

2023 Georgia Legislative Session Preview



Thursday, December 15, 2023

About Georgians for the Arts

Georgians for the Arts (GA4Arts), a 501c4 established in 2019, has the mission to provide vision, leadership, and resources that ensure the growth, prosperity, and sustainability of arts and culture in Georgia.

GA4Arts advances its mission through year-round arts and culture advocacy activities, year-round programs for artists, and the networking of artists, arts educators, local arts organizations, and business leaders, all working towards a better Georgia.

Georgians for the Arts is supported exclusively from Georgians and Georgia-based arts and culture organizations.

Individual membership starts as low as \$5/month with student memberships available. Arts and culture organizations are also available for as low as \$25/month.

Become a member of Georgians for the Arts today by visiting georgiansforthearts.org/membership.

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Georgia Legislation

- SR 135 - Sports Betting
- SB 142 - Lottery for Education; lottery game of sports wagering in this state
- HB 586 - Georgia Economic Recovery Act of 2021 (sales tax exemption)
- HB 821 - Income tax; Georgia taxpayers to make certain voluntary contributions to Georgia Council for the Arts
- And others impacting the arts and culture community of Georgia

View all legislation Georgians for the Arts is tracking: georgiansforthearts.org/bills.

Agenda

Part I: 2023 Legislative Session Preview (12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.)

The first part of this webinar will include speakers from a cross-section of organizations sharing legislation of interest to them, how they responded to the bill, and their strategies to help educate legislative members about the pros and cons of the legislation's impact on the arts and culture community.

Panel Speakers Include:

- Marcy Breffle, President, Georgia Association of Museums
- Eileen Edwards, Vice President, Dance Educators of Georgia
- Patrick Kelsey, President & CEO, Georgians for the Arts
- Laura McCarty, President, Georgia Humanities
- Mala Sharma, President, Georgia Music Partners
- Allan Vella, President & CEO, Fox Theatre

Part II: 2023 Legislative Session Toolkit (~ 1:30 p.m.)

- Georgia's Legislative process
- What, and how, to ask for something from legislative members
- Building a year-round strategy to engage policy-makers
- BillTrack 50 Demonstration, Karen Suhaka, LegiNation
- Georgia's Arts Action Center tour, Patrick Kelsey, Georgians for the Arts

A recording of today's preview will be available on georgiansforthearts.org and youtube.com/@georgiansforthearts

Panel Speakers



Marcy Breffle, President, Georgia Association of Museums

Marcy Breffle serves as the president of the Georgia Association of Museums (GAM). GAM is a statewide organization dedicated to serving a diverse membership in a way that establishes a responsive network, provides a resource base, and promotes professionalism so that Georgia's museum community is strong, effective, and proactive. Marcy is a consultant at Purpose Possible, an Atlanta-based fundraising and development firm. Before joining Purpose Possible, Marcy spent seven years as the Education Manager at Historic Oakland Foundation in Atlanta. She studied history at the University of Georgia and received a graduate degree in public history from Georgia State University.

About Georgia Association of Museums



The mission of the Georgia Association of Museums (GAM) is to serve the entire state of Georgia as a private, non-profit museum and gallery association.

GAM is a statewide organization dedicated to serving a diverse membership in a way that establishes a responsive network, provides a resource base and promotes professionalism so that Georgia's museum community is strong, effective, and proactive.

www.gamuseums.com



Eileen Edwards, Vice President, Dance Educators of Georgia

Eileen Edwards is an arts educator and advocate based in the Atlanta area. Her professional teaching experience includes being on faculty at both Fulton and Cobb County public school magnet programs for the past twenty years along with teaching and choreographing at private studios, the Atlanta Ballet, and regional theaters. Her students are currently working on Broadway and national tours, and in dance companies across the country.

Her choreography has been featured at both local, national, and international dance and theatre festivals including the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Scotland.

