

House Bill 757 (AS PASSED HOUSE AND SENATE)

By: Representative Hanner of the 148th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To create and establish the Georgetown-Quitman County Charter and Unification
2 Commission; to provide for a short title; to provide for definitions; to provide for the
3 appointment of the members of said commission; to provide for the organizational meeting
4 of the charter and unification commission and for the election of a chairperson; to provide
5 for the powers and duties of said commission; to provide that the charter and unification
6 commission shall be authorized to employ a staff to assist it in carrying out its powers and
7 duties; to provide for the expenses of the charter and unification commission and for the
8 payment of those expenses by the governing authorities of the City of Georgetown and the
9 County of Quitman; to provide that said commission shall be authorized to study all matters
10 relating to the governments of the County of Quitman and the City of Georgetown and all
11 matters relating to the establishment of a single county-wide government with powers and
12 jurisdiction throughout the territorial limits of Quitman County; to provide for the submission
13 of such proposed county-wide government charter to the qualified voters for approval or
14 rejection; to provide for the conduct of such election and for the certification of the results
15 thereof; to provide for all procedures and other matters connected with the foregoing; to
16 provide an effective date; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

17 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:**

18 **SECTION 1.**

19 This Act shall be known and may be cited as the "Georgetown-Quitman County Charter and
20 Unification Commission Act" and is enacted pursuant to the authority granted by Article IX,
21 Section III, Paragraph II of the Constitution of the State of Georgia.

22 **SECTION 2.**

23 As used in this Act, the following terms shall have the meanings ascribed to them unless the
24 context clearly requires otherwise:

1 (1) "Charter and unification commission" or "commission" shall mean the
2 Georgetown-Quitman County Charter and Unification Commission provided for in this
3 Act.

4 (2) "Governing authority of the City of Georgetown" shall mean the mayor and city
5 council of the City of Georgetown, a municipal corporation of the State of Georgia.

6 (3) "Governing authority of the County of Quitman" shall mean the Board of
7 Commissioners of Quitman County, a political subdivision of the State of Georgia.

8 SECTION 3.

9 (a) There is created the Georgetown-Quitman County Charter and Unification Commission,
10 which shall consist of 17 members to be appointed within 30 days of the effective date of this
11 Act as provided in this section.

12 (b) The governing authority of the City of Georgetown shall appoint seven members to the
13 charter and unification commission who shall be citizens of the City of Georgetown at the
14 time of such appointment and for the duration of their respective terms as members of such
15 commission.

16 (c) The governing authority of the County of Quitman shall appoint seven members to the
17 charter and unification commission who shall be citizens of unincorporated Quitman County
18 at the time of such appointment and for the duration of their respective terms as members of
19 such commission.

20 (d) The 14 members of the charter and unification commission provided for in
21 subsections (b) and (c) of this section shall jointly appoint three members to the charter and
22 unification commission who shall be citizens of Quitman County at the time of such
23 appointment and for the duration of their entire terms as members of such commission.

24 (e) If a governing authority refuses or fails to appoint a member of the commission as
25 required by this section, the senior superior court judge of the Pataula Judicial Circuit shall
26 make such appointment within ten days following the expiration of the 30 day period allowed
27 for appointments provided for in subsection (a) of this section.

28 (f) None of the members of said charter and unification commission shall hold any other
29 elective public office.

30 (g) To be eligible for appointment as a member of the charter and unification commission,
31 a person must be at least 21 years of age and shall have been a resident of the State of
32 Georgia for a period of at least five years and registered as an elector to vote in Quitman
33 County for a period of at least two years prior to his or her appointment.

34 (h) If a member of the charter and unification commission should die, become disabled,
35 remove his or her residence and place of domicile to a place outside the territorial limits of
36 the appointing jurisdiction, resign, or become unable or decline to serve for any reason

1 whatever as a member of the charter and unification commission, said commission shall
2 declare a vacancy in his or her office as a member of such commission and within 15 days
3 thereafter the governing authority or authorities that appointed that member shall appoint a
4 successor promptly to fill such vacancy.

5 (i) A certificate of appointment shall be issued by the appointing authority of each member
6 of the charter and unification commission and filed in the office of the Probate Court of
7 Quitman County with a duplicate original of such certificate being transmitted to, and filed
8 with, the chairperson or the secretary of the charter and unification commission.

