

# 2024 Washington, D.C. Fly-In



As part of the Cobb Chamber's mission to advance pro-business initiatives at the local, state, and federal levels, a delegation of 44 business and civic leaders visited the nation's capital from September 10 to 12, delivering the 2024 Federal Agenda to members of the Georgia Congressional Delegation and agency staff.

This document highlights the accomplishments that our participants achieved during our time in Washington, D.C. It is our hope that you will share with your team to illustrate the return on investment for your participation.

Collaborating with our members, the annual Washington, D.C. Fly-In exemplifies how the Cobb Chamber advocates and partners to enhance the state's business climate. During our time on 'The Hill,' we jointly present our federal legislative agenda, as approved by the Cobb Chamber Board of Directors. Our goal is to help attendees forge valuable connections with members of Cobb County's congressional delegation, federal officials, and each other. This annual trip is one of the many ways the Chamber unites Cobb's business community to present a cohesive voice to our elected officials and civic leaders at the local, state, and federal levels.

The Chamber cannot provide opportunities such as this without the support and investment of our sponsors. We thank Freeman Mathis Decisions and The Home Depot for being our co-presenting sponsors. In addition, we thank Cumberland Community Improvement District and Town Center Community Improvement District for their annual transportation sponsorship and the following event and program sponsors: Aaron's, Arylessence, Axis Infrastructure, Atlanta Braves, Croy Engineering, Georgia Power, Kennesaw State University, Lockheed Martin, Metro Atlanta Chamber and RaceTrac.

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## 2024 Event Recap

While in Washington, D.C., the Cobb Chamber delegation exhibited a strong commitment to representing our 2,700 member organizations comprehensively. Their efforts encompassed a range of critical issues, including fostering a resilient economy, responsible investments in infrastructure and transportation enhancements, a renewed focus on healthcare options for businesses, and safeguarding the vitality of our military resources and the continued support of the surrounding defense community.

During meetings with elected officials and federal agency representatives, Chamber President & CEO Sharon Mason, along with fellow Chamber delegates, effectively conveyed the essential messages outlined in our 2024 Federal Legislative Agenda. They also provided copies of this agenda to key personnel within the offices of senators and congressional members, fostering productive discussions. Below, we summarize the feedback and communication received from members of our congressional delegation.

Photos can be viewed at <https://tinyurl.com/2024dcflyin>.

## Day 1: Tuesday, September 10

### OPENING LUNCH

In what has become an annual tradition, the Fly-In participants gathered for an opening lunch to hear from the presenting sponsors of the program, Hillary Thrower of the Home Depot, and Trey Paris of Freeman Mathis Decisions. President and CEO Sharon Mason set the tone for the Fly-In, stressing the importance of the trip while also leading a round robin of introductions of the group, which comprised of veterans and new participants alike. As in past years, the Congress and Senate were returning from the August recess and face looming deadlines on budget agreements and the impending 'Lame Duck Session' after the November election.

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### SENATOR JON OSSOFF

The first official meeting of the Fly-In was with senior U.S. Senator Jon Ossoff, and his legislative team. Introduced by Government Affairs Chair and co-presenting sponsor, Hillary Thrower of The Home Depot, he met with the delegation in the Senate Judiciary Hearing Room inside the Hart Senate Office Building.

Senator Ossoff emphasized his commitment to supporting law enforcement and improving infrastructure in Georgia, highlighting recent appropriations for upgraded radio systems for deputies, and recognized his work with Sheriff Craig Owens.

He stressed the importance of being accessible to constituents and solving their problems, from national tax policy to personal issues like passport needs. Ossoff praised the bipartisan infrastructure law for bringing significant investment to Georgia's transportation, broadband, and rural electrification. He discussed efforts to attract capital investment in advanced energy, automotive, and semiconductor manufacturing, noting Georgia's success in securing significant investments.

The senator also acknowledged the importance of supporting military installations and mentioned progress in planning for new missions and upgrades at various bases, including Dobbins Air Reserve Base. Addressing a key priority of the Cobb Chamber, he discussed challenges related to the expiration of the R&D deduction and efforts to extend it, the likelihood of a continuing resolution to avoid a government shutdown and how he's addressing the U.S. Postal Services delays.





