

Senate Resolution 788

By: Senators Thomas of the 54th, Goggans of the 7th, Unterman of the 45th, Staton of the 18th, Wiles of the 37th and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Creating the Senate Study Committee on Brain Injury Related Neurobehavioral Issues in
2 Georgia; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, there is concern over the unmet needs of people with brain injury related
4 neurobehavioral issues in Georgia; and

5 WHEREAS, neurobehavioral issues are problems with a person's ability to behave socially,
6 communicate, and control emotions, which can result in a threat to themselves or others and
7 which are caused by an injury to the brain such as traumatic brain injury or acquired brain
8 injury; and

9 WHEREAS, traumatic brain injury is the leading cause of death and disability for any
10 American age 45 or younger; and

11 WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that there are 1.5
12 million new traumatic brain injuries every year in the United States, which are primarily
13 caused by motor vehicle accidents, falls, sports injuries, and violence; and

14 WHEREAS, among more than 42,000 Georgians with traumatic brain injury were treated
15 and released from emergency departments in 2005, 6,320 sustained traumatic brain injuries
16 were severe enough to require admission to the hospital; of these people with severe injuries,
17 it is estimated that 34 percent of them will be permanently disabled; and

18 WHEREAS, in addition, approximately 15,000 other Georgians each year are discharged
19 from hospitals after receiving treatment for acquired brain injuries that are the result of
20 strokes, tumors, and other medical conditions; and

21 WHEREAS, these statistics only reveal the number of people treated for brain injuries in
22 Georgia hospitals and do not include people who seek treatment from other medical facilities,

1 out-of-state facilities, or not at all, nor do these figures include members of the military,
2 where traumatic brain injury has been identified as the "signature wound" of the Iraq War;
3 and

4 WHEREAS, it is estimated that approximately 187,000 Georgians have a long-term or
5 lifelong disability relating to a traumatic brain injury, and that, of these, it is estimated that
6 up to 18,700 of them will require ongoing, intensive services and supports due to the
7 neurobehavioral issues they present to their families and communities, and that this number
8 does not include the number of people with neurobehavioral issues caused by acquired brain
9 injury; and

10 WHEREAS, in the United States, the average lifetime cost of care for a person with a
11 moderate to severe brain injury can range from \$600,000.00 to \$1,875,000.00, and the costs
12 for a person with a severe brain injury, including someone with significant neurobehavioral
13 issues, can reach as high as \$4,000,000.00, particularly when timely and appropriate services
14 and rehabilitation have not been provided; and

15 WHEREAS, neurobehavioral issues caused by brain injury must be distinguished from other
16 cognitive behavioral disabilities such as mental illness or developmental disabilities because
17 the problems, needs, and support strategies are very different, as well as because people with
18 brain injury are generally not eligible to receive services from the mental health or
19 developmental disabilities service systems; and

20 WHEREAS, a coordinated system of care would significantly improve the quality of life for
21 people with neurobehavioral issues, enable them to live in the community or the least
22 restrictive and most appropriate community based setting possible, and reduce the use of
23 state funds for inappropriate and ineffective services; and

24 WHEREAS, a coordinated system of care for people with neurobehavioral issues currently
25 does not exist in Georgia, and as a result of the lack of sufficient funding and appropriate and
26 effective services, a large number of Georgians with neurobehavioral issues are ending up
27 in costly settings such as nursing homes, prisons, or state hospitals, or they are placed out of
28 state or end up homeless; and

29 WHEREAS, such inappropriate placements are taking a significant toll on lives as well as
30 the State of Georgia in terms of higher costs of care, lost wages, and lost opportunities to
31 contribute both personally and economically to local communities; and

1 WHEREAS, the Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission has issued a detailed report
2 on the needs of Georgians with neurobehavioral issues entitled "Georgia's Neurobehavioral
3 Crisis: Lack of Coordinated Care, Inappropriate Institutionalizations," which describes
4 successful models for services and supports for people with neurobehavioral issues in other
5 states.

6 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that there is created the Senate
7 Study Committee on Brain Injury Related Neurobehavioral Issues in Georgia to be composed
8 of five members of the Senate appointed by the President of the Senate. The President of the
9 Senate shall designate a member of the committee as chairperson of the committee. The
10 chairperson shall call all meetings of the committee. In addition, the committee membership
11 shall include four nonlegislative members to be comprised of the following: one person or
12 the immediate family member of a person with neurobehavioral issues caused by brain
13 injury, one provider of neurobehavioral services, one commission member of the Brain and
14 Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission, and one at-large member from a state agency that
15 provides services to Georgians with acquired or traumatic brain injury. All nonlegislative
16 members shall be appointed by the chairperson of the study committee.

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the committee shall undertake a study of the conditions,
18 needs, issues, and problems mentioned above or related thereto and as described in the Brain
19 and Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission's report for the purpose of determining the
20 infrastructure and funding necessary to develop and implement a coordinated system of care
21 for people with brain injury related neurobehavioral issues and to recommend any action or
22 legislation which the committee deems necessary or appropriate to accomplish this.

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the committee may conduct meetings at such places and
24 at such times as it may deem necessary or convenient to enable it to exercise fully and
25 effectively its powers, perform its duties, and accomplish the objectives and purposes of this
26 resolution. The members of the committee shall receive the allowances provided for in Code
27 Section 28-1-8 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated. The allowances authorized by
28 this resolution shall not be received by any member of the committee for more than five days
29 unless additional days are authorized. The funds necessary to carry out the provisions of this
30 resolution shall come from the funds appropriated to the Senate. In the event the committee
31 makes a report of its findings and recommendations, with suggestions for proposed
32 legislation, if any, such report shall be made on or before December 31, 2008. The
33 committee shall stand abolished on December 31, 2008.