

House Bill 1601

By: Representative Buckner of the 76th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Part 1 of Article 4 of Chapter 2 of Title 21 of the Official Code of Georgia
2 Annotated, relating to selection and qualification of candidates and presidential electors, so
3 as to establish a code of conduct for candidates for elective office; to provide for legislative
4 intent; to provide for administration by the State Ethics Commission; to provide for related
5 matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

7 **SECTION 1.**

8 Part 1 of Article 4 of Chapter 2 of Title 21 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
9 relating to selection and qualification of candidates and presidential electors, is amended by
10 adding at its end new Code sections to be designated as Code Sections 21-2-140, 21-2-141,
11 and 21-2-142 to read as follows:

12 "21-2-140.

13 The Georgia General Assembly, through enactment of the code of Conduct for Candidates
14 Seeking Elective Office, acknowledges and affirms to every candidate for public office in
15 the State of Georgia the moral obligation to adhere voluntarily to these principles:

- 16 (1) Candidates are encouraged to present a campaign which adheres to the highest
17 principles of honest debate and fair and ethical practices;
- 18 (2) Debate of issues will embrace the democratic process while demonstrating integrity
19 and respect for the constitutional right of citizens to choose their governing
20 representation;
- 21 (3) Campaigns will be conducted so that citizens' understanding and confidence in the
22 political process and government are expanded; and
- 23 (4) The goal of each candidate will be foster respect, faith, and trust in elected officials
24 and provide a foundation for government that will inspire citizens to unite with elected
25 officials to resolve the issues that confront our state.

1 21-2-141.

2 There is established for and within the state a code of conduct for candidates for elective
3 office which shall read as follows:

4 **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CANDIDATES SEEKING ELECTIVE OFFICE**

5 Any person who is a candidate for any elective office in this state should:

6 (1) Put loyalty to the highest moral principles and to country above loyalty to persons,
7 party, or office;

8 (2) Uphold the Constitution, laws, and legal regulations of the United States and the
9 State of Georgia and of all governments therein and never be a party to their evasion;

10 (3) Give his or her earnest effort and best thought to the duties of the office sought;

11 (4) Seek to find and employ more efficient and economical ways of getting tasks
12 accomplished;

13 (5) Never discriminate unfairly by the dispensing of special favors or privileges to
14 anyone, whether for remuneration or not, and never accept, for self or family, favors or
15 benefits under circumstances which might be construed by reasonable persons as
16 influencing the performance of the governmental duties of the office sought;

17 (6) Make no private promises of any kind binding upon the duties of office, since a
18 government official has no private word which can be binding on public duty;

19 (7) Engage in no business with the government, either directly or indirectly, which is
20 inconsistent with the conscientious performance of the governmental duties of the office
21 sought;

22 (8) Never use any information coming to him or her confidentially in connection with
23 governmental affairs as a means for making private profit;

24 (9) Expose corruption wherever discovered;

25 (10) Adhere to the highest standards of truthfulness in all campaign activities,
26 recognizing that untruthful campaign statements debase the electoral process, lower the
27 repute of government, and cast discredit upon all candidates for office; and

28 (11) Uphold these principles, ever conscious that public office is a public trust.

29 21-2-142.

30 (a) The State Ethics Commission shall provide a depository where candidates seeking
31 elected office may submit items that, in their opinion, are evidence of a violation of the
32 Code of Conduct for Candidates Seeking Elective Office. The depository will be open for
33 public inspection.

34 (b) Items placed in the depository will be held through two campaign cycles before being
35 purged.

1 (c) The State Ethics Commission will issue a depository notification to the author of the
2 item received, or to the candidate to whose campaign the item refers, if said candidate is
3 not the recognized author of the material. Said candidate may respond to the item being
4 placed in the depository by submitting to the State Ethics Commission a letter of
5 explanation or rebuttal that will also be placed in the depository."

6 **SECTION 2.**

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