## FLY-IN RECEPTION AND DINNER

The annual Cobb Chamber Reception and Dinner for members of our congressional delegation and staff was held at The Monocle, the closest restaurant to the U.S. Capitol building with a 50-year history.

Lt. Gen. John P. Healy attended the reception and dinner as a special guest. He serves as the Chief of Air Force Reserve, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Arlington, Virginia, and Commander, Air Force Reserve Command, Robins Air Force Base, Georgia. As Chief of Air Force Reserve, he serves as principal adviser on reserve matters to the Secretary of the Air Force and the Air Force Chief of Staff. As Commander of Air Force Reserve Command, he has full responsibility for the supervision of all Air Force Reserve units around the world. In addition, from July 2019–July 2021, he served as the Commander, 22nd Air Force, Dobbins ARB.

Rep. Dr. Rich McCormick spoke to the attendees at the reception and Rep. and Mrs. Barry Loudermilk and Rep. Majorie Taylor Greene attended the dinner. In addition, the following staff were in attendance:

### Chief of Staff and Legislative Directors:

- Rob Adkerson, Chief of Staff, Office of Rep. Loudermilk
- Anna Cullen, Legislative Director, Office of Sen. Ossoff
- Josh Delaney, Legislative Director, Office of Sen. Warnock
- Annie Wang, Deputy Legislative Director, Office of Sen. Warnock

### Additional Congressional Staff:

- Annette Christie, Legislative Assistant, Office of Sen. Warnock
- Eric Johnson, Senior Advisor, Military Affairs, Office of Rep. Loudermilk
- Ty Sharp, Director of Operations, Office of Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene
- Gavin Thompson, Senior Field Representative, Office of Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene
- Ethan Whiting, Military Legislative Assistant, Office of Sen. Warnock

Events such as this cannot happen without the generosity of our sponsors. We thank reception sponsors Axis Infrastructure and RaceTrac, and dinner sponsors Arylessence, Georgia Power, and the Metro Atlanta Chamber, along with Freeman Mathis Decisions and The Home Depot, our presenting sponsors, for an amazing night of great food, laughter, and fellowship.



## Day 2: Wednesday, September 11

### LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING MEETINGS

Completed in the spring of 1933, the seven-story Longworth Building is the second of three office buildings constructed for the U.S. House of Representatives, where the Fly-In participants spent the day for meetings.

#### JUSTIN LUMADUE

Vice President, Government Affairs, U.S. Chamber of Commerce



The series of meetings began with Lumadue providing an overview of the key legislative priorities and challenges facing the 118th United States Congress leading up to its lame-duck end. He emphasized the critical need for effective advocacy and education to navigate legislative hurdles to the Cobb Chamber attendees.

Lumadue discussed the ongoing budget debate, which could either ensure government funding or lead to a shutdown, as well as the passing of the Defense Authorization Act. Looking ahead to 2025, he highlighted the importance of Congress addressing the debt ceiling and the expiration of provisions from the 2017 tax reform, which will have a significant impact on the business community.

During the discussion, participants emphasized the importance of maintaining competitive corporate tax rates and considered the potential consequences of increasing them. Lumadue also stressed the need for local educational efforts to address the loss of institutional knowledge due to high turnover in Congress. Additionally, the rollout of the Corporate Transparency Act has faced challenges, with low compliance rates and significant administrative burdens on businesses.

#### U.S. SENATOR REVEREND RAPHAEL WARNOCK

In between committee meetings, Georgia's junior senator, the Reverend Raphael Warnock, stopped by to speak to the group. He expressed deep gratitude for the support he has received from the people of Georgia. He proudly highlighted his involvement in recent significant legislative efforts, such as the CHIPS and Science Act, the bipartisan infrastructure law, and the Inflation Reduction Act, all of which are bringing jobs and resources back to Cobb County. He reiterated his support for tax relief, which includes the expansion of the child tax credit, the low-income housing tax credit, and the R&D tax credit. He also passionately spoke about the need for Medicaid expansion in Georgia, highlighting its benefits for working-class Georgians and its economic rationale, and asked for the help of the audience to share that message with local lawmakers.



Warnock underscored his focus on local investments in Cobb County, including funding for air traffic control equipment, low-emission school buses, and various mobility projects in the community improvement districts.