Due to her interest in advocacy and non-profit work, she completed her MA in Arts Administration at Goucher College and has subsequently taken on more advocacy roles as a member of Georgians for the Arts, Americans for the Arts, Dance Educators of Georgia Society, National Dance Educators Organization, and Georgia Association of Educators. She is currently serving her third year as Vice President of DEGAS, as well as being the advocacy representative for the state for NDEO. She has participated in multiple events with Georgians for the Arts including Capitol Arts Day in Atlanta, GA, Arts Action Summit in Washington, DC and multiple advocacy roundtables and workshops.

She is especially interested in any legislation that affects education and funding for the arts across the state. Recent bills that are of concern are HB 1028 which deals with how districts are decided because she has seen first-hand how this affects school board selection and overcrowding at schools. Another troubling bill is HB 1084 which challenges what teachers can teach, and HB 4035 regarding transgender discrimination. Eileen is excited to help get our organization focused and organized for the upcoming legislative session so that we can effectively advocate for the arts across the state of Georgia.

About Dance Educators of Georgia

Dance Educators of GA Society, Inc. non-profit was founded in 2018 to serve as the state affiliate of the National Dance Education Organization (NDEO). DEGAS serves dance educators and students by providing professional development for teachers, supporting dance students with educational opportunities, advocating for dance education, keeping abreast of current dance research, and promoting the National Honors Society for Dance, and provide special opportunities for members.



www.degasteachers.org



Patrick A. Kelsey, President & CEO, Georgians for the Arts

Patrick A. Kelsey is a Professor of Business at the Savannah College of Art and Design. He has worked as Managing Director and Development Director for Off-Broadway's Irish Repertory Theatre, General Manager of Broadway's Lyric Theatre, and Director of Operations for Broadway Across America.

Patrick has served as a grant panelist for the Nancy Quinn Grant for ART/NY, Georgia Council for the Arts, South Arts, and the City of Savannah.

He holds a BS in Entrepreneurship & Small Business Management and Technical Theatre from Ball State University, an MFA in Theatre Management & Producing from Columbia University, and an MBA from Nyack College.

Patrick is an avid arts and culture advocate, and he leads both the Arts and Culture Alliance of Chatham County and Georgians for the Arts.

He currently serves as Georgia's state captain for American for the Arts' National Arts Action Summit and as a Chair for the City of Savannah Cultural Affairs Commission. He lives in Savannah with his wife, Tara, and his artistically-talented daughter, Eliza.

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GA4Arts advances its mission through year-round arts and culture advocacy activities, year-round programs for artists, and the networking of artists, arts educators, local arts organizations, and business leaders, all working towards a better Georgia.

GA4Arts is a member of the Americans for the Arts State Arts Action Network. The 501c4 assumed the advocacy activities started and supported by ArtsGeorgia in 2013.

www.georgiansforthearts.org





Laura T. McCarty, President, Georgia Humanities Council

Laura McCarty became President of Georgia Humanities in 2018. She joined the GH team as Program Assistant in 1994 and, during her career, led the grant program and National History Day Georgia. Laura also served as deputy to former President Jamil Zainaldin, with responsibilities for planning, fundraising, cultivation of partnerships, and advocacy.

Laura McCarty is a past president of the Georgia Council for Social Studies and the Georgia Association of Historians, as well as a Board member for the Kiwanis Club and a Board of Selections member for Georgia Women of Achievement. In 2021, Governor Brian Kemp appointed Laura to the Georgia Historical Records Advisory Council.

A native of South Carolina, Laura McCarty holds an MA in Comparative Literature from the University of Georgia and a BA in English and French from Wofford College, where she also was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa. She is the author of *Coretta Scott King: a Biography* (Greenwood/ABC-Clio, 2009), as well as over 30 articles for the *New Georgia Encyclopedia*. Laura lives in Decatur.

