Fiscal Research Center

Tax Policy in Georgia’s 2018 Legislative Session

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with
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About the Fiscal Research Center (FRC)

Non-partisan academic think tank that leverages the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies’ public finance expertise to assist Georgia’s state and local policy-makers on questions of tax and economic policy.

- **Technical assistance to state government:**
  - “Fiscal notes”
  - Georgia Tax Expenditure Report
    - [http://opb.georgia.gov/tax-expenditure-reports](http://opb.georgia.gov/tax-expenditure-reports)
  - Study committee support and other

- **Technical assistance to local governments:**
  - Incorporation studies
  - Revenue analysis and forecasting

- **Technical assistance projects outside Georgia**

- **Academic research**
Annual publications

Fiscal Research Center
Georgia’s Rankings
Among the States:
Budget, Taxes and
Other Indicators

Fiscal Research Center
Georgia’s Taxes
A Summary of Major State and
Local Government Taxes

Twenty-Second Edition
Fiscal Research Center
Andrew Young School of Policy Studies
Georgia State University

frc.gsu.edu
Annual publications: Georgia’s Taxes

STATE & LOCAL REVENUE SOURCES

State General Fund Tax Collections
Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2017

- Personal Income: 51%
- General Sales and Use: 26%
- Motor Fuels: 8%
- TAVT: 5%
- Corporate: 4%
- Other: 4%
- Insurance Premium: 2%

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Annual publications: Georgia’s Taxes

For each state and local tax:

- Tax Base and Rate Structure
- Major Exemptions and Special Provisions (if any)
- Administrative Responsibilities and Payment Dates
- History of Major Changes
- Revenue Production (5 years)
- Comparisons with Other States
- Georgia Code References

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# Annual publications: Georgia’s Rankings Among the States

## Per Capita State & Local Taxes, FY 2014

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>IN $</th>
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- 50-State Average: 4,607
- Georgia: 3,377

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Fiscal Notes

- Analysis of impact of proposed legislation on the state budget.
- Responsibility of the Office of Planning and Budget (OPB) and the State Auditor (Audits).
- For revenue related fiscal notes, the state contracts with the FRC for the analysis and estimates necessary.
- The FRC has been preparing such revenue fiscal notes since 2005.
Tax Policy in the 2018 Legislative Session

Tax bills that were adopted

- Purpose of the bill
- What it changed in the tax code
- How it affects the state budget

With particular attention to

- The Tax Cut & Jobs Act and
- State Income Tax Changes

Plus, an update on taxation of online sales
Tax Policy in the 2018 Legislative Session

Adopted Legislation, by Tax and Purpose:

- **Income tax, targeted incentives/relief**
  - HB 217 (part) – Qualified education tax credit, increase cap
  - HB 735 – Railroad track maintenance tax credit
  - HB 749 – Exclude military survivor benefits from income tax

- **Income tax, broader investment and jobs incentives**
  - HB 843 – Job credit for less developed areas, counties with military bases

- **Income tax, general reforms**
  - SB 328 – Repeal of three underutilized credits
  - HB 918 – IRC conformity and phased-in income tax changes
Tax Policy in the 2018 Legislative Session

Adopted Legislation, by Tax and Purpose:

- **Sales tax, reform**
  - HB 61 – Economic nexus (online sales)

- **Sales tax, targeted incentives/relief**
  - HB 217 (part) – Exempt written material purchases by nonprofits
  - HB 332 – Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Trust Act
  - HB 696 – High-tech data center equipment exemption
  - HB 697 – Exemption for nonprofit health centers, extend
  - HB 871 – Partial exemption for manufactured homes

- **Other taxes, reform**
  - HB 329 – TAVT revisions
Tax Policy in the 2018 Legislative Session

Noteworthy Legislation Not Adopted:

- **Income tax**
  - HB 664 - Georgia Higher Ed Savings Plan Deduction Increase

- **Sales and franchise tax reforms**
  - HB 887 – Georgia Communications Services Tax Act

- **Other**
  - HB 118 – Registered Fantasy Contest Operators Act, again
  - SB 432/HB 93 – Georgia Tax Credit Business Case Act / Georgia Measuring Success Act
Tax Policy in the 2018 Legislative Session

