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## Willis faces Ga. Senate in political showdown

Heavyweights sit on both sides of case as the Fulton DA testifies today.

By David Wickert  
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A former governor and the state's top local prosecutor on one side. Three would-be lieutenant governors and a would-be

attorney general on the other. Toss in the collapse of the biggest criminal case in Georgia history, and today's showdown between Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis and a state Senate panel could provide plenty of political fire. Willis will testify before the Senate Special Committee on Investigations — a panel created to investigate her actions in the criminal



Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis will testify to a Georgia Senate panel today.

case she brought against Donald Trump and 18 others who sought to overturn the 2020 presidential

election in Georgia. She filed that case in 2023 and quickly obtained four guilty pleas. But it hit a snag when defense attorneys accused Willis of having a conflict of interest because of a romantic relationship with a special prosecutor she hired to assist with the case. After Willis was disqualified from the case, another prosecutor dropped the remaining charges last month.

The Senate created the panel shortly after the allegations against Willis came to light. Willis resisted the committee's efforts to compel her testimony. But today, she'll make a long-delayed appearance before the panel. The committee is stocked with Republicans aiming for higher office, and other big names in

Willis continued on A7

## DeKalb extends pause in data center growth

Freeze could end early if officials approve regulations before ban is over.



An opponent of data centers, Gina Mangham, shares her concerns during public comment at the DeKalb Board of Commissioners meeting in Decatur on Tuesday. PHOTOS BY MIGUEL MARTINEZ/AJC

By Reed Williams  
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DeKalb County commissioners on Tuesday extended a moratorium on the development or expansion of data centers for six months, after hearing from residents who are fiercely opposed to the facilities. However, county officials said the moratorium could be repealed or shortened if the Board of Commissioners approves an ordinance before then to establish data center regulations. The board is set to consider those regulations at its Jan. 27 meeting. "If we approve the text amendments in January, there really wouldn't be a rationale for having (the moratorium) in place another five months," Commissioner Ted Terry said after the meeting.



DeKalb Commissioner Ted Terry proposed a yearlong extension to the data center moratorium, but it was rejected by a 4-3 vote.

A draft of the legislation generally requires data centers be built at least 500 feet from homes, county parks or trails and a half-mile from

high-capacity public transit stops. Some residents say 500 feet is not nearly far enough from homes and that no data centers should be built in the county, period. The Board of Commissioners approved a temporary moratorium on any new data centers or expansions in July — then extended it in October — while county officials work on regulations. The moratorium had been set to expire Tuesday, but the board voted unanimously to extend it another six months. Tuesday's action came after the board rejected Terry's motion that the county extend the moratorium for 12 months, allowing time for a study on the health and environmental impacts of data centers. Terry's proposal for the yearlong

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## Georgians have more time to pick ACA policies

State runs own exchange with Jan. 15 deadline, but prices to soar for many.

By Ariel Hart | ariel.hart@ajc.com

Monday was the deadline to buy health insurance that starts in January on the Affordable Care Act marketplace. But unlike many other states, it's not too late for Georgia residents, who have until Jan. 15 to sign up for coverage that begins Feb. 1. That's because Georgia runs its own ACA marketplace exchange, GeorgiaAccess.gov. About 1.3 million people are enrolled in Georgia Access. The Affordable Care Act is also known as Obamacare. Prices for next year will still be high. Congress last week shot down attempts to fund lower health insurance premiums on the exchange, through an extension of ACA subsidies.

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## Execution put on hold over parole board confusion

Judge to consider if at least one board member must recuse herself.

By Jozsef Papp | jozsef.papp-chang@ajc.com and Shaddi Abusaid | shaddi.abusaid@ajc.com

The planned execution this week of a death row prisoner is on hold for now while a Fulton County judge considers whether at least one of the five-member Georgia Board of Pardons and Paroles must recuse themselves from a clemency hearing. The decision was announced during an hours-long emergency hearing seeking to halt the execution of Stacey Ian Humphreys, who was scheduled to die by lethal injection for the 2003 murders of two Cobb County real estate agents. "Roughly an hour before this hearing started there was a stay of execution issued," Humphreys' attorney Jessica Gable Cino told Fulton County Superior Court Judge Robert McBurney. Other attempts to halt Humphreys' execution in federal court have been denied, and he was slated for a Tuesday clemency hearing. His attorneys

Execution continued on A6

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REMEMBERING JIMMY CARTER

### December 30, 2024 Georgia's native son dies

Jimmy Carter — the only Georgian to become president — died Dec. 29, 2024, at his home in Plains. He was 100. Carter lived longer than any other commander in chief and redefined what a post-presidency could be. After leaving office in 1981, his reputation grew through his work at the Carter Center in Atlanta and philanthropic causes, such as Habitat for Humanity — where he and his wife, Rosalynn, served as volunteers. Carter won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2002 and the United Nations Human Rights Prize in 1998. Tribute page, A14



## Flurry of fires leaves at least 5 dead, displaces dozens

Fire threat rises when temperatures fall, authorities caution.

By Rosana Hughes  
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Several fires in metro Atlanta and North Georgia in recent days have killed at least five people, injured others and displaced dozens as temperatures dipped unseasonably cold. A blaze Saturday in College

Park killed a woman, and a Snellville woman died in a house fire early Sunday, according to officials. Later that day, two children were killed in yet another deadly blaze, this time in a northeast Georgia mobile home, according to Union County officials. Then on Monday afternoon, a house fire near Stone Mountain left one man dead, investigators said. "This is the season when we see the most fires," DeKalb County Fire Capt. Jaeson Daniels told The Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

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Investigators believe a fire that burned three homes in East Point on Tuesday might have started in an abandoned house. No injuries were reported, officials said. BEN HENDREN FOR THE AJC