Before heading to his next meeting Warnock mentioned securing funding for the 81st Army Reserve Center at Dobbins Air Force Reserve Base and highlighted the importance of Lockheed Martin's production line, reinforcing his commitment to supporting military communities.





## **SCOTT GOLDSTEIN**

### **Deputy Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy**

Next on the agenda was an update from the U.S. Department of Transportation. No stranger to our state, Scott Goldstien, a former Chief of Staff to two Democratic Georgia congressmen, and now the deputy assistant secretary for transportation policy, discussed the progress and impact of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), emphasizing its role in enhancing transportation infrastructure across the United States. The BIL has reached its halfway point, with nearly \$460 billion allocated to more than 60,000 projects nationwide. These projects aim to build cleaner, safer, and more accessible transportation systems, improve freight mobility, support supply chains, and create numerous well-paying jobs. Significant achievements include the modernization of more than 10,200 bridges, repair of 175,000 miles of roads, and upgrades to more than 1,100 airports.

Goldstein stressed the importance of community support and engagement in the success of these projects. He discussed various grant programs available to local communities, such as the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program and the Railroad Crossing Elimination Program, which aim to address long-standing transportation challenges and improve safety.

Goldstein also touched on workforce development, highlighting specific set-asides in programs like the Federal Transit Administration's Low and No Emission Bus Program, which support training and employment in the transportation sector. He discussed the department's efforts to manage supply chain issues and ensure timely project delivery to mitigate the impact of rising costs due to inflation.

In his closing remarks, Goldstein encouraged ongoing communication and collaboration between the USDOT and local communities. He invited questions and offered support to help communities navigate the grant application process and make the most of federal funding opportunities.



## **CONGRESSMAN DR. RICH MCCORMICK**

In between bill markup meetings, Congressman McCormick made a brief visit to the group, expressing his gratitude for the opportunity to attend the Tuesday reception. He mentioned the previous night's presidential debate and emphasized the importance of business and economic growth no matter the outcome of the election. McCormick reiterated his belief that reducing regulations and lowering taxes on businesses would lead to more job creation and higher tax revenue. He acknowledged the divisions across the political spectrum, highlighting the value of self-determination. He also advocated for term limits on long-serving government employees, asserting that business owners are better equipped to drive progress.

The Congressman then shifted his focus to the ongoing budget debates in the House and Senate. He explained that 75% of the federal budget is allocated to non-discretionary spending on programs like Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security. As he wrapped his remarks, he stressed the need for honest, realistic discussions about the country's financial challenges, even if such conversations are politically difficult.

## MATT BORON

### Executive Director, Association of Defense Communities

Boron visited members to discuss the importance of advocacy for Dobbins Air Force Reserve Base. The Cobb Chamber, through Team Dobbins, already collaborates with base personnel, but Boron highlighted additional programs from the Department of Defense Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation (OLDCC) that could be applied for and implemented in Cobb County. These programs support local governments and the community outside the base in areas such as noise mitigation, infrastructure projects, installation resilience, and intergovernmental support agreements to strengthen partnerships with military bases.



### CONGRESSMAN BARRY LOUDERMILK

Longtime Chamber supporter and friend, Congressman Loudermilk expressed how grateful he was to spend time with the group while in D.C. both at dinner and in the official meeting setting. Like the others, he emphasized how busy the schedule has been since returning from the August recess. He gave shoutouts to friends in the audience, including longtime supporters from Arylessence which is in his district. Because of the relationship with the company, he is the founding co-chair of the Fragrance Caucus on the Hill. He emphasized the need to renew key provisions of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which are crucial for small businesses and research and development.

Loudermilk addressed the threat posed by China in the semiconductor industry and efforts to find alternative sources for rare earth minerals. He stressed the importance of bipartisan cooperation to tackle issues like tax policy and regulatory reform, despite the challenges of hyper-partisanship.

The Congressman also discussed data privacy legislation, balancing regulatory requirements with protecting businesses and individuals, and efforts to modernize financial service regulations. He expressed concerns about the burdensome requirements of beneficial ownership reporting on small businesses.

Additionally, he acknowledged the importance of supporting military personnel and veterans, including improving insurance coverage for reservists.

