

**Columbus Consolidated Government
Council Meeting Agenda Item**

TO:	Mayor and Councilors
AGENDA SUBJECT:	2023 Legislative Agenda – Add Ons: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Designation Of Muscogee County as A Single County Judicial Circuit- Casino Gaming Referendum- Legitimation Procedures- Municipal Court Jurisdiction- Housing Affordability- Mayor/Mayor Pro Tem Compensation- New Options Waiver Program And Comprehensive Supports Waiver Program
AGENDA SUMMARY:	Approval is requested of the add on resolutions for the 2023 Legislative Session of the Georgia General Assembly, which the Mayor and Council deem appropriate.
INITIATED BY:	Isaiah, Hugley, City Manager

Recommendation: Approval is requested of the add on resolutions for the 2023 Legislative Session of the Georgia General Assembly, which the Mayor and Council deem appropriate.

Background: Each year elected and appointed officials of the Columbus Consolidated Government develop a list of issues important to the citizens of Columbus that requires action by the Local Legislative Delegation. Once approved, a meeting will be held with the Delegation to explain the rationale behind these issues and to solicit their support. The Hometown Connection and Legislative Agenda meeting was held on October 19, 2022.

Analysis: Staff, elected and appointed officials were asked to present issues they felt were important to the operation of city government. Research and justification for these issues were presented to the City Manager and a list was prepared for presentation to the Mayor/Council.

Financial Considerations: The City is expected to receive additional revenues if many of the issues are passed by the Georgia General Assembly.

Recommendations/Actions: Approve those resolution, which the Mayor and Council deem appropriate.

1. **DESIGNATION OF MUSCOGEE COUNTY AS A SINGLE COUNTY JUDICIAL CIRCUIT:**

The Columbus Consolidated Government is requesting the local legislative delegation to the General Assembly introduce legislation to create a Muscogee Judicial Circuit comprised of judges from Muscogee County Superior Court. (*Request of Councilor Toyia Tucker, and Evelyn Mimi Woodson*)

Explanation:

See attached letter.

2. **CASINO GAMING REFERENDUM:**

The Columbus Consolidated Government is requesting the legislative delegation to the General Assembly introduce or support legislation to authorize a statewide referendum for a constitutional amendment to allow Georgia citizens to vote as to whether casino gaming should be allowed in Georgia for the purpose of Hope Scholarship funding. Further, if any such constitutional amendment is adopted, this Council requests a local referendum be established for approval or rejection of any such casino gaming in Muscogee County. (*Request of Councilor Evelyn Mimi Woodson/Carry Over From Previous Years*)

Explanation:

To provide Hope Scholarships to college bound students to ensure that a lack of funding does not prevent them from going to college, staying in college and graduating from college.

3. **LEGITIMATION PROCEDURES:**

The Columbus Consolidated Government is requesting the legislative delegation to the General Assembly introduce a resolution supporting the legislative study of legitimation procedures to make them more affordable and accessible to fathers of limited means who desire to take responsibility for a role in the life of their biological children. (*Request of Councilor Evelyn Mimi Woodson*)

Explanation:

The benefit of having two parents responsible for a child is known to have a positive effect on the child's welfare. The legislative study of the legitimation procedures required by Georgia law to determine whether they can be revised to make them more accessible and less costly would further increase well-being and economic security for the children of this State.

4. MUNICIPAL COURT JURISDICTION:

The Columbus Consolidated Government is requesting the legislative delegation to the General Assembly to amend an Act establishing the Municipal Court of Columbus, Georgia, approved August 12, 1915 (Ga. L. 1915, p. 63), as amended, particularly by an Act approved March 29, 1983 (Ga. L. 1983, p. 4443), so as to increase the civil jurisdiction amount of said Court to \$50,000; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes. (*Request of Judge Steven Smith, Municipal Court Judge*)

Explanation:

