

House Resolution 1341

By: Representatives Benfield of the 85th, Thomas of the 55th, Smith of the 168th, Sims of the 169th, Holmes of the 61st, and others

A RESOLUTION

- 1 Creating the Joint Study Committee on Direct Entry Midwifery; and for other purposes.
- 2 WHEREAS, pregnancy and childbirth are normal life events; and
- 3 WHEREAS, the citizens of Georgia need access to midwives who provide maternity care and
4 attend births in homes and freestanding birth centers and who offer the best chance for a
5 natural birth; and
- 6 WHEREAS, there exists a shortage of maternity care in certain areas of the state and a
7 shortage of consumer choices for maternity care throughout the state; and
- 8 WHEREAS, ninety-nine percent of births in the United States currently take place in
9 hospitals, and many involve unnecessary interventions; and
- 10 WHEREAS, nearly one-third of births, the highest rate ever reported, now occur by means
11 of Cesarean section, a rate exceeding recommended rates including the national health goals;
12 and
- 13 WHEREAS, the very large prospective study of out-of-hospital births with Certified
14 Professional Midwives recently published in the *British Medical Journal* showed that the
15 outcomes (intrapartum and neonatal mortality) of planned home birth for low risk women
16 in North America using Certified Professional Midwives are equivalent to outcomes for
17 similar women giving birth in hospitals, with much lower rates of medical interventions; and
- 18 WHEREAS, "granny" midwives were Direct Entry Midwives and have played an important
19 role in the history of this state and their many contributions are deserving of respect and
20 recognition; and

1 WHEREAS, the state of Georgia has no mechanism to provide licensure for Direct Entry
2 Midwives; and

3 WHEREAS, the Georgia Board of Nursing authorizes certified nurse midwives (CNMs) to
4 attend women in childbirth, but those so certified must be registered professional nurses who
5 have graduated from an American College of Nurse-Midwives accredited program, and
6 almost none practice in out-of-hospital settings; and

7 WHEREAS, the Certified Professional Midwife, a national certification recognized in a
8 number of states, is now available to midwives who meet the standardized requirements for
9 knowledge, skills, and experience for entry level practice; and

10 WHEREAS, 24 states currently provide licensure for Direct Entry Midwives who practice
11 in out-of-hospital settings; and

12 WHEREAS, the large majority of out-of-hospital births that occur in the United States are
13 attended by Direct Entry Midwives; and

14 WHEREAS, out-of-hospital births attended by Direct Entry Midwives cost much less than
15 hospital births, potentially saving the government of Georgia millions of dollars, and result
16 in healthier babies with fewer complications; and

17 WHEREAS, the American Public Health Association supports efforts to increase access to
18 out-of-hospital maternity care services and increase the range of quality maternity care
19 choices available to consumers, through recognition that legally-regulated and nationally
20 certified professional midwives can serve clients desiring safe, planned, out-of-hospital
21 maternity care services; and

22 WHEREAS, the American Public Health Association encourages the development and
23 implementation of guidelines for the licensing, certification, and practice for professional
24 midwives for use by state and local health agencies, health planners, maternity care
25 providers, and professional organizations.

26 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
27 GEORGIA that there be created the Joint Study Committee on Direct Entry Midwifery to be
28 composed of three members of the House of Representatives and two lay persons to be
29 appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and three members of the Senate

1 and two lay persons to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Assignments. The Speaker
2 shall designate a member of the House and the Senate Committee on Assignments shall
3 designate a member of the Senate who shall serve as chairpersons of the committee. The
4 committee shall meet at the call of the co-chairpersons.

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the committee shall undertake a study of the conditions,
6 needs, issues, and challenges mentioned above or related thereto to assist in the issue of
7 infant mortality in rural and urban areas of Georgia and recommend any actions or legislation
8 which the committee deems necessary or appropriate. The committee may conduct such
9 meetings at such places and at such times as it may deem necessary or convenient to enable
10 it to exercise fully and effectively its powers, perform its duties, and accomplish the
11 objectives and purposes of this resolution. The members of the committee shall receive the
12 allowances authorized for legislative members of interim legislative committees but shall
13 receive the same for not more than five days unless additional days are authorized; and the
14 nonlegislative members shall serve without compensation. The funds necessary to carry out
15 the provisions of this resolution shall come from the funds appropriated to the House of
16 Representatives and the Senate. In the event the committee makes a report of its findings and
17 recommendations, with suggestions for proposed legislation, if any, such report shall be
18 made on or before December 1, 2006. The committee shall stand abolished on December
19 1, 2006.