

House Bill 1015

By: Representatives Golick of the 34<sup>th</sup>, Hatfield of the 177<sup>th</sup>, Levitas of the 82<sup>nd</sup>, Ramsey of the 72<sup>nd</sup>, Setzler of the 35<sup>th</sup>, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 15 of Title 16 and Title 17 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,  
2 relating, respectively, to street gang terrorism and prevention and criminal procedure, so as  
3 to expand and change provisions relating to criminal street gangs and criminal gang activity;  
4 to change and add legislative findings and intent; to change provisions relating to what  
5 constitutes criminal gang activity; to change provisions relating to commission of offense  
6 admissible as evidence of existence of criminal street gang and criminal gang activity; to  
7 provide that the Georgia Bureau of Investigation shall be authorized to establish a state-wide  
8 criminal street gang data base, subject to funding availability; to require criminal gang  
9 offenses to be granted bail by a superior court judge; to provide that a person sentenced for  
10 violating the 'Georgia Criminal Street Gang Terrorism and Prevention Act' be supervised on  
11 probation for the duration of his or her sentence; to provide for related matters; to repeal  
12 conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

13 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

14 style="text-align:center">**SECTION 1.**

15 Chapter 15 of Title 16 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to street gang  
16 terrorism and prevention, is amended by revising Code Section 16-15-2, relating to  
17 legislative findings and intent, as follows:

18 "16-15-2.

19 (a) The General Assembly finds and declares that it is the right of every person to be  
20 secure and protected from fear, intimidation, and physical harm caused by the activities of  
21 violent groups and individuals. It is not the intent of this chapter to interfere with the  
22 exercise of the constitutionally protected rights of freedom of expression and association.  
23 The General Assembly recognizes the constitutional right of every citizen to harbor and  
24 express beliefs on any lawful subject whatsoever, to associate lawfully with others who  
25 share similar beliefs, to petition lawfully constituted authority for a redress of perceived  
26 grievances, and to participate in the electoral process.

27 (b) The General Assembly, however, further finds that the State of Georgia is in a state of  
 28 crisis which has been caused by violent criminal street gangs whose members threaten,  
 29 terrorize, and commit a multitude of crimes against the peaceful citizens of their  
 30 neighborhoods. These activities, both individually and collectively, present a clear and  
 31 present danger to public order and safety and are not constitutionally protected.

32 (c) The General Assembly finds that there are criminal street gangs operating in Georgia  
 33 and that the number of gang related murders is increasing. It is the intent of the General  
 34 Assembly in enacting this chapter to seek the eradication of criminal activity by criminal  
 35 street gangs by focusing upon ~~patterns of~~ criminal gang activity and upon the organized  
 36 nature of criminal street gangs which together are the chief source of terror created by  
 37 criminal street gangs.

38 (d) The General Assembly further finds that an effective means of punishing and deterring  
 39 the criminal activities of criminal street gangs is through forfeiture of the profits, proceeds,  
 40 and instrumentalities acquired, accumulated, or used by criminal street gangs.

41 (e) The General Assembly further finds that in order to effectuate the purposes of this  
 42 chapter, it is necessary to ensure that evidence of criminal gang activity and criminal street  
 43 gangs, their history, nature, activities, and practices shall be admissible in trials and  
 44 proceedings brought under this chapter."

45 **SECTION 2.**

46 Said chapter is further amended by revising paragraph (2) of Code Section 16-15-3, relating  
 47 to definitions, as follows:

48 "(2) 'Criminal street gang' means any organization, association, or group of three or more  
 49 persons associated in fact, whether formal or informal, which engages in criminal gang  
 50 activity as defined in paragraph (1) of this Code section. The existence of such  
 51 organization, association, or group of individuals associated in fact may be established  
 52 by evidence of a common name or common identifying signs, symbols, tattoos, graffiti,  
 53 or attire or other distinguishing characteristics, including, but not limited to, common  
 54 activities, customs, or behaviors. Such term shall not include three or more persons,  
 55 associated in fact, whether formal or informal, who are not engaged in criminal gang  
 56 activity."

