

Senate Resolution 416

By: Senators Levetan of the 40th, Tate of the 38th, Stokes of the 43rd, Reed of the 35th, Unterman of the 45th and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Creating the Senate Hospital Indigent Care Funding Study Committee; and for other
2 purposes.

3 WHEREAS, Georgia's 157 community acute care hospitals incurred indigent, charity, and
4 bad debt costs that exceeded \$840 million in 2001; and

5 WHEREAS, Georgia's hospitals have a social and legal obligation to treat all patients in
6 need of care; and

7 WHEREAS, the number of Georgia's 1.4 million uninsured citizens continues to grow; and

8 WHEREAS, only 26 of Georgia's 159 counties are contributing to the costs of hospital care
9 to their residents, with hospitals absorbing those unpaid costs; and

10 WHEREAS, payments for hospital services provided to medicare and Medicaid patients do
11 not cover the cost of treating those patients; and

12 WHEREAS, ten Georgia hospitals have closed in the past four years as a result of financial
13 losses due to uncompensated care costs; and

14 WHEREAS, two-thirds of 113 Georgia hospitals lost money in providing patient care
15 because of the increased amount of uncompensated care costs; and

16 WHEREAS, the communities served by these hospitals are dependent on jobs and payrolls
17 to support the economy of local communities, particularly in rural areas of the state; and

18 WHEREAS, the state should explore sustained funding of indigent care through a variety of
19 revenue sources such as county funding, fees and special taxes, and other revenue sources;
20 and

1 WHEREAS, the state should explore ways to help Georgia's uninsured citizens obtain
2 insurance coverage through expansion of PeachCare for Kids Program, high risk pools, new
3 insurance products, and other funding mechanisms.

4 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that there is created the Senate
5 Hospital Indigent Care Funding Study Committee to be composed of five members of the
6 Senate to be appointed by the Committee on Assignments. The chairperson of the Senate
7 Appropriations Committee shall be chair of the committee. The chairperson shall call all
8 meetings of the committee.

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the committee shall draw upon the resources of the
10 Georgia Hospital Association, the Association County Commissioners of Georgia, the
11 Georgia Municipal Association, the Georgia Department of Community Health, the
12 Department of Human Resources, the Georgia Chamber of Commerce, advocates for the
13 uninsured, the insurance industry, the medical community, and other resources as necessary.

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the committee shall undertake a study of the conditions,
15 needs, issues, and problems mentioned above or related thereto and recommend any actions
16 or legislation which the committee deems necessary or appropriate. The committee may
17 conduct such meetings at such places and at such times as it may deem necessary or
18 convenient to enable it to exercise fully and effectively its powers, perform its duties, and
19 accomplish the objectives and purposes of this resolution. The members of the committee
20 shall receive the allowances authorized for legislative members of interim legislative
21 committees. The allowances so authorized shall not be received by any member of the
22 committee for more than five days unless additional days are authorized. The funds
23 necessary to carry out the provisions of this resolution shall come from the funds
24 appropriated to the Senate. In the event the committee makes a report of its findings and
25 recommendations, with suggestions for proposed legislation, if any, such report shall be
26 made on or before December 31, 2003. The committee shall stand abolished on December
27 31, 2003.