• **HB 217 – Two tax provisions**
  • *Increased aggregate cap on the Qualified Education Tax Credit*
    • 100% credit for contributions to student scholarship organizations
    • *Cap increased from $58 million per year to $100 million, effective TY 2019 – TY 2028*
  
  **Est’d state revenue impact, FY19-23: ($175) mil**

• *Creates a new sales and use tax exemption for “noncommercial written materials or mailings” purchased by nonprofits, effective FY 2019-21*

  **Est’d state revenue impact, FY19-21: ($17-30) mil**
Tax Policy in the 2018 Legislative Session

- HB 329 – Title Ad Valorem Tax (TAVT) revisions
  - Modifies distribution of TAVT revenues between the state and local governments
  - Reduces TAVT rate on out-of-state vehicles, when registered in GA, to 3 percent
  - Reduces TAVT rate on vehicles transferred through divorce to 1 percent
  - Modifies taxation of kit cars and pre-1963 vehicles, and payment of tax on certain buses

Est’d state revenue impact, FY19-23: ($92) mil
Tax Policy in the 2018 Legislative Session

- **HB 332 – GA Outdoor Stewardship Trust Act**
  - Dedicates a portion of sales tax collections from sporting goods retailers to the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Trust Fund
  - Initially 40 percent of collections beginning FY 2020, may be increased to up to 80 percent by future legislation
  - Subject to a voter referendum in Nov 2018

Est’d state revenue impact, FY20-23: ($82) mil
Tax Policy in the 2018 Legislative Session

- **HB 696 – High-tech data center exemption**
  - Creates new sales tax exemption for high-technology data center (HTDC) equipment, subject to
    - A minimum investment threshold of between $100 million and $250 million over seven years, depending on county size, and
    - Creating a minimum of 20 new quality jobs

*Est’d state revenue impact, FY19-23: ($50-75) mil*
Tax Policy in the 2018 Legislative Session

- HB 697 – Nonprofit health centers exemption
  - Extends expiration of existing sales tax exemption for nonprofit health centers and volunteer health clinics
    - from June 30, 2018 to June 30, 2019

*Est’d state revenue impact, FY19: ($2) mil*
Tax Policy in the 2018 Legislative Session

- **HB 735 – Railroad track maintenance tax credit**
  - Credit for maintenance expenditures related to railroad track owned or leased by Class III railroads
  - Equal to 50 percent of railroad track maintenance expenditures, subject to a maximum credit of $3,500 per track mile per year
  - Effective Jan 1, 2019; expires Dec 31, 2023

*Est’d state revenue impact, FY19-23: ($9-17) mil*
Tax Policy in the 2018 Legislative Session

- HB 749 – Military survivor benefits exclusion
  - Exempts benefits received by a surviving family member of a deceased service member from income tax
  - Retroactive to Jan 1, 2018

*Est'd state revenue impact, FY18-23: ($7-25) mil*
Tax Policy in the 2018 Legislative Session

- **HB 843 – Job credit for less-developed areas**
  - Extends existing credit to certain counties with a military base with 5,000 personnel or more, and
  - An industrial park owned/operated by a governmental entity
  - Credit of $3,500 per year for up to five years for each newly-created job, subject to
    - a minimum of two newly created jobs in the year and other conditions

*Est’d state revenue impact, FY19-23: ($2-12) mil*
Tax Policy in the 2018 Legislative Session

- **HB 871 – Manufacture homes exemption**
  - Creates a partial (50 percent) sales tax exemption on the sale of manufactured homes,
  - Provided the home is converted to real property within 30 days of sale

Est’d state revenue impact, FY19-23: ($17) mil
Tax Policy in the 2018 Legislative Session

- **SB 328 – Repeal of three underutilized credits**
  - **Repeals, effective Dec 31, 2018, income tax credits for**
    - *qualified transportation fringe benefits*
    - *private driver education courses*
    - *diesel particulate emission reduction technology equipment*
  - *Few taxpayers have utilized these credits since they were first offered.*

*Est’d state revenue impact, FY19-23: $6 mil*
Tax Policy in the 2018 Legislative Session