57 **SECTION 3.**

58 Said chapter is further amended by revising Code Section 16-15-4, relating to participation  
 59 in criminal street gang activity prohibited, as follows:

60 "16-15-4.

61 (a) It shall be unlawful for any person employed by or associated with a criminal street  
62 gang to conduct or participate in criminal ~~street~~ gang activity through the commission of  
63 any offense enumerated in paragraph (1) of Code Section 16-15-3.

64 ~~(b) It shall be unlawful for any person employed by or associated with a criminal street  
65 gang to commit any offense enumerated in paragraph (1) of Code Section 16-15-3 with  
66 knowledge that members of such criminal street gang have committed one or more of such  
67 offenses.~~

68 ~~(c)~~ It shall be unlawful for any person to commit any offense enumerated in paragraph (1)  
69 of Code Section 16-15-3 with the intent to obtain or earn membership or maintain or  
70 increase his or her status or position in a criminal street gang.

71 ~~(d)~~(c) It shall be unlawful for any person to acquire or maintain, directly or indirectly,  
72 through criminal gang activity or proceeds derived therefrom any interest in or control of  
73 any real or personal property of any nature, including money.

74 ~~(e)~~(d) It shall be unlawful for any person who occupies a position of organizer, supervisory  
75 position, or any other position of management or leadership with regard to a criminal street  
76 gang to engage in, directly or indirectly, or conspire to engage in criminal gang activity.

77 ~~(f)~~(e) It shall be unlawful for any person to cause, encourage, solicit, recruit, or coerce  
78 another to become a member or associate of a criminal street gang, to participate in a  
79 criminal street gang, or to conduct or participate in criminal gang activity.

80 ~~(g)~~(f) It shall be unlawful for any person to communicate, directly or indirectly, with  
81 another any threat of injury or damage to the person or property of the other person or ~~to~~  
82 of any associate or relative of the other person with the intent to deter such person from  
83 assisting a member or associate of a criminal street gang to withdraw from such criminal  
84 street gang.

85 ~~(h)~~(g) It shall be unlawful for any person to communicate, directly or indirectly, with  
86 another any threat of injury or damage to the person or property of the other person or ~~to~~  
87 of any associate or relative of the other person with the intent to punish or retaliate against  
88 such person for having withdrawn from a criminal street gang.

89 (h) It shall be unlawful for any person to communicate, directly or indirectly, with another  
90 any threat of injury or damage to the person or property of the other person or of any  
91 associate or relative of the other person with the intent to punish or retaliate against such  
92 person for refusing to or encouraging another to refuse to become or obtain the status of  
93 a member or associate of a criminal street gang.

94 (i) It shall be unlawful for any person to communicate, directly or indirectly, with another  
95 any threat of injury or damage to the person or property of the other person or of any  
96 associate or relative of the other person with the intent to punish or retaliate against such

97 person for providing statements or testimony against criminal street gangs or any criminal  
 98 street gang member or associate.

99 (j) In addition to the prohibitions set forth in Code Section 16-10-93, it shall be unlawful  
 100 for any person to communicate, directly or indirectly, with another any threat of injury or  
 101 damage to the person or property of the other person or of any associate or relative of the  
 102 other person with the intent to intimidate, deter, or prevent such person from  
 103 communicating to any law enforcement or corrections officer, prosecuting attorney, or  
 104 judge information relating to criminal street gangs, criminal street gang members or  
 105 associates, or criminal gang activity.

106 ~~(i)~~(k)(1) Any person who violates subsection (a), (b), or (c), ~~or~~ (d) of this Code section  
 107 shall, in addition to any other penalty imposed by law, be punished by imprisonment for  
 108 not less than five nor more than 15 years or by a fine of not less than \$10,000.00 nor  
 109 more than \$15,000.00, or both.

110 (2) Any person who violates subsection ~~(e)~~ (d) of this Code section may, in addition to  
 111 any other penalty provided by law, be punished by imprisonment for an additional ten  
 112 years which shall be served consecutively to any other sentence imposed on such person  
 113 by law.

