

State Policy Affordable Housing Update for Georgia ACT- July 17, 2019

The slow summer months in a non-election year are especially important times for advocates to engage deeply with legislators on their housing priorities before the session convenes in January. These next five months provide great opportunities to meet with your Senators and Representatives in their district, invite them to learn more about your housing mission and needs, show them what you have achieved in their district, and let them know the policies you would like to see implemented in 2020. If they voted with you on housing and related issues in 2019, be sure to thank them for those important votes. Help them to understand how investments in affordable housing will strengthen their communities and improve outcomes for education, health, jobs and economic development.

July 1, 2019 was the date most laws enacted this year go into effect, including [HR 346](#), supported by Georgia ACT through the Healthy Housing Georgia coalition. This law prohibits retaliatory evictions by landlords in response to tenant complaints of unhealthy and unsafe rental housing. In addition to providing a defense to a retaliatory eviction and other remedies available under law, the measure provides for the award of statutory damages, declaratory relief and attorney's fees.

Below are updates on meetings and resources relating to your state and local level advocacy to increase access to safe, decent affordable housing for all Georgians:

Meetings of Interest:

The [House Rural Development Council](#) will be meeting on August 20-21 in Jasper, Pickens County. The link will take you to more information about the composition and work of the Council and is a good place to check for information about what is happening.

The members of the [House Study Committee on Workforce Housing](#) have been appointed by House Speaker David Ralston and can be seen at this link. No meeting has yet been scheduled. This Study Committee was created pursuant to [HR 591](#) and seeks to eliminate county and municipal control of design elements to reduce the cost for construction of housing. The Committee is charged to meet no more than five times and submit a report of findings and recommendations, if any, before it is abolished on December 1, 2019.

The [State Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless](#) will hold its quarterly meeting on July 24, 2019, at 1:30 p.m. at the Department of Community Affairs' office and Board Room at 60 Executive Park South, NW, Atlanta.

Affordable Housing Resources:

The National League of Cities issued a new Report last week [The Road to Affordable Housing](#) which includes a range of federal, state and local policy solution recommendations.

The City of Atlanta released the [One Atlanta: Housing Affordability Action Plan](#) to address its plan to meet the commitment to increase access to affordable housing over the next decade with a combined investment of \$1 Billion in public, private and philanthropic funds.

The [Georgia Department of Revenue](#) provides a wealth of information about property tax revenues broken down by county. The most recent [Annual Report](#) available online for 2017 (released Feb. 2018)

reflects the end of the state's receipt of property tax funds (beginning with a gradual decline in 2011 and ending at 0 in 2016). *Id.* at p. 17. That report reflects that over half of receipts for ad valorem taxes derive from residential properties and about one quarter from commercial properties. *Id.* at p. 15. The property tax distribution was 61% to school purposes and 39% to counties. *Id.* at p. 14.

Also Of Note:

The [Fulton County Daily Report](#) reported that a jury in Columbus, Georgia awarded \$125 Million for “a man who died in an unbearably hot apartment in a building for low-income and disabled residents, many of whom testified of squalid conditions, nonfunctional heating and air conditioning and management that evicted anyone who complained.”