**HB 61 – Economic nexus bill**

- Objective is to increase collection of taxes already owed on online sales.
- *Estimated untaxed online sales in Georgia:*
  - Approx. $5.7 billion in FY 2017
  - Representing ≈ $228 million in lost state revenues
- *Projected to grow > 8% per year through FY 2022*

*Est’d state revenue impact, FY19-23: NA*
HB 61 Georgia Online Sales Act
and
Federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act

Prof. Lucia Smeal
School of Accountancy
Robinson College of Business

June 7, 2018
GEORGIA’S NEW ONLINE SALES TAX LAW

HB 61 adopts an economic nexus test for taxing online sales. Businesses would be subject to the nexus rule if they have

- $250,000 of in-state sales in total in the previous year

OR

- 200 or more in-state transactions per year

- Sellers would be required to collect and remit Georgia sales tax or provide the state with sales records for Georgia citizens and notify purchasers in Georgia that they must file and pay the use tax. Effective January 1, 2019.

- Annual sales and use tax statements would go to buyers and must be filed with the GA Department of Revenue, with a $500 threshold.
CAN STATES REQUIRE OUT-OF-STATE SELLERS TO COLLECT AND REMIT SALES AND USE TAX?

This is an unsettled, complex constitutional question.

Yes, if the remote seller has ‘nexus’ with the taxing state.

WHAT IS ‘NEXUS’?

From Latin, *nexus* means ‘a binding together.’

Indicates the connection a taxpayer has with a state that allows the state to exercise its taxing powers.

Legal uncertainty about enforceability of Georgia’s law pending Supreme Court decision in a South Dakota case.
1992 Quill v. North Dakota case held that an out-of-state seller must have a “physical presence” in a state to establish sufficient nexus for requiring the seller to collect and remit sales tax on goods sold within the state.

S.D. Senate Bill 106 looks to a retailer’s economic presence rather than its physical presence within the state.

Retailers must register with the state and collect sales taxes if:

a) they have more than $100,000 in sales; or
b) they have more than 200 transactions in South Dakota.

No retroactive liability.

- Georgia’s law is very similar to the South Dakota law.
South Dakota v. Wayfair
U.S. Supreme Court

- South Dakota SB 106 was effective May 1, 2016, but in March 2017 was found to be unconstitutional by a state circuit court. State S.C. affirmed in Sept. 2017. U.S. Supreme Court granted certiorari in Jan. 2018.

- Oral Arguments April 17, 2018 before U.S. Supreme Court
- Justices seemed to indicate it is more appropriate for Congress to act.
- SD has most “reasonable incarnation” of sales tax scheme.
- Concerns about small business, burdens on commerce, minimum thresholds, and retroactivity.
- Unexpected coalitions of judges, i.e., Gorsuch and Ginsburg.
- Expect a decision by end of June. A Reversal kills Quill.
Congressional proposals are pending but have not seen much action.
Key House Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte (R-Va.) has blocked consideration of federal legislation.
Members of Congress filed amicus briefs on both sides of the issue in the Wayfair case.
S.C. could reach a decision that would force Congress to act by overturning Quill with no guidelines or by simply affirming.
Amazon has conceded. Amazon has pursued state incentives for locating facilities. Large sellers may follow Amazon and stop fighting.
Consumers and online retailers should prepare themselves for state taxation of online sales. Sellers will need to develop compliance systems to calculate, collect, and remit taxes collected on internet sales.
If South Dakota law is upheld, Georgia’s law will be validated.
TAX CUTS AND JOBS ACT (TCJA)
P.L. 115-97

• Comprehensive Act with tax cuts of $1.5 trillion over the next decade. The changes affect all individuals and every type of business.

• The complex legislation took effect on January 1, 2018 and is designed to be a 10-year plan.

• The corporate rate reduction is permanent while the deduction for passthrough entities and the individual rate reductions expire after 2025.
CHANGES FOR INDIVIDUALS

Individual Tax Rates and Brackets

• Retains seven brackets while reducing tax rates to 10%, 12%, 22%, 24%, 32%, 35%, and 37%.

• The 37% rate is for single taxpayers with taxable income over $500,000 and married taxpayers filing jointly with taxable income over $600,000.