9 (j) A majority of the members of the charter and unification commission shall constitute a
10 quorum for the transaction of business. Such quorum shall not be applicable with respect to
11 any committees or subcommittees which, at the discretion of the charter and unification
12 commission, may be appointed. A majority of the members of each such committee or
13 subcommittee shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of its business.

14 (k) The charter and unification commission may appoint advisory committees or
15 subcommittees from among the general populace to advise it with respect to its work;
16 provided, however, that the charter and unification commission may not delegate any of the
17 duties, powers, or obligations imposed upon the commission and granted to it by this Act to
18 any such advisory committee or subcommittee. Any such advisory committee or
19 subcommittee so appointed shall serve at the discretion of the commission and shall serve
20 subject to such terms, conditions, and charges as may be imposed upon it by the commission.

21 (l) All persons who shall, from time to time, serve as members of the charter and unification
22 commission or its committees or subcommittees and all agents, employees, and staff
23 appointed or hired by the charter and unification commission from time to time shall be
24 afforded coverage and shall be included in the insured class, under the provision of such
25 policies, riders, or other insurance contracts from time to time in force and held by the
26 governing authority of the County of Quitman, extending to members of such governing
27 authority of the County of Quitman, and what is commonly referred to as "public official's
28 liability insurance coverage," to the same extent and as nearly as practicable with identical
29 coverage and limits as afforded to the individual members of the governing authority of the
30 County of Quitman. Any and all additional premium amounts payable by the County of
31 Quitman due to the extension of such coverage to the members of the charter and unification
32 commission and its appointees, agents, employees, and staff shall be paid, when due and
33 payable, one-half by the County of Quitman and one-half by the City of Georgetown, which
34 payments shall be made in addition to all other amounts otherwise payable under the
35 provisions of this Act.

36 (m) The governing authority of the County of Quitman, the governing authority of the City
37 of Georgetown, and the governing authority of any county-wide government created under

1 a charter adopted pursuant to this Act are authorized and directed to expend funds for fees,
2 costs, and expenses incurred in providing for the defense of the members of the charter and
3 unification commission arising out of their activity as members of such commission and in
4 providing for the defense of any proposed charter submitted by the commission, whether
5 prior to the referendum thereon or after the referendum thereon is conducted.

6 **SECTION 4.**

7 (a) The charter and unification commission shall hold an organizational meeting not less
8 than 30 days nor more than 45 days after the date this Act becomes effective. Any three or
9 more members of the charter and unification commission, composed of at least one member
10 appointed by the governing authority of the City of Georgetown and one member appointed
11 by the governing authority of the County of Quitman, shall call such organizational meeting.
12 The call of such organizational meeting shall designate the time, date, and place that such
13 organizational meeting shall be held.

14 (b) The first order of business at the organizational meeting shall be the designation, by the
15 majority vote of those members present, of a temporary chairperson to preside until a
16 permanent chairperson is elected. The second order of business at the organizational meeting
17 shall be the election of a permanent chairperson who shall be elected by the majority vote of
18 all members of the charter and unification commission.

19 (c) The charter and unification commission shall be authorized to elect a secretary, who need
20 not be a member of the commission, and such other officers from the membership of the
21 charter and unification commission as it shall deem necessary. The charter and unification
22 commission shall be further authorized to employ such staff as may be required to assist it
23 in studying all matters relating to the government of the City of Georgetown and the County
24 of Quitman and in drafting a charter. The charter and unification commission shall not
25 employ any person who holds any elective public office.

26 (d) The members of the charter and unification commission shall not receive per diem or
27 other compensation for their services, but the members shall be reimbursed for actual
28 expenses incurred by them in carrying out their duties. The staff employed by the
29 commission shall be paid compensation as determined by the commission within the limits
30 of funds available to it. The governing authority of the City of Georgetown and the
31 governing authority of the County of Quitman are authorized to expend public funds in
32 carrying out the provisions of this Act and shall share equally the expense thereof. Each of
33 the said governing authorities shall initially appropriate up to \$5,000.00 for the charter and
34 unification commission and the treasurer or other fiscal authority of each of those governing
35 authorities shall honor, from time to time, vouchers or warrants signed by the chairperson of
36 the charter and unification commission for amounts up to an aggregate total of such amount.

1 The governing authorities shall appropriate such additional funds in equal amounts as may
2 be necessary to meet the expenses of the charter and unification commission, provided that
3 such additional expenditures shall be first approved by both governing authorities.

4 (e) The charter and unification commission is also authorized to solicit, receive, and expend
5 contributions, grants, gifts, and other funds from other sources to be utilized by it in the
6 conduct of its business.