### CONGRESSWOMAN MARJORIE TAYLOR GREENE

New to the Cobb County Congressional Delegation, Congresswoman Greene introduced herself to the group and shared her background as a small businesswoman. She and her father own Taylor Construction Company, which has expanded into 11 states. Her commercial construction industry background has helped her understand the position that business owners are in under the current economic and regulatory environment. She apologized for the burden that D.C. places on business and stressed that she is a fighter for cutting as many regulations as possible and removing barriers to doing business in the United States.



She continued to share her fears that the nation is on the brink of a recession, citing high inflation, rising housing costs, and high interest rates coupled with a high debt rate. Congresswoman Greene promised the audience that as long as she is in office, she will oppose tax increases and burdensome regulations on business owners.

As a fellow Georgian and taxpayer, she emphasized the importance of bringing appropriations—citizens' tax dollars—back to her district, which includes Cobb County. She described this as an "America First Policy," focusing on returning funds to the 14th district, where she helped secure \$9 million. Additionally, she committed to collaborating with local officials to understand the newly incorporated areas of Cobb County in her district and to foster a partnership moving forward.

To introduce the Fly-In delegation to other members of the Georgia Congressional Delegation, Congressman Mike Collins of Jackson and Congressman Buddy Carter of Pooler were invited to take part in the meeting agenda. Congressman Collins serves on the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, the House Committee on Natural Resources and the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology. Congressman Carter serves on the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, and serves as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Environment, Manufacturing, and Critical Materials. He is also on the House Budget Committee.

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### CONGRESSMAN MIKE COLLINS

Congressman Collins described his busy schedule and shared his background as a second-generation member of the trucking industry. He emphasized his commitment to representing small businesses and reducing government overreach while in office. As a first-term Congressman, Collins highlighted his legislative achievements, which includes getting his first bill signed into law. He described it as a common-sense measure to support law enforcement - the TRANQ Research Act, which directs the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) to deepen its partnerships and strategically focus on the science needed to detect, identify, and better understand synthetic opioids.



He also discussed his efforts in passing amendments to support water resource projects in Georgia and Alabama, and his work on hypersonics, including pushing through amendments to support hypersonic technology development.

Collins emphasized the need to reduce excessive regulations and government overreach, particularly in areas affecting small businesses and the trucking industry. During his 19-months in office, he has introduced a bill to help small businesses leverage AI technology, ensuring they have access to methodologies and programs developed by NIST. He discussed the future of the trucking industry, including the potential for autonomous trucks and changes in truck weight regulations, expressing support for increasing truck weight limits with additional safety measures.

Collins highlighted the importance of hypersonic technology for national security and economic growth, noting that the U.S. needs to stay ahead of countries like China in this field. He addressed issues related to the Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule and the need for timely environmental reviews to avoid project delays.

Finally, Collins outlined his goals for the next Congress, including pushing for regulatory and tort reform to streamline processes and reduce bureaucratic delays.



### CONGRESSMAN BUDDY CARTER

Congressman Carter emphasized the need for a continuing resolution (CR) to keep the government running, as only four out of 12 appropriations bills have been passed for the federal budget year starting October 1st. He detailed the Speaker's proposed CR, which is coupled with the SAVE Act, mandating proof of citizenship for voter registration. He described this as common-sense legislation to appease the far-right faction of the Republican Party. Like other speakers, Carter emphasized that shutting the government down is the wrong message to send back home and achieves nothing in the long run.

Carter also discussed his district, which spans the entire coast of Georgia – 100 miles of coastline that boasts two major ports, significant military presence and economic development projects, including the \$7.6 billion Hyundai plant for electric vehicles.

As the chair of the Environment, Manufacturing, and Critical Materials Subcommittee, Carter discussed the importance of the committee's work. His goal as chair is to surpass China in critical minerals, boost American energy, reduce emissions, and foster a pro-business environment.

In healthcare policy, Carter's focus is on reducing prescription drug costs and addressing vertical integration in the industry, drawing on his background as a pharmacist. Additionally, Carter discussed the complexities of passing privacy legislation, particularly the Kids Online Safety Act and updates to Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act.



### A TRIBUTE TO CONGRESSMAN DAVID SCOTT

Although Congressman David Scott couldn't meet with the entire Fly-In delegation due to prolonged committee meetings, a small group visited his office to present a token of appreciation for his years of service to Cobb County. Starting in January 2025, the new district maps will exclude Cobb County from the 13th Congressional District for the first time since 2004. President and CEO Sharon Mason, along with current and past Chamber Chairs Mike Plant and Greg Teague, current and past Cobb County Commission Chairs Lisa Cupid and Sam Olen, and Sheriff Craig Owens, presented the congressman with a specially commissioned Lillie Glassblowers sculpture of Cobb County featuring the Chamber logo.