114 (3) Any person who violates subsection (e), (f), (g), ~~or~~ (h), (i) or (j) of this Code section  
 115 shall, in addition to any other penalty provided by law, be punished by imprisonment for  
 116 not less than three nor more than ten years.

117 (l) In addition to any other penalty provided by this Code section, all sentences imposed  
 118 under this Code section shall require as a special condition of the sentence that the person  
 119 sentenced shall not knowingly have contact of any kind or character with any other  
 120 member or associate of a criminal street gang, shall not participate in any criminal gang  
 121 activity, and, in cases involving a victim, shall not knowingly have contact of any kind or  
 122 character with any such victim or any member of any such victim's family or household.

123 ~~(j)~~(m) Any crime committed in violation of this Code section shall be considered a  
 124 separate offense."

#### 125 **SECTION 4.**

126 Said chapter is further amended by revising subsection (d) of Code Section 16-15-7, relating  
 127 to real property used by criminal street gangs declared a public nuisance, as follows:

128 "(d) The state, any political subdivision thereof, or any person aggrieved by a ~~pattern of~~  
 129 criminal street gang or criminal gang activity may bring an action to enjoin violations of  
 130 this chapter in the same manner as provided in Code Section 16-14-6."

131 **SECTION 5.**

132 Said chapter is further amended by revising Code Section 16-15-9, relating to commission  
 133 of offense admissible as evidence of existence of criminal street gang and criminal gang  
 134 activity, as follows:

135 "16-15-9.

136 The commission of any offense enumerated in paragraph (1) of Code Section 16-15-3 by  
 137 any member or associate of a criminal street gang shall be admissible in any trial or  
 138 proceeding for the purpose of proving the existence of the criminal street gang and criminal  
 139 gang activity."

140 **SECTION 6.**

141 Said chapter is further amended by revising Code Section 16-15-10, relating to the Criminal  
 142 Street Gang Reward Fund, as follows:

143 "16-15-10.

144 There shall be established as part of the Prosecuting ~~Attorney's~~ Attorneys' Council of the  
 145 State of Georgia the Criminal Street Gang Reward Fund. The chief of police, sheriff, or  
 146 chairperson of any county governing authority may request the posting of up to a \$5,000.00  
 147 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of any person involved in  
 148 criminal ~~street~~ gang activity that leads to the death or maiming of another person or  
 149 property damage in the amount of \$2,500.00 or more."

150 **SECTION 7.**

151 Said chapter is further amended by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

152 "16-15-11.

153 (a) Subject to funds as may be appropriated by the General Assembly or otherwise  
 154 available for such purpose, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation shall be authorized to  
 155 establish, develop, manage, and maintain a state-wide criminal street gang data base, to be  
 156 known as the Georgia Criminal Street Gang Database, to facilitate the exchange of  
 157 information between federal, state, county, and municipal law enforcement, prosecution  
 158 and corrections agencies, offices, and departments. The Georgia Bureau of Investigation  
 159 shall be authorized to solicit input from law enforcement and prosecuting attorneys in  
 160 determining useful information for such data base so that information may be used by law  
 161 enforcement, prosecution and corrections agencies, and other agencies, offices, and  
 162 departments for investigative, prosecutorial, and corrections purposes.

163 (b) Once the Georgia Criminal Street Gang Database is created and operational, the  
 164 Georgia Bureau of Investigation shall be authorized to notify all federal, state, county, and  
 165 municipal law enforcement, prosecution and corrections agencies, offices, and departments

166 located in this state that information regarding criminal street gangs and their members and  
 167 associates shall be entered into the Georgia Criminal Street Gang Database.

168 (c) The Georgia Bureau of Investigation shall be authorized to create and promulgate a  
 169 uniform reporting format for the entry of pertinent information received from law  
 170 enforcement, prosecution and corrections agencies, offices, and departments for use in the  
 171 Georgia Criminal Street Gang Database.

172 (d) All state, county, and municipal law enforcement, prosecution