7 (f) All public officials and employees of the City of Georgetown and the County of Quitman
8 upon request shall furnish the charter and unification commission with all documents, books,
9 records, data, and information necessary or appropriate in the opinion of the charter and
10 unification commission for it to carry out its duties, except for information that is
11 confidential or privileged by law and shall furnish such other assistance and aid to the
12 commission as it shall request and shall also appear and give testimony, at the request of the
13 commission, before the commission or before any of its committees, subcommittees, or
14 advisory committees.

15 **SECTION 5.**

16 The commission shall be authorized to study all matters relating to the governments of the
17 City of Georgetown and the County of Quitman and all matters relating to the establishment
18 of a single county-wide government with powers and jurisdiction throughout the territorial
19 limits of Quitman County. The commission shall upon completion of its study issue a
20 written report of its findings, conclusions, and recommendations. If, after conducting such
21 study, the charter and unification commission shall deem it to be in the best interests of the
22 governments proposed to be affected, said commission shall draft a proposed charter creating
23 a single county-wide government, and if such charter is approved by the voters under the
24 provisions of this Act, then the newly created county-wide government shall supersede and
25 replace the existing governments of the City of Georgetown and the County of Quitman and
26 may also supersede and replace any public authorities and special service districts located
27 and operating within Quitman County. If the charter and unification commission does not
28 deem it to be in the best interests of the governments proposed to be affected to recommend
29 the establishment of a single county-wide government but concludes from its study that it is
30 feasible to consolidate specific governmental services, programs, and activities, then the
31 commission may issue such findings, conclusions, and recommendations in writing together
32 with reasons why such recommendations will make government operations more efficient.

33 **SECTION 6.**

34 (a) The charter so drafted shall be submitted to the qualified voters of Quitman County for
35 approval or rejection of the referendum provided for in Section 10 of this Act.

1 (b) The General Assembly delegates its powers to the charter and unification commission
2 to draft such a charter which may include any provisions necessary to effectuate its purposes.
3 Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the proposed charter may provide for any
4 one or more, or a combination, of the matters listed below. Where it is indicated that an item
5 shall be included, the inclusion of that particular item shall be mandatory:

6 (1) The charter shall provide for the abolishment of the existing governments of the City
7 of Georgetown and the County of Quitman and for the creation of a new single
8 government which may have all powers formerly exercised by the City of Georgetown
9 and the County of Quitman and such other powers as may be necessary or desirable. The
10 new single government may be given, and may have, such rights, privileges, exemptions,
11 preferences, discretions, immunities, powers, duties, and liabilities as are now or hereafter
12 granted to, or vested in, municipalities or counties or both by the Constitution and laws
13 of the State of Georgia. The form and composition of the new government shall be as the
14 charter shall provide;

15 (2) The charter may authorize the new government to continue to be eligible to have,
16 hold, enjoy, and be entitled to any assistance, credits, benefits, moneys, grants,
17 grants-in-aid, funds, loans, aid, appropriations, and matching funds to the same extent
18 that any municipality or county of the State of Georgia now or may hereafter enjoy or
19 possess under the Constitution and laws of the State of Georgia or by other provisions of
20 law or under any present or future state or federal programs;

21 (3) The charter may provide for the abolishment, modification, consolidation, or merger
22 of any court unless otherwise prohibited by the Constitution or general law;

23 (4) The charter may provide for the abolishment, modification, consolidation, or merger
24 of any public authorities and special service districts located within Quitman County
25 created by law and for the transfer of any powers, duties, and obligations of such
26 authorities and districts to the new county-wide government or to any agency thereof or
27 from one such authority or special service district to another in such manner as said
28 charter shall provide unless otherwise prohibited by the Constitution or general law;

29 (5) The charter may provide for the abolishment, modification, consolidation, or merger
30 of any one or more public offices or positions of public employment of any municipality
31 merged in the county-wide government and the County of Quitman and any public
32 authorities or special service districts located or operating within Quitman County unless
33 otherwise prohibited by the Constitution or general law. The charter may provide for
34 administrative division or changes with reference to the duties and responsibilities of any
35 public office or official as the charter and unification commission shall deem necessary
36 for the efficient functioning of the new county-wide government;

1 (6) The charter shall provide for the creation of the governing authority of the new single
2 county-wide government, including the number of members of the governing authority,
3 their powers, duties, terms of office, manner, and time of election or appointment,
4 compensation, method of removal, and all other matters incidental or necessary to the
5 creation of said county-wide governing authority. The charter shall provide for the name
6 or names of the new county-wide government and governing authority;

