

Dear all:

SB 415, the tort reform bill, should be up for a vote before the full Senate sometime this week. The bill passed the Senate Insurance and Labor Committee with a vote of 7-2.

The bill needs to pass the Senate by Thursday to still be “alive” for the remainder of the legislative session.

SB 415 does the following:

- Improves the state’s failing tort environment that negatively impacts patients and physicians;
- Stop abusive trial lawyer demands designed to increase litigation and prevent insurers from settling claims;
- Eliminate “phantom damages” (the difference between what a patient is billed and what they pay for their care, which can translate into much higher medical malpractice awards);
- Change the state’s ‘Civil Practice Act’ to improve and streamline the process for physicians and small businesses that are involved in lawsuits;
- Establish guidelines for what a judge needs to consider when they decide whether to bifurcate a trial;
- Includes other legal reforms (e.g., premises liability reform and seat belt admissibility).

SB 415 is important is needed for the following reasons:

- 76 counties in Georgia lack an OB-GYN. One of the reasons Georgia has a hard time recruiting and retaining OBs is because of our known hostile legal climate for physicians;
- Georgia ranks sixth on the ‘Judicial Hellholes’ Top 10 list for 2019-2020;
- Georgia now ranks 9th in the U.S. for med-mal payment severity, and it is much higher than neighboring states that may negatively impact a physician’s decision to come to Georgia;
- Georgia is near the bottom (41st) of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s ‘Lawsuit Climate Survey’ for 2019.

**Please contact the following Senators and ask him/her to support SB 415 because It’s time for the Georgia General Assembly to pass reasonable legal reforms to protect consumers and businesses and create a more stable, balanced, and fair legal system.**

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