About Georgia Humanities

Georgia Humanities is a 501(c)3 non-profit, founded in 1971, which connects people and communities to encourage understanding and inspire hope. Georgia's affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, we conduct and support programming that engages all ages and backgrounds to explore what shapes us as individuals and binds us together as Georgians. We work with people and organizations in rural, suburban, and rural communities.



Programs that analyze and interpret historical artworks or traditions are within the scope of humanities content and methodology. GH has made grants and partnered with organizations with arts missions; however, we do not support the creation or performance of new works.

www.georgiahumanities.org



Mala Sharma, President, Georgia Music Partners

Mala Sharma is a creative thinker with financial skills and a proven leader of high-performing, collaborative, cross-functional teams. Sharma's broad-based experience in the entertainment industry includes business development, management, and strategic partnerships in music production and digital entertainment.

Sharma has been consulting in the creative industries since 2015, working with clients in all aspects of the entertainment industry clients including Wabi Sabi Sound, Avatar Events Group, Sound Diplomacy, and Dekalb Entertainment Commission.

With 20+ years in the music & entertainment industry, Sharma has collaborated on some of the most successful albums of our time. Her work with GRAMMY-winning music producers Rick Rubin and Brendan O'Brien has resulted in timeless, multi-platinum recordings by artists such as Bruce Springsteen, Pearl Jam, Johnny Cash, Tom Petty, and more.

Sharma also established City National Bank's presence in Atlanta as VP by building and fostering successful relationships with high-profile entertainment clients. Sharma oversaw marketing and sponsorship for the bank's flagship Atlanta office. Sharma's career also includes tenures at Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Def American Records, and Fifty Seven Records (a Sony label).

In 2019, Sharma was appointed to the Georgia Film, Music, and Digital Entertainment Commission by Governor Kemp. Her service also includes the Napster Creative Advisory Board, Showrunner Backstage Pass Board and US IP Alliance, Georgia IP Association Entertainment, Arts and Sports Committee, the Board of Governors for The Recording Academy Atlanta Chapter, and the advisory board for the UGA's Music Business Program.

A recognized leader in entertainment advocacy, she frequently brings her industry expertise to speaking engagements at conferences, meetings, and summits.

About Georgia Music Partners

Georgia Music Partners (a Georgia not-for-profit 501(c)(6) corporation) exists because we believe that music matters to the people of Georgia – in our communities, in our schools, and in our economy. Our mission is to help Georgia’s music industry grow to become one of the country’s biggest and best, which promotes both job growth and culture in our state. GMP has been instrumental in leading efforts at the local, city, and state levels, from conducting economic impact studies, and white papers, to passing the Georgia Music Investment Act in 2017. Georgia Music Partners continues to work proactively with the city, county, and state leaders to advance policy and legislative initiatives to protect, grow, and market opportunities for the 45,000 music industry professionals around the state.



www.georgiamusicpartners.org



Karen Suhaka, Founder & Catalyst, LegiNation

Karen started her career as a mathematician in data analysis way back in the way back days running a consulting firm and getting up to all sorts of database hijinks. She got interested in legislative data and founded BillTrack50 in 2011. Much to her surprise, she moved from Denver to Birmingham, UK, in 2016 and now has twice as much politics to keep up with, which she'll tell you is not for the faint of heart!

About LegiNation

We strive to make complicated legislative information as accessible as possible. Search results from all states and Congress are presented in an easy-to-understand grid that includes links to more detailed information. We present congressional bills in the same format across all states. We also provide full contact details for all current legislators to encourage citizens to get involved.



BillTrack50 offers both a free and a paid service to help you follow legislation. Our genuinely free service allows citizens to search by keyword or bill number to discover and review an unlimited number of state and federal bills. Unlimited free access to bill data is fundamental to the working of our sharing tools and is fundamental to our mission. It won't be going away.

www.legination.com



Allan Vella, President & CEO, Fox Theatre

Allan C. Vella is the President and CEO of the Fox Theatre, Inc. in Atlanta, Georgia, a position he has held since June 2006.