7 (7) The charter may provide for the creation of the various departments, boards, bureaus,
8 offices, commissions, and positions of public employment of the new county-wide
9 government and for any matters necessary or incidental thereto;

10 (8) The charter shall provide for the creation of special tax districts consisting of the
11 territory lying within the former boundaries of the affected governments for the purpose
12 of the successor county-wide government levying a tax therein sufficient to retire any
13 bonded indebtedness of such governments which is outstanding on the effective date of
14 the abolishment of such government;

15 (9) The charter may provide for the assumption by the new government of all bonded
16 indebtedness and all other obligations of whatever kind of all governmental units, public
17 authorities, and special service districts which are altered by said charter and a method
18 by which the new county-wide government shall assume the payment of any obligations
19 issued under Article 3 of Chapter 82 of Title 36 of the O.C.G.A., the "Revenue Bond
20 Law," or other similar legislation;

21 (10) The charter may provide for the transfer to the new county-wide government of
22 assets, contracts, and franchises of all governmental units and any public authorities and
23 special service districts which are merged with the new county-wide government or are
24 altered by the charter;

25 (11) The charter may provide the purposes for which the new county-wide government
26 or governing authority or any agency thereof may levy taxes;

27 (12) The charter shall provide for the method or methods by which it may be amended.
28 The General Assembly expressly reserves the right to amend any charter adopted
29 pursuant to this Act. The charter may provide for an additional method or methods by
30 which the charter may be amended and shall provide for any amendments adopted by any
31 such other method or methods to be filed with the Secretary of State so that they may be
32 published in the *Georgia Laws*;

33 (13) The charter shall provide for the repeal of conflicting laws; and

34 (14) The charter may contain such other provisions as are necessary and needful to
35 achieve the objectives of consolidation of the governments and functions of the City of
36 Georgetown and the County of Quitman and the creation of a successor government.

1 (c) The following additional provisions shall govern proceedings of the charter and
2 unification commission and any successor county-wide government created by a charter
3 drafted by the commission:

4 (1) The charter and unification commission is authorized to contract with any public or
5 private institution or body, including the Carl Vinson Institute of Government, for any
6 special studies or assistance it deems necessary, subject to the limitation that any
7 expenditure therefor shall be within the limits of the funds made available to the
8 commission by the respective governing authorities; and

9 (2) Any successor government created and established shall, without the necessity or
10 formality of deed, bill of sale, or other instrument of transfer, be and become the owner
11 of all property, assets, and rights previously belonging to the City of Georgetown and the
12 County of Quitman and any other authorities or special service districts merged into the
13 new government.

14 (d) The charter and unification commission shall have all the powers of the superior courts
15 to compel the attendance of witnesses before the commission and any of its committees,
16 subcommittees, or advisory committees; to compel witnesses to testify thereat; and to
17 subpoena any person or entity and all such books, records, data, papers, documents, and other
18 tangible items which may be deemed by the commission to be material to any question or
19 issue deemed by it to be relevant to the duties or prerogatives imposed upon or granted to the
20 commission by this Act. Such subpoenas shall be issued in the name of the commission,
21 shall be signed by either the chairperson or the secretary of the commission, and shall be
22 served in the manner provided by law for the service of subpoenas in civil cases pending in
23 the superior courts. Witnesses subject to such subpoenas shall be entitled to the same
24 compensation as witnesses attending superior court, which compensation shall be collected
25 in the same manner as that of witnesses in the superior courts except that such compensation
26 shall be paid from funds of the commission. Should any such subpoenaed person or witness
27 fail or refuse to answer questions propounded or fail or refuse to produce any books, records,
28 data, papers, documents, or other tangible items required to be produced by the commission,
29 except upon a legal excuse which would relieve such person of such obligation in a civil case
30 pending in the superior court, the person so failing or refusing shall be guilty of contempt and
31 may be cited by the commission to appear before a judge of the Superior Court of Quitman
32 County. The judge of said court shall have the same power and jurisdiction to punish the
33 person cited for contempt and to require and compel the attendance, the giving of testimony,
34 or the production of items as in cases of contempt committed in the presence of the court and
35 as in cases pending before the court.