• Previously, the top rate was 39.6% at about $400,000 of income.

• **Note:** These lower rates expire after 2025 and revert to 2017 tax rates unless Congress acts before then.
STANDARD DEDUCTION and PERSONAL EXEMPTION

The standard deduction is increased to:
- $12,000 for single filers
- $18,000 for heads of household
- $24,000 for joint filers

Indexed to chained CPI.

Note: These increases expire after 2025.
- Personal Exemptions eliminated
DEDUCTIONS

For AGI deductions: **Alimony and Moving Expenses** no longer deductible.
Restricts or eliminates most **Itemized Deductions**.

**Mortgage Interest**: Deduction for mortgage interest is limited to aggregate debt of $750,000 or less, for first and second homes and home equity loans. Prospective only.

**Charitable Deductions**: Increases the deduction for donations of cash to public charities by raising the AGI percentage limit from 50% to 60%.

**Athletic Tickets**: Taxpayers can no longer get a deduction for donations to colleges or universities for the right to purchase sports tickets.

**State and Local Taxes**: Personal deductions for all state and local taxes combined are capped at $10,000 per year. This includes income taxes, real property taxes, personal property taxes, and sales taxes.

**Itemized Deduction Phase-out**: The phaseout of itemized deductions for high-income taxpayers (the “Pease” limitations) is suspended.

**Miscellaneous Itemized Deductions** no longer allowed, such as unreimbursed employee business expenses.
CHILD AND FAMILY TAX CREDITS

• The child tax credit is increased to $2,000 and allowed for children up to age 17.
• Raises the threshold for phase-out of the credit to $200,000 for singles and $400,000 for married taxpayers.
• Up to $1,400 per child is refundable for lower-income taxpayers.
• A new $500 credit is allowed for dependents who are not children of the taxpayer.
PASSTHROUGH DEDUCTION

• Covers sole proprietorships, partnerships, LLCs, and S corporations
• 20% deduction against “qualified business income”, not compensation income
• With a maximum individual rate of 37%, the tax rate on qualified passthrough income is 29.6%

The deduction is phased out for professional services businesses if the owners’ taxable income is more than $157,500 for single filers and $315,000 for joint filers. Deduction is completely lost at $207,500 for single filers and $415,000 for joint filers.

This rule does not apply to architects and engineers.
DEDUCTION BASED ON W-2 WAGES AND DEPRECIABLE ASSETS

For non-service businesses above income thresholds, deduction is limited by:

• W-2 wages paid by the business
• Cost of tangible depreciable property held by the business

These limitations are computed on a business-by-business basis, so you cannot use W-2 wages from one business to compute the deduction for a different business.
OTHER IMPORTANT POINTS

● The 20% passthrough deduction is a below-the-line deduction but is not treated as an itemized deduction. That means taxpayers can take it even if they do not itemize.

● The deduction will not lower a taxpayer’s Adjusted Gross Income (AGI). This means AGI for purposes of Georgia income taxation will not be affected.

● Georgia did not adopt the 20% passthrough deduction.
DEPRECIATION and CAPITAL INVESTMENT

100% Bonus Depreciation:
100% write-off of business assets for five years, through 2022. Purchases of both new and used property qualify.

Phase-down and Expiration: Beginning in 2023, bonus depreciation is reduced 20% each year to:
- 80% for property placed in service in 2023.
- 60% for property placed in service in 2024.
- 40% for property placed in service in 2025.
- 20% for property placed in service in 2026.

After 2026, bonus depreciation expires.
SECTION 179 EXPENSING

• Expensing limit of $1 million of business assets
• $2.5 million purchase limitation
These higher expensing limits expire after five years.

Building Improvements
• 15-year recovery period for an expanded class of property improvements.
• These building improvements now qualify for both bonus depreciation and Section 179 expensing.
CORPORATE TAX RATE

• Reduced from 35% to 21%, effective in 2018.

• The 21% is a flat rate with no brackets.

• The corporate dividends received deduction is reduced to reflect lower tax rate.
OTHER DEDUCTIONS COULD IMPACT GA INCOME

Meals and Entertainment

• Repeals the deduction for business entertainment expenses.
• Business meals still deductible.

