

2025 DeKalb County Legislative Agenda

The philosophy of the 2025 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.

(Items highlighted in yellow are newly proposed legislative items)

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. Supports a comprehensive review of the 60% annexation method.**
(Sponsors: Commissioner Robert Patrick, District 1; Commissioner Michelle 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 Michelle Long Spears, District 2)
 - d. Opposes any legislative annexation advanced to the delegation.**
(Sponsor: Commissioner Ted Terry, Super District 6)
- **Supports the creation of a Warehouse Worker Protection Act.**
(Sponsors: Commissioner Robert Patrick, District 1; Commissioner Ted Terry, Super District 6)

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 that restricts the use of taxpayer funds on consultants for annexations.**
(Sponsor: Commissioner Michelle Long Spears, District 2)

<h2 style="margin: 0;">Elections</h2>		<p>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.</p>
<p>Priorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supports extended early voting through the weekend immediately preceding the November General Election Day, any primary election and any run off election. 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> 	
<p>Support Statements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supports the implementation of countywide polling place programs. <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Mereda Davis Johnson, District 5)</i> - Supports the suspension of Code Enforcement sign clean-up activities in County and City rights-of-way up to 30 days prior to an election. <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Robert Patrick, District 1)</i> - Requests the State to issue voter precinct cards for all registered voters at least 14 days prior to Election Day. Additionally, upon redistricting, precinct cards are issued to all affected voters. <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Michelle Long Spears, District 2)</i> 	
<h2 style="margin: 0;">Environmental Reform & Sustainability</h2>		<p>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.</p>
<p>Priorities</p>	<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> 	
<p>Support Statements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supports legislation that protects the Okefenokee Swamp. <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Ted Terry, District 6)</i> - Supports legislation or a study committee that reviews the impacts of data centers on electrical grids around the State. <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Michelle Long Spears, District 2)</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)</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 that the General Assembly amend O.C.G.A. Section 44-10-28 regarding the Historic Preservation Commission to allow the County to amend Chapter 13.5-8 (12)(a) of the DeKalb County Code of Ordinances, to remove the Board of Commissioners from the appellate process and refer all cases directly to the Superior Court of DeKalb County. <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Long Spears, District 2)</i>
Support Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supports legislation that recognizes and addresses the impact of increased property insurance premiums on the availability and affordability of housing for renters across the State. <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Ted Terry, Super District 6)</i> - Supports legislation and request guidance as to the valuation and tax assessment of short-term rental properties within the County. <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Ted Terry, Super District 6)</i> - Supports legislation that eliminates the identification of classes of people by zip code. <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 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)</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 the recommendations from the final report of the Georgia Behavioral Health Reform and Innovation Commission, especially those recommendations requesting additional state funding for housing initiatives. <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Michelle Long Spears, District 2 and Commissioner Terry, Super District 6)</i> - Supports legislation prohibiting the sale of dogs, cats and pet rabbits in a poorly regulated transient locations such as parking lots, flea markets and roadsides. <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Michelle Long Spears, District 2)</i> - Supports legislation adding cockfighting to Georgia’s dogfighting statute and adding increased penalties for bringing a minor to a dogfight or cockfight. <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Michelle Long Spears, District 2)</i> - Supports legislation amending the existing educational loan repayment program for veterinarians to include veterinarians who agree to practice shelter medicine for a specified period of time. <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Michelle Long Spears, District 2)</i> - Supports Medicaid Expansion in Georgia. <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Ted Terry, Super District 6)</i>

<h1 style="background-color: #76b82a; color: white; padding: 10px; margin: 0;">Public Safety</h1>		<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>
<p>Priorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="369 326 1955 423"> <p>- 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></p> <li data-bbox="369 461 1965 558"> <p>- Requests amendment of Georgia Code, § 35-8-8, to add “Legally Permitted Residents” to the criteria of those who can apply as Peace Officers and Firefighters in the State of Georgia. <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Ted Terry, Super District 6)</i></p> <li data-bbox="369 596 2018 660"> <p>- Requests the General Assembly repeal O.C.G.A. Section 30-60-32 regarding the preemption of video surveillance at gas stations. <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Ted Terry, Super District 6)</i></p> 	
<p>Support Statements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="369 776 2011 873"> <p>- 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></p> <li data-bbox="369 911 1944 1008"> <p>- 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></p> <li data-bbox="369 1045 1934 1143"> <p>- 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></p> <li data-bbox="369 1180 1913 1278"> <p>- 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></p> 	

Transportation		DeKalb County supports initiatives that expand access to safe and reliable public transportation.
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No legislative requests at this time. 	
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, specifically for Community Service Board’s and their designees. <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Robert Patrick, District 1; Commissioner Long Spears, District 2)</i> - Requests an amendment to O.C.G.A. Section 5-3-10 Service of Process, to require certified mail or overnight delivery for service of process for appellate petitions. <i>(Sponsor: Commissioner Mereda Davis Johnson, District 5)</i> 	
Support Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supports legislation adopting the 2025 Association County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG) State legislative priorities. <i>(Sponsors: All Commissioners)</i> - Supports legislation adopting the 2025 National Association of Counties’ (NACo) legislative priorities. <i>(Sponsors: All Commissioners)</i> 	