36 (e) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Act, the charter and unification commission
37 and the charter proposed by the commission and subsequently adopted may not:

1 (1) Alter or affect the status of the Quitman County School System or the Quitman
 2 County Board of Education or any provision of the Constitution or laws of the State of
 3 Georgia by which the Quitman County School System is constituted, empowered, or
 4 preserved or transfer any of their powers, duties, or obligations;

5 (2) Impair or diminish any pension or retirement rights; or

6 (3) Abolish the office of sheriff, clerk of superior court, or tax commissioner.

7 (f) None of the foregoing limitations shall be construed as prohibiting the General Assembly
 8 from exercising any legislative power with respect to any municipality electing to be
 9 excluded as provided in this Act or the school district, board of education, industrial
 10 development authority, office of sheriff, clerk of superior court, or tax commissioner, pension
 11 rights, and homestead exemptions which existed prior to the adoption of this Act.

12 (g) The powers granted in this Act to the charter and unification commission by the General
 13 Assembly are remedial in nature and shall be liberally construed to effectuate their purpose.

14 **SECTION 7.**

15 (a) The charter and unification commission shall be required to hold at least two public
 16 hearings to determine the sentiment of the citizens of the City of Georgetown and the County
 17 of Quitman regarding the work of the charter and unification commission. The first public
 18 hearing shall be held within 30 days of the issuance of the commission's final written report
 19 on the feasibility of establishing a single county-wide government within Quitman County,
 20 and a second public hearing shall be held within 15 days of the submission of any proposed
 21 charter for such consolidated government to the Quitman County Board of Elections. The
 22 charter and unification commission is authorized to hold more than two public hearings if it
 23 determines that additional public hearings are desirable. The charter and unification
 24 commission shall cause the date, time, and place of each such hearing to be advertised in the
 25 official organ of Quitman County twice during the week next preceding the week in which
 26 the public hearing is held. The charter and unification commission shall cause to be made
 27 a transcript of each public hearing held and shall file the same in its minutes and records.

28 (b) Following issuance of the commission's final written report, the governing authorities
 29 of the City of Georgetown and the County of Quitman shall each hold and conduct a public
 30 hearing to determine the sentiments of their citizens regarding the work of the charter and
 31 unification commission. Notice of such hearings shall be advertised in the same manner as
 32 required for hearings held by the charter and unification commission. Representatives of the
 33 charter and unification commission shall be invited to present the final report to said
 34 governing authorities.

SECTION 8.

1
2 (a) The charter and unification commission shall complete its studies and shall prepare,
3 complete, and file any proposed charter no later than August 31, 2007; provided, however,
4 the above-described time period may be extended for such additional periods of time as may
5 be authorized by a resolution duly adopted by the governing authority of the City of
6 Georgetown and by a similar resolution being duly adopted by the governing authority of the
7 County of Quitman and may also be extended by an Act of the General Assembly and shall
8 be automatically extended for a period of time equal to the period of time that any proposed
9 charter shall be under consideration by the United States Department of Justice or by any
10 courts.

11 (b) Certified copies of the charter shall be filed by the charter and unification commission
12 with the clerks of the governing authorities of the City of Georgetown and the County of
13 Quitman and shall be authenticated by the signature of the chairperson of the charter and
14 unification commission. Such copies shall be public records and shall be available for
15 inspection or examination by any interested person.

16 (c) The charter and unification commission shall also make available a copy of the charter
17 to every daily or weekly newspaper published in Quitman County and to each radio or
18 television station operating within the county. The commission shall take such other steps,
19 within the limitation of its available funds, as it deems reasonable and appropriate to inform
20 the public throughout the county of the contents of the proposed charter. The charter and
21 unification commission shall also cause a summary of the proposed charter to be printed in
22 pamphlets or booklets and made available for general distribution throughout the county.

23 (d) The charter and unification commission is authorized to adopt such rules and regulations
24 as it deems necessary or desirable to carry out its powers and perform its duties and
25 functions.

26 (e) Following the completion of the proposed charter by the charter and unification
27 commission and prior to the time of filing or submission thereof as provided in this Act, the
28 same shall be presented for review by the United States Department of Justice as may be
29 required by law. The failure of any proposed charter submitted by the charter and unification
30 commission to the Department of Justice to obtain preclearance by the Department of Justice
31 shall not prevent the charter and unification commission from revising said charter in a
32 manner so as to enable the proposed charter to meet Department of Justice objections with
33 respect thereof, and the charter and unification commission is empowered to redraft any such
34 proposed charter in such manner so as to meet requirements for the Department of Justice's
35 approval in the event that any initial proposed charter fails to obtain Department of Justice
36 approval.