### Take Me Out to the Ballpark

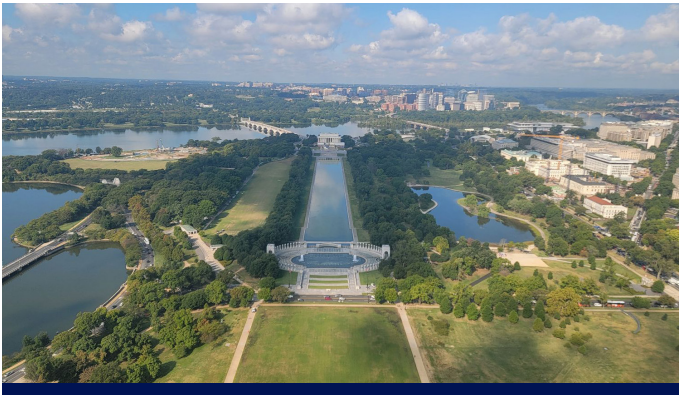
As an evening excursion, most of the Fly-In participants headed to National's Park to watch the Washington Nationals play the Atlanta Braves. The game featured a September 11th pre-game tribute with a USAF flyover and third inning military salute. Many thanks to the Braves and our current Chamber Chairman Mike Plant for providing tickets to the game. While the outcome wasn't what we would have preferred, the camaraderie and social time were a homerun.





### Day 3: Thursday, September 12

Before heading home, some of our delegation returned to the Hill for individual meetings while others walked to the Washington Monument for a top of the tower tour before heading to the airport.



### Save the date for the 2025 Cobb Chamber Washington, D.C. Fly-In

Tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, Sept. 16 to Thursday, Sept. 18, 2025.  
Dates will be confirmed once the 2025 Congressional Calendar is released.



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## Thank you to our 2024 Washington Fly-In Attendees

Andrew Allison, Kennesaw State University  
Teri Anulewicz, GA House of Representatives, District 42  
Laura Austin, Old Mountain Consulting/Cobb Chamber  
Denise Brilliant, Brilliantbox  
Leanna Brown, Metro Atlanta Chamber  
Lori Burns, Arylescence, Inc.  
Lisa Cupid, Cobb Board of Commissioners, Chairwoman  
Chuck Clay, Freeman Mathis Decisions  
Andrew Dill, Lockheed Martin  
Christy Ellerbee, Global Payments  
Britt Fleck, Georgia Power Company/Metro West Region  
Brad Humphrey, HNTB  
Ashley Jenkins, Gas South, LLC  
Dana Johnson, Cobb Chamber  
David Jones, Cobb County Sheriff's Office  
Robert Knotts, Georgia Institute of Technology  
Coleman Loftin, Mauldin & Jenkins, LLC  
Chuck Martin, Arylescence, Inc.  
Christina Martin, Kaiser Permanente Health Plan of Georgia  
Sharon Mason, Cobb Chamber  
Kim Menefee, Cumberland Community Improvement District  
Michael Oduselu, Axis Infrastructure

Sam Olens, Dentons US LLP  
Craig Owens, Cobb County Sheriff  
Trey Paris, Freeman Mathis Decisions  
Mike Plant, Atlanta Braves Development Company  
Drew Raessler, Cobb Department of Transportation  
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Nick Rider, Mauldin & Jenkins, LLC  
Eva Rigamonti, RaceTrac  
Adam Ross, Cumberland Community Improvement District  
Amanda Seals, Cobb Chamber  
Alicia Smith, Town Center Community Improvement District  
Katie Stone, Global Payments  
Tracy Styf, Town Center Community Improvement District  
Scott Sweeney, Georgia Department of Education  
Casey Tanner, Kennesaw State University  
Greg Teague, Croy Engineering  
Hillary Thrower, The Home Depot  
Stephen Vault, Wellstar Health System  
Eddie Wade, Croy Engineering  
Michael Wall, Aaron's, Inc.  
Chris Wasserman, Wasserman Talent Solutions  
Pamela Younker, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta



# 2024 Federal Legislative Agenda

Cobb County's business community consistently demonstrates resilience and adaptability in the face of ongoing and unpredictable changes. Despite Georgia being named the top state for business for the 10th consecutive year, our members face challenges such as inflationary pressures, workforce shortages, evolving consumer behavior, and a more complex federal regulatory environment.