Net Operating Losses

• Restricts net operating loss (NOL) deductions to 80% of taxable income, starting in 2018.
• Carryback of NOLs is no longer allowed, but they can be carried forward indefinitely.

Interest Deduction

• Limited to 30% of taxable income (real estate exception).
INTERNATIONAL PROVISIONS

Moves the U.S. to a modified territorial system of international taxation. Multinational corporations that own 10% or more of a foreign corporation would receive a 100% exemption on the foreign-sourced dividends.

DEEMED REPATRIATION

• Deemed Repatriation of Offshore Profits: As a transition to the lower corporate tax rate and the territorial tax system, profits now held offshore will face a one-time tax of 15.5% for liquid assets and 8% for illiquid assets.

• The tax may be paid over an 8-year period, with 8% paid in each of the first five years, 15% in the 6th year, 20% in the 7th year, and 25% in the 8th year.
TCJA AND GEORGIA LAW

Georgia uses federal AGI as starting point for individuals.

Georgia uses federal taxable income as starting point for corporations.

TCJA generally expands the federal income tax base, which could result in higher state taxes in Georgia.

The response: Georgia’s TCJA Conformity Act, HB 918
Tax Policy in the 2018 Legislative Session

- HB 918 – IRC conformity & phased-in tax reform
  - Updates the conformity of Georgia’s corporate and personal income tax to the federal tax code, reflecting all relevant changes adopted in the TCJA and other acts through Feb 9, 2018 except for the following:
    - 20 percent deduction from qualified business income
    - bonus depreciation
    - expansion of qualified property under section 179
    - changes to depreciation rules for new farm equipment
    - modifications related to contributions of capital
    - limitations on the deduction of net business income
Tax Policy in the 2018 Legislative Session

- HB 918 – IRC conformity & phased-in tax reform
  - For TY 2018, doubles the state standard deduction for PIT
  - For TY 2019, cuts CIT rate and top PIT rate from 6.0 to 5.75 percent
  - Subject to ratification by the General Assembly and Governor in January 2020, cuts CIT rate and top PIT rate from 5.75 to 5.50 percent
### Tax Policy in the 2018 Legislative Session

- **State revenue effects of IRC conformity only**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>($ millions)</th>
<th>FY 2018</th>
<th>FY 2019</th>
<th>FY 2020</th>
<th>FY 2021</th>
<th>FY 2022</th>
<th>FY 2023</th>
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<td>Personal Conformity Effects</td>
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- **State revenue effects with phased-in reforms**

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<th>($ millions)</th>
<th>FY 2018</th>
<th>FY 2019</th>
<th>FY 2020</th>
<th>FY 2021</th>
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<td>Net Revenue Effects of HB 918</td>
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<td>($255)</td>
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Tax Policy in the 2018 Legislative Session

- **Distributional effects of PIT changes**
  - Effects of IRC conformity only, select provisions incl.
    - Itemized deduction changes except changes to
      - Mortgage interest deduction and charitable contributions limit
    - Repeal of moving expense deduction

**Note:** Results reflect effect of higher federal standard deduction on decisions to itemized deductions.
Tax Policy in the 2018 Legislative Session

- **Distributional effects of PIT changes**
  - Effects with TY 2018 and 2019 phased-in reforms
    - Doubled standard deduction and 5.75% top rate

![Graph: Average Tax Change by Income Percentile (2015 $)]

Note: Results reflect effect of higher federal standard deduction on decisions to itemized deductions.
Tax Policy in the 2018 Legislative Session

- **Distributional effects of PIT changes**
  - **Effects with all phased-in reforms**
    - Doubled standard deduction and 5.50% top rate

Note: Results reflect effect of higher federal standard deduction on decisions to itemized deductions.
## Tax Policy in the 2017 Legislative Session

### Adopted Legislation – Projected revenue impact

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<tr>
<th>($ millions)</th>
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<td><strong>($582)</strong></td>
<td><strong>($438)</strong></td>
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* midpoint of low and high estimates
Tax Policy in the 2018 Legislative Session

Questions?

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lnsmeal@gsu.edu