SECTION 9.

(a) A certified copy of the proposed charter shall be submitted by the commission to the election superintendent of Quitman County, and it shall be the duty of such superintendent to call and hold a referendum election for ratification or rejection of the proposed charter as provided in Section 10 of this Act.

(b) The charter and unification commission shall be abolished by operation of law at midnight of the day the results of the special referendum election on the proposed charter become final and effective pursuant to the laws of the State of Georgia.

SECTION 10.

(a) As soon as practicable after receipt of the certified copy of the proposed charter and after receipt of preclearance, or the usual notice of no current objections, by the United States Department of Justice of such proposed charter, it shall be the duty of the election superintendent of Quitman County to call a special election for approval or rejection of the proposed charter. The election superintendent shall set the date of the election for the earliest date therefor permissible under general law after the filing of any proposed charter as provided for in Section 8 of this Act. The election superintendent shall cause the date and purpose of the election to be published once a week for two calendar weeks immediately preceding the date thereof in the official organ of Quitman County. The ballot shall have written or printed thereon the following:

"() YES Shall the charter reorganizing and consolidating the governments of the City of Georgetown and the County of Quitman and creating a single () NO county-wide government to supersede and replace those governments be approved?"

(b) All persons desiring to vote for approval of the charter shall vote "Yes," and those persons desiring to vote for rejection of the charter shall vote "No." The votes cast on such question by the qualified voters of Quitman County residing within the corporate limits of the City of Georgetown and the votes cast on such question by the qualified voters of Quitman County shall be counted separately. If more than one-half of the votes cast by the qualified voters of Quitman County residing within the corporate limits of the City of Georgetown are for approval of the charter and if more than one-half of the total votes cast by the qualified voters residing within both the incorporated and unincorporated areas of Quitman County are for approval of the charter, then the charter shall become effective. Otherwise, it shall be void and of no force and effect. The expense of such election shall be borne equally by the City of Georgetown and the County of Quitman.

1 (c) The special election shall be conducted pursuant to Chapter 2 of Title 21 of the
2 O.C.G.A., the "Georgia Election Code," except to the extent specifically provided otherwise
3 by this Act.

4 (d) The term "qualified voter," as used in this Act, shall mean a voter of Quitman County
5 qualified to vote for members of the General Assembly of Georgia. The election
6 superintendent shall certify the returns to the Secretary of State. The election superintendent
7 shall also furnish a certified copy of the charter to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of
8 State shall issue his or her proclamation showing and declaring the result of the election on
9 the approval or rejection of the charter. One copy of the proclamation shall be attached to
10 the copy of the charter certified to the Secretary of State. One copy of the proclamation shall
11 be delivered to the clerk of the governing authority of the City of Georgetown, who shall
12 attach the same to the copy of the charter previously certified to him or her. One copy of the
13 proclamation shall be delivered to the clerk of the governing authority of the County of
14 Quitman, who shall attach the same to the copy of the charter previously certified to him or
15 her.

16 (e) Whenever a charter for the consolidation of the governments of the City of Georgetown
17 and the County of Quitman has been adopted, the above-certified copies thereof, with the
18 proclamation of the Secretary of State of Georgia attached thereto, shall be deemed duplicate
19 original copies of the charter of the consolidated government for all purposes. The certified
20 copy of the charter and proclamation deposited with the clerk of the governing authority of
21 the City of Georgetown and the certified copy of the charter and proclamation deposited with
22 the clerk of the governing authority of the County of Quitman shall subsequently be
23 delivered by them to the successor government. The successor government may issue
24 certified copies of the charter and any copy so certified shall be deemed a duplicate original
25 copy of the charter of the consolidated government for all purposes. The Secretary of State
26 is authorized to issue certified copies of the charter on file with him or her, and copies so
27 certified by him or her shall be deemed duplicate original copies of the charter of the
28 consolidated government for all purposes.

29

SECTION 11.

30 In the event the proposed single county-wide government charter is approved by voters as
31 provided in Section 10 of this Act, an election shall be held in accordance with the provisions
32 of the charter to elect the members of the governing authority of the county-wide
33 government. Upon the election of the members of the governing authority and their taking
34 office as the governing authority of the county-wide government, the existing governments
35 of the City of Georgetown and the County of Quitman shall stand abolished, all in
36 accordance with the provisions of the charter of the new county-wide government.

1 **SECTION 12.**

2 This Act shall become effective upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law
3 without such approval.

4 **SECTION 13.**

5 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.