To amend an Act establishing the Municipal Court of Columbus, Georgia, approved August 12, 1915 (Ga. L. 1915, p. 63), as amended, particularly by an Act approved March 29, 1983 (Ga. L. 1983, p. 4443), so as to increase the civil jurisdiction amount of said Court to \$50,000; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

5. HOUSING AFFORDABILITY:

The Columbus Consolidated Government is requesting that the local legislative delegation introduce an amendment to said statewide legislation to allow cities and counties to enact localized anti-displacement policies for properties in Qualified Census Tracts (QCTs) and Difficult Development Areas (DDAs) economically depressed zones as defined by general law of the General Assembly. (*Request of Councilor Toyia Tucker*)

Explanation:

O.C.G.A. Section 44-7-19 prohibits city and county governments from enacting, maintaining, or enforcing “any ordinance or resolution which would regulate in any way the amount of rent to be charged for privately owned, single-family or multiple-unit residential rental property.” Rising rents compound the overall financial insecurity of many households. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines a cost-burdened household as one that spends more than 30 percent of its income on housing costs. The onslaught of pandemic-related job losses, rising health care costs, and increased cost of necessities due to inflation and supply chain issues likely worsened the outlook for many renters. The pain of rising rents and the associated financial insecurity disproportionately affects single parents, individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with multiple or intersecting identities. The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent economic fallout succeeded in shining a harsh light on the ongoing housing crisis.

6. MAYOR/MAYOR PRO TEM COMPENSATION:

The Columbus Consolidated Government is requesting that the local delegation to the General Assembly introduce a local Act setting the salary of the Mayor of Columbus, Georgia at 70% of the salary of the City Manager; and setting the salary of the Mayor Pro-Tem at 35% of the salary of the Mayor; to be effective in January, 2027; and to repeal any conflicting provisions of the Columbus Charter. (*Request of City Manager Isaiah Hugley*)

Explanation:

The Consolidated Government Pay Plan has been reviewed and approved by the Columbus Council for public safety and general government employees. The current pay study from Evergreen consultants did not make a specific recommendation for the salary of the Mayor or Mayor Pro-Tem. This Council deems it appropriate to request that the local delegation to the General Assembly introduce a local Act to set the salary of the Mayor of Columbus at 70% of the salary of the City Manager and the salary of the Mayor Pro-Tem at 35% of the Mayor, to be effective in January, 2027.

7. **NEW OPTIONS WAIVER PROGRAM AND COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORTS WAIVER PROGRAM:**

The Columbus Consolidated Government is requesting the legislative delegation to the General Assembly evaluate and appropriately fund operation of the New Options Waiver (NOW) and the Comprehensive Supports Waiver Program (COMP), which offer home- and community-based services for people with intellectual disabilities (ID) or developmental disabilities (DD). *(Request of Councilor Toyia Tucker)*

Explanation:

See attached fact sheet.

**A RESOLUTION
NO. _____**

A Resolution requesting that the local legislative delegation introduce legislation to create a Muscogee Judicial Circuit comprised of judges from Muscogee County Superior Court.

WHEREAS, seven counties in Georgia currently comprise a single judicial circuit; and,

WHEREAS, Muscogee County has grown to the point that this Council deems it appropriate to request that the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly introduce legislation to create a Muscogee Judicial Circuit comprised of judges from Muscogee County Superior Court.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA HEREBY RESOLVES:

The Columbus Council requests that the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly introduce legislation to create a Muscogee Judicial Circuit comprised of judges from Muscogee County Superior Court.

Let a copy of this resolution be forwarded by the Clerk of Council to each member of the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly.

Introduced at a regular meeting of the Council of Columbus, Georgia, held the ___ day of _____, 20__ and adopted at said meeting by the affirmative vote of _____ members of said Council.

- Councilor Allen voting _____.
- Councilor Barnes voting _____.
- Councilor Crabb voting _____.
- Councilor Davis voting _____.
- Councilor Garrett voting _____.
- Councilor House voting _____.
- Councilor Huff voting _____.
- Councilor Thomas voting _____.
- Councilor Tucker voting _____.
- Councilor Woodson voting _____.

