

Senate Resolution 1188

By: Senators Orrock of the 36th, Thomas of the 54th, Goggans of the 7th, Unterman of the 45th, Butler of the 55th and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Creating the Senate Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias Study Committee; and for
2 other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, Alzheimer's disease is a slow, progressive disorder of the brain that results in
4 loss of memory and other cognitive function and, eventually, results in death; and

5 WHEREAS, because Alzheimer's is accompanied by memory loss, poor judgment, changes
6 in personality and behavior and a tendency to wander, individuals with this disease are at
7 increased risk for accidental injury, getting lost, abused, neglected and exploited; and

8 WHEREAS, research shows that one in ten people over the age of 65 and almost one in
9 every two people over the age of 85 have Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia. Given
10 Georgia's population that means that more than 161,000 older Georgians suffer with
11 Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia; and

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13 WHEREAS, the number of persons with Alzheimer's disease is expected to increase
14 exponentially due to the aging of the baby boomers; and

15 WHEREAS, Alzheimer's disease takes an enormous toll on loving family members, with an
16 estimated one in four Georgians acting as caregivers for each individual with the disease; and

17 WHEREAS, caregivers for individuals with Alzheimer's watch closely the deleterious
18 effects of the disease and often suffer more stress, depression, and health problems than
19 caregivers of people with other illnesses; and

20 WHEREAS, there is an increasing number of individuals developing early-onset Alzheimer's
21 disease—a form of the disease occurring prior to age 65, when individuals are in their 30's,
22 40's, 50's, or early 60's; and

1 WHEREAS, early-onset Alzheimer's disease can be particularly difficult on family dynamics
2 and economics due to the early age of disease onset; and

3 WHEREAS, no surveillance currently exists in Georgia to track the number of persons who
4 have been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease; and

5 WHEREAS, there is an economic impact of Alzheimer's disease upon the business, medical,
6 and caregiver communities of Georgia; and

7 WHEREAS, the State of Georgia needs to assess the current and future impact of
8 Alzheimer's disease on Georgians and state systems, programs, and services to assure an
9 integrated, comprehensive, coordinated, and up-to-date strategy to address the needs of this
10 growing segment of Georgia's population;

11 WHEREAS, it would be beneficial to study and make recommendations on the following:

12 (1) Surveillance of persons with Alzheimer's disease for purposes of having proper
13 estimates of the number of Georgians with Alzheimer's disease;

14 (2) Safety and well-being of persons with Alzheimer's disease (driving assessment and
15 emergency placement for persons who are found or abandoned);

16 (3) Dementia care practice recommendations to ensure quality care in long-term settings;

17 (4) Future need for dementia related services as well as funding for programs for
18 individuals with dementias (including those with early-onset); and

19 (5) Implementation of the following action steps to improve public health surveillance:

20 (A) Add the Communicable Disease Center's optional module on caregiving, including
21 questions about memory and other cognitive problems of the care recipient to Georgia's
22 2009 Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance System;

23 (B) Add the additional questions on memory and thinking to Georgia's 2009 Behavioral
24 Risk Factors Surveillance System;

25 (C) Plan for simple and cross-tabular analysis of the data generated in the state and for
26 its wide public dissemination; and

27 (D) Add the module on memory and other cognitive problems that is being developed
28 by the Communicable Disease Center's expert panel to Georgia's 2010 Behavioral Risk
29 Factors Surveillance System.

30 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that there is created the Senate
31 Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias Study Committee to be composed of five
32 members of the Senate appointed by the President of the Senate and not more than an

1 additional five members who are stakeholders including one member who has early memory
2 loss appointed by the President of the Senate. The President of the Senate shall designate a
3 member of the committee as chairperson of the committee. The chairperson shall call all
4 meetings of the committee.

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the committee shall undertake a study of Alzheimer's
6 disease and other dementia disorders and shall initiate a stakeholder process to develop a
7 state strategic plan based on the study. The Senate Alzheimer's Disease and Other
8 Dementias Study Committee shall provide a report to the President of the Senate by
9 November 30, 2008, whereupon it shall be disseminated to the chairpersons of the
10 appropriate Senate committees and shall also provide the report to the Department of Human
11 Resources Division of Aging Services for consideration and to the Georgia Council on Aging
12 for consideration and inclusion in the report it is preparing regarding aging in Georgia.

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the committee may conduct meetings at such places and
14 at such times as it may deem necessary or convenient to enable it to exercise fully and
15 effectively its powers, perform its duties, and accomplish the objectives and purposes of this
16 resolution. The legislative members of the committee shall receive the allowances provided
17 for in Code Section 28-1-8 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated. The allowances
18 authorized by this resolution shall not be received by any member of the committee for more
19 than five days unless additional days are authorized. The funds necessary to carry out the
20 provisions of this resolution shall come from the funds appropriated to the Senate. The
21 committee shall stand abolished on December 31, 2008.