

Senate Resolution 21

By: Senators Kemp of the 46th, Grant of the 25th, Tate of the 38th and Hamrick of the 30th

ADOPTED SENATE

A RESOLUTION

1 Creating the Joint Early Learning Initiative Commission; and for other purposes.

2 WHEREAS, early learning, especially for at-risk children, is essential to improving school
3 performance for Georgia students; and

4 WHEREAS, the state has invested lottery proceeds, state funds, and federal funds in the
5 Office of School Readiness and Georgia's Pre-K Program, for a total of \$360,959,969.00 in
6 the 2004 budget adopted in the 2004 session; and

7 WHEREAS, there are proposals for delegation of authority and funding over certain federal
8 early learning programs to the states; and

9 WHEREAS, a comprehensive review of early learning opportunities currently available and
10 recommendations for improvement of early learning opportunities would be helpful to the
11 General Assembly in adopting education policies and appropriating funds for the most
12 effective uses.

13 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
14 GEORGIA that there is created the Joint Early Learning Initiative Commission to be
15 composed of 19 members, including four members of the House of Representatives to be
16 appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and four members of the Senate
17 to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Assignments. The Governor shall appoint six
18 members, including one member with expertise relating to early learning programs, one
19 parent with a child enrolled in a pre-kindergarten program, one parent with a child currently
20 enrolled in Head Start or Early Head Start, one representative from the child care/early
21 learning center community, one private provider pre-kindergarten instructor, one public
22 school pre-kindergarten instructor, and one Head Start instructor. The director of the
23 Georgia Lottery Corporation, the director of the Georgia Student Finance Commission, the
24 Georgia State School Superintendent or her designee, and the commissioner of Bright From

1 the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning shall be ex-officio members of the
2 commission. The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall designate a member of the
3 House and the Senate Committee on Assignments shall designate a member of the Senate
4 who shall serve as cochairpersons of the commission. The commission shall meet at the call
5 of the cochairpersons.

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the commission shall undertake a study of the following:
7 issues relating to the anticipated action of the federal government in delegating authority
8 relating to Head Start to the state; an examination of federal and state early learning
9 programs to define efficiencies in each; options for combining federal and state programs if
10 authority over federal funds and programs are delegated to the state; an investigation of early
11 learning efforts statewide, including federal, state, and private programs to assess innovative
12 approaches and to recommend effective practices; an investigation of ways to improve
13 pre-kindergarten standards, with a focus on a state training program for noncertified
14 pre-kindergarten instructors; the possible creation of an early learning program specially
15 designed for at-risk four-year-olds; possible expansion of early learning programs for at-risk
16 three-year-olds; the impact of an early education income tax credit for families with incomes
17 under 200 percent of the federally designated poverty level that would allow low-income
18 families to afford early education options that wealthier families can afford at institutions of
19 their choice. The commission may recommend any actions or legislation which the
20 commission deems necessary or appropriate. The commission may conduct such meetings
21 at such places and at such times as it may deem necessary or convenient to enable it to
22 exercise fully and effectively its powers, perform its duties, and accomplish the objectives
23 and purposes of this resolution. The members of the commission shall receive the
24 allowances authorized for legislative members of interim legislative committees but shall
25 receive the same for not more than three days unless additional days are authorized. The
26 funds necessary to carry out the provisions of this resolution shall come from the funds
27 appropriated to the House of Representatives and Senate. The Carl Vinson Institute at the
28 University of Georgia is authorized and directed to provide staff services to the commission.
29 In the event the commission makes a report of its findings and recommendations, with
30 suggestions for proposed legislation, if any, such report shall be made on or before December
31 31, 2006. The commission shall stand abolished on December 31, 2006.