Sandra T. Davis, Clerk of Council

B.H. "Skip" Henderson, III, Mayor

A RESOLUTION
NO. _____

WHEREAS, this Council desires to facilitate the provision of Hope Scholarships to college bound students to insure that a lack of funding does not prevent them from going to college; and,

WHEREAS, additional funding sources are necessary to be able to fully implement the Hope Scholarship program.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA, HEREBY RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

We hereby respectfully request that the local legislative delegation to the Georgia General Assembly introduce or support legislation to authorize a referendum to allow Georgia citizens to vote as to whether casino gaming should be allowed in Georgia for the purpose of Hope Scholarship funding. Let a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Clerk of Council to each member of the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly.

Let a copy of this resolution be forwarded by the Clerk of Council to each member of the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly.

Introduced at a regular meeting of the Council of Columbus, Georgia held on the _____ day of _____ 2022, and adopted at said meeting by the affirmative vote of _____ members of Council.

- Councilor Allen voting _____.
- Councilor Barnes voting _____.
- Councilor Crabb voting _____.
- Councilor Davis voting _____.
- Councilor Garrett voting _____.
- Councilor House voting _____.
- Councilor Huff voting _____.
- Councilor Thomas voting _____.
- Councilor Tucker voting _____.
- Councilor Woodson voting _____.

Sandra T. Davis, Clerk of Council

B. H. "Skip" Henderson III, Mayor

A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR MAKING LEGITIMATION PROCEDURES MORE EASILY ACCESSIBLE TO BIOLOGICAL FATHERS.

WHEREAS, Georgia law requires a biological father who is not married to the mother at the time of the child’s birth to file a separate legal petition in order to legitimate and obtain legal rights as a parent of that biological child; and,

WHEREAS, the benefit of having two parents responsible for a child is known to have a positive effect on the child’s welfare; and,

WHEREAS, there are biological fathers who desire to obtain paternal rights but may be discouraged by the lack of awareness of cost of the legitimation procedures; and,

WHEREAS, legislative study of the legitimation procedures required by Georgia law to determine whether they can be revised to make them more accessible and less costly would further increase well-being and economic security for the children of this State.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA HEREBY RESOLVES:

We respectfully request that the local delegation to the General Assembly introduce a resolution supporting the legislative study of legitimation procedures to make them more affordable and accessible to fathers of limited means who desire to take responsibility for a role in the life of their biological children.

Let a copy of this resolution be forwarded by the Clerk of Council to each member of the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly.

Introduced at a regular meeting of the Council of Columbus, Georgia, held on the ___ day of _____, 2022 and adopted at said meeting by the affirmation vote of ___ members of Council.

- Councilor Allen voting _____.
- Councilor Barnes voting _____.
- Councilor Crabb voting _____.
- Councilor Davis voting _____.
- Councilor Garrett voting _____.
- Councilor House voting _____.
- Councilor Huff voting _____.
- Councilor Thomas voting _____.
- Councilor Tucker voting _____.
- Councilor Woodson voting _____.

Sandra T. Davis, Clerk of Council

B.H. “Skip” Henderson, Mayor

A RESOLUTION

NO. _____

A Resolution requesting that the local legislative delegation amend an Act establishing the Municipal Court of Columbus, Georgia, approved August 12, 1915 (Ga. L. 1915, p. 63), as amended, particularly by an Act approved March 29, 1983 (Ga. L. 1983, p. 4443), so as to increase the civil jurisdiction amount of said Court to \$50,000; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

WHEREAS, the local Act creating the Municipal Court of Columbus, Georgia, Ga. L. 1983, p. 4443, contains a civil jurisdiction amount of \$7500.00; and,

WHEREAS, the civil jurisdiction of Municipal Court has not been updated since the 1983 amendment and even Magistrate Court jurisdiction is set at \$15,000; and,