A graduate of the University of Iowa with a BA in Liberal Arts and Arts Management, Vella served as the Director of the Student Commission on Programming and Entertainment while at Iowa.

Vella has worked professionally in the Facility Management field since 1986, managing theatres, arenas, amphitheatres, and exhibition facilities. His experience spans a wide range of events, including NCAA Tournaments, MLB, NHL, fine arts, corporate events, concerts, Broadway, and Presidential visits, to name just a few.

As the President and CEO, Vella is responsible for overseeing all operations that make up the Fox Theatre, as well as programming for the facility. The Fox Theatre averages 200-250 performances and hosts over 600,000- 700,000 guests annually - offering an impressive range of events from rock concerts to Broadway, ballet, comedy, and movies.

Under Vella's direction, the 4,665-seat Fox Theatre has been consistently ranked in the top three non-residency theatres in North America for gross ticket sales by industry trade magazines Pollstar, Billboard, and VenuesNow. In addition, the Fox Theatre was named the 2019 & 2017 International Entertainment Buyers Association Theatre of the Year, as well as declared a Top Stop of the Decade by VenuesNow for the highest number of tickets sold, and Billboard Magazine ranked the theatre the 2nd highest grossing venue worldwide under 5,000 seats, and Pollstar ranked the Fox 3rd worldwide for ticket sales for its category. Vella was named one of VenuesNow 2019 All-Stars, and also in 2021, Vella was named one of Atlanta's top 500 leaders by Atlanta Magazine. In 2014 Vella was nominated as one of Atlanta's most admired CEOs by the Atlanta Business Chronicle.

Prior to joining the Fox Theatre, Vella worked for SMG, the world's largest facility management company. His positions included that of General Manager for Ford Park in Beaumont, Texas, where he operated a 227-acre facility consisting of a 16,000-seat amphitheater, a 10,000-seat arena, an exhibit hall, and a State Fair Grounds. Vella's first assignment with SMG was at the Dow Event Center in Saginaw, Michigan, where he oversaw the securing of naming rights, privatization, renovation, and operation of a 7,200-seat arena and a 2,300-seat theater.

Other notable experience for Vella includes thirteen years with Olympia Entertainment in Detroit, Michigan, where he held influential positions such as Senior Director and General Manager of The Fox Theatre, Detroit. Director of Merchandising for the Detroit Tigers, Detroit Red Wings, Detroit Zoo, and parent company Little Caesars Pizza and Executive Director of the Glens Falls Civic Center in Glens Falls, New York.

Vella is a Member of the International Association of Venue Managers, a graduate of IAVM's Venue Management School, a member of the IAVM Performing Arts Committee, a member of Georgia Arts and Culture Venues Coalition, the Broadway League, a Board Member-Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau, Board Member-Midtown Alliance, Board Member- Georgia Tourism Foundation, Rotary International as well as Variety of Georgia, a children's charity. He and his wife Nicole have three children and reside in Decatur, Georgia.



About Fox Theatre

The historic Fox Theatre, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, is one of Atlanta's premiere venues for live entertainment. The Fox hosts more than 150 performances a year, ranging from Broadway to rock to comedy to movies. In the past decade, the Fox has been widely recognized by leading industry influencers for excellence in arts and entertainment, being recognized as a top-grossing venue worldwide by Billboard and Pollstar Magazines, as well as given the distinction by Rolling Stone Magazine as one of "The Best Big Rooms in America."

In addition to the world-famous theatre, Fox's spectacular ballrooms have hosted everything from weddings to proms to corporate events. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Fox has reinvested millions back into the restoration, preservation, and capital improvement of the building. Through the Fox Theater Institute, the Fox has given back to the community through the preservation and restoration of other historic theaters in Georgia, providing essential technical, historical, and organizational support and education to performing arts venues.

www.foxtheatre.org