</i> - Requests the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) increase funding for crisis service unit (CSU) bed capacity across the State. <i>(Sponsors: Commissioner Ted Terry, Super District 6; Commissioner Michelle Long Spears, District 2; The DeKalb County Planning, Economic Development, & Community Services (PECS) Committee)</i> - Requests additional funding to the DeKalb Community Service Board toward a new BHCC building, to address healthcare infrastructure needs. <i>(Sponsors: Commissioner Ted Terry, Super District 6; Commissioner Michelle Long Spears, District 2)</i> 	

Support Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supports additional funding for County Boards of Health to increase compensation for employees and assign fleet vehicles for inspector-use. <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Michelle Long Spears, District 2)</i> - Supports review of legislation regarding animal breeding regulations. <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Michelle Long Spears, District 2)</i> - Supports acknowledgement by General Assembly of limited Gun Safety as a Public Health Crisis. <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Lorraine Cochran-Johnson, Super District 7)</i> - Supports Medicaid Expansion in Georgia. <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Ted Terry, Super District 6)</i>
Public Safety	
Priorities	<p>DeKalb County believes in protecting and preserving the public health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of DeKalb County, and addressing local public safety and judicial resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Requests the General Assembly provide parity between Counties and Cities regarding the authority to adopt ordinances to regulate the possession of less than one ounce of marijuana. <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Mereda Davis Johnson, District 5)</i> - Requests amendment of Georgia Code, § 35-8-8, to add “Legally Permitted Residents” to the criteria of those who can apply as Peace Officers in the State of Georgia. <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Ted Terry, Super District 6)</i>
Support Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Requests the General Assembly Mandate, Support, and Implement the Use of Body Cameras For All Responding Georgia State Patrol Troopers (GSP). <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Ted Terry, Super District 6)</i> - Requests the General Assembly authorize within the powers for Community Service Aides the ability to handle minor injury and property damage accidents. <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Robert Patrick, District 1)</i> - Supports maintaining current levels of funding and providing additional funding for prosecution-based Victims Advocate programs throughout the State. <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Michelle Long Spears, District 2)</i> - Requests that the General Assembly enact legislation to adopt a safe gun storage policy to impact and prevent accidental injuries and deaths. <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Ted Terry, Super District 6)</i>

Transportation		DeKalb County supports initiatives that expand access to safe and reliable public transportation.
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Requests that the Georgia General Assembly should create a Georgia New Starts Transit program, modeled after Florida's, to match 50% of Federal discretionary transit grants; and that the Georgia General Assembly should adopt a policy to allocate 50% of the new Federal Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) created by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) to transit. <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Steve Bradshaw, District 4)</i>	
Other		Reserved to provide information on other policies that may not fall under previous spheres.
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Requests that the General Assembly amend O.C.G.A. Section 50-14-1, to authorize all Agencies as defined in that code section to hold meetings by teleconference regardless of emergency conditions. <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Robert Patrick, District 1; Commissioner Long Spears, District 2)</i>	
Support Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Supports legislation adopting the 2024 Association County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG) State legislative priorities. <i>(Sponsors: All Commissioners)</i>- Supports legislation adopting the 2024 National Association of Counties' (NACo) legislative priorities. <i>(Sponsors: All Commissioners)</i>	