The 2024 federal legislative agenda for the Cobb Chamber represents our commitment to advance a vibrant and thriving economy by enhancing the business climate and quality of life for Cobb County, the region, and the state of Georgia. Most of our members are small businesses, and our agenda addresses critical concerns from over 2,700 member organizations representing over 18,000 business leaders. While our positions fall into four policy areas, top priorities include:

- Addressing the expiration of 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA), which includes R&D deductions and the 20% deduction for pass-through businesses.
- Support of federal funding for Cobb County projects to improve mobility for our county, the seven cities in Cobb County, the Cumberland Community Improvement District, the Town Center Community Improvement District, and the Gateway Marietta Community Improvement District.
- Pass the FY 2025 budget prior to the new fiscal year to avoid continuing resolutions.



## Fostering a Resilient Economy:

- Oppose legislation or agency regulations that increases inflationary spending levels, imposes tax increases, including increases in marginal tax rates, inheritance taxes, and capital gains, or that would negatively impact economic growth, job creation, and competitiveness.
- Support legislation reducing the cost of time, resources, and regulatory constraints on small businesses.
- Oppose programs that create obstacles for companies seeking to attract and retain essential workforce talent.
- Support using robust, peer-reviewed science and risk-based determinations in legislation and regulatory policies.
- Support liability protection legislation for businesses against frivolous lawsuits.
- Support apprenticeship and job training programs that incentivize employment and better prepare our citizens for future workforce challenges.
- Support federal funding for community-level grants that assist entrepreneurs and small business start-ups.
- Support policies and legislation that provide equal tax treatment for brick-and-mortar and online retailers.
- Support a federal consumer privacy law to provide businesses a streamlined roadmap for compliance.
- Support policies that keep energy safe, reliable, and affordable.
- Support policies that combat organized retail crime and counterfeit goods.
- Support Congressional action to increase the human, physical, and technological resources along the southern border and at our ports of entry.
- Support instituting modern, effective, and efficient employment verification reforms.



## Infrastructure and Transportation:

- Support efforts to sustain and enhance investments in transportation to move goods and people efficiently and effectively.
- Support policies that encourage the growth and modernization of telecommunications and energy infrastructure.
- Oppose unnecessary regulations on federally funded infrastructure projects and support policies that streamline federal oversight.
- Support the streamlining of competitive grant program application processes to better direct projects of local priority to the most competitive grant applicant.
- Support legislation allowing greater flexibility in federal funding programs for multimodal options incorporating highway and transit elements.



## Healthcare:

- Enable greater flexibility for businesses as they offer healthcare coverage to their employees.
- Support adding full tax deductibility of health plan premiums for individuals, businesses, and business owners.
- Support workforce development efforts to assist hospitals and healthcare delivery systems with the national healthcare workforce shortage.
- Support the expansion, offering, and enrollment in diverse coverage options like association health plans to decrease costs and increase access for small businesses.
- Urge Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) to account for inflation in FY25 to assist with the continuing strain on healthcare resources, such as hospitals and long-term care facilities, and the healthcare workforce.
- Urge CMS to create a permanent hospital-to-home program rather than its current waiver process to allow for greater access to healthcare.



## Safeguarding Dobbins Air Reserve Base and Supporting Growth of Our Military & Defense Community:

- Support current and future missions and resources for Dobbins Air Reserve Base.
- Continue to support funding of facilities needed to relocate the U.S. Army Reserve's 81st Readiness Division unit to Dobbins Airforce Reserve Base.
- Oppose continuing resolutions, which fail to provide adequate payroll funding for Reservists.
- Support full adds for C130J and F-35 aircraft that provide direct and indirect Georgia jobs.
- Support the availability of TRICARE Reserve Select Insurance for Air Force Reservists, who are also federal civilian employees, which comprise a large portion of the population in Cobb County.
- Support increased pay for our troops and the modernization of our U.S. Armed Forces.