WHEREAS, the Municipal Court can better serve the citizens of Columbus with an increased civil jurisdiction amount of \$50,000.00 and the Municipal Court Judge has recommended this change.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA HEREBY RESOLVES:

We hereby request that the local legislative delegation amend an Act establishing the Municipal Court of Columbus, Georgia, approved August 12, 1915 (Ga. L. 1915, p. 63), as amended, particularly by an Act approved March 29, 1983 (Ga. L. 1983, p. 4443), so as to increase the civil jurisdiction amount of said Court to \$50,000. Let a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to each member of the local legislative delegation to the Georgia General Assembly.

Introduced at a regular meeting of the Council of Columbus, Georgia, held the ___ day of _____, 20__ and adopted at said meeting by the affirmative vote of _____ members of said Council.

- Councilor Allen voting _____.
- Councilor Barnes voting _____.
- Councilor Crabb voting _____.
- Councilor Davis voting _____.
- Councilor Garrett voting _____.
- Councilor House voting _____.
- Councilor Huff voting _____.
- Councilor Thomas voting _____.
- Councilor Tucker voting _____.
- Councilor Woodson voting _____.

Sandra T. Davis, Clerk of Council

B.H. "Skip" Henderson, Mayor

**A RESOLUTION
NO. _____**

A Resolution requesting that the local legislative delegation introduce an amendment to said statewide legislation to allow cities and counties to enact localized anti-displacement policies for properties in Qualified Census Tracts (QCTs) and Difficult Development Areas (DDAs) economically depressed zones as defined by general law of the General Assembly.

WHEREAS, O.C.G.A. Section 44-7-19 prohibits city and county governments from enacting, maintaining, or enforcing “any ordinance or resolution which would regulate in any way the amount of rent to be charged for privately owned, single-family or multiple-unit residential rental property.”; and,

WHEREAS, rising rents compound the overall financial insecurity of many households. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines a cost-burdened household as one that spends more than 30 percent of its income on housing costs; the onslaught of pandemic-related job losses, rising health care costs, and increased cost of necessities due to inflation and supply chain issues likely worsened the outlook for many renters; the pain of rising rents and the associated financial insecurity disproportionately affects single parents, individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with multiple or intersecting identities; the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent economic fallout succeeded in shining a harsh light on the ongoing housing crisis.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA HEREBY RESOLVES:

The Columbus Council requests that the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly introduce an amendment to said statewide legislation to allow cities and counties to enact localized anti-displacement policies for properties in Qualified Census Tracts (QCTs) and Difficult Development Areas (DDAs), economically depressed zones as defined by general law of the General Assembly.

Let a copy of this resolution be forwarded by the Clerk of Council to each member of the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly.

Introduced at a regular meeting of the Council of Columbus, Georgia, held the ___ day of _____, 20__ and adopted at said meeting by the affirmative vote of _____ members of said Council.

- Councilor Allen voting _____.
- Councilor Barnes voting _____.
- Councilor Crabb voting _____.
- Councilor Davis voting _____.
- Councilor Garrett voting _____.
- Councilor House voting _____.
- Councilor Huff voting _____.
- Councilor Thomas voting _____.
- Councilor Tucker voting _____.
- Councilor Woodson voting _____.

**A RESOLUTION
NO. _____**

A Resolution requesting that the local delegation to the General Assembly introduce a local Act setting the salary of the Mayor of Columbus, Georgia at 70% of the salary of the City Manager; and setting the salary of the Mayor Pro-Tem at 35% of the salary of the Mayor; to be effective in January, 2027; and to repeal any conflicting provisions of the Columbus Charter.

WHEREAS, the Consolidated Government Pay Plan has been reviewed and approved by the Columbus Council for public safety and general government employees; and,

WHEREAS, the current pay study from Evergreen consultants did not make a specific recommendation for the salary of the Mayor or Mayor Pro-Tem; and,

WHEREAS, this Council deems it appropriate to request that the local delegation to the General Assembly introduce a local Act to set the salary of the Mayor of Columbus at 70% of the salary of the City Manager and the salary of the Mayor Pro-Tem at 35% of the Mayor, to be effective in January, 2027.

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA HEREBY
RESOLVES:**

We hereby request that the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly introduce a local Act to set the salary of the Mayor of Columbus, Georgia at 70% of the salary of the City Manager and the salary of the Mayor Pro-Tem at 35% of the Mayor, to be effective in January, 2027; and to repeal any conflicting provisions of the Columbus Charter.

Let a copy of this resolution be forwarded by the Clerk of Council to each member of the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly.

Introduced at a regular meeting of the Council of Columbus, Georgia, held the ___ day of _____, 2022 and adopted at said meeting by the affirmative vote of _____ members of said Council.

- Councilor Allen voting _____.
- Councilor Barnes voting _____.
- Councilor Crabb voting _____.
- Councilor Davis voting _____.
- Councilor Garrett voting _____.
- Councilor House voting _____.
- Councilor Huff voting _____.
- Councilor Thomas voting _____.
- Councilor Tucker voting _____.
- Councilor Woodson voting _____.

A RESOLUTION
NO. _____

A Resolution requesting that the local legislative delegation evaluate and appropriately fund operation of the New Options Waiver (NOW) and the Comprehensive Supports Waiver Program (COMP), which offer home- and community-based services for people with intellectual disabilities (ID) or developmental disabilities (DD).

WHEREAS, the New Options Waiver (NOW) and the Comprehensive Supports Waiver Program (COMP) offer home- and community-based services for people with intellectual disabilities (ID) or developmental disabilities (DD); and,

WHEREAS, goals for participants in the NOW program, which serves individuals with less intensive needs than those in the COMP program, include: Avoiding the need for more intensive services. Increasing independence and quality of life of individuals with I/DD; increasing the flexibility of service planning and delivery to meet exact individual needs; providing the opportunity for all participants to elect to direct their services to the extent that they choose; and ensuring the health, safety and welfare of NOW participants; and,

WHEREAS, goals for participants in the COMP program include: avoiding the need for institutional placement; increasing independence and quality of life of individuals with ID/DD who have intensive or comprehensive support needs; facilitating the transition of institutionalized individuals to community living; offering opportunities statewide for participant direction by waiver participants who have intensive or comprehensive support needs; and ensuring the health, safety and welfare of COMP program participants; and,

WHEREAS, there are more than 12,000 people with developmental disabilities who are served by the NOW/COMP programs in Georgia; and,

WHEREAS, this Council desires that the local legislative delegation evaluate and appropriately fund operation of the New Options Waiver (NOW) and the Comprehensive Supports Waiver Program (COMP), which offer home- and community-based services for people with intellectual disabilities (ID) or developmental disabilities (DD).

NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA HEREBY RESOLVES:

We hereby request that the local legislative delegation to the Georgia General Assembly evaluate and appropriately fund operation of the New Options Waiver (NOW) and the Comprehensive Supports Waiver Program (COMP), which offer home- and community-based services for people with intellectual disabilities (ID) or developmental disabilities (DD), through the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD), Division of Developmental Disabilities. Let a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to each member of the local legislative delegation to the Georgia General Assembly.

Introduced at a regular meeting of the Council of Columbus, Georgia, held the ____ day of _____, 20__ and adopted at said meeting by the affirmative vote of _____ members of said Council.

Councilor Allen voting	_____.
Councilor Barnes voting	_____.
Councilor Crabb voting	_____.
Councilor Davis voting	_____.
Councilor Garrett voting	_____.
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Councilor Huff voting	_____.
Councilor Thomas voting	_____.
Councilor Tucker voting	_____.
Councilor Woodson voting	_____.

Sandra T. Davis, Clerk of Council

B. H. "Skip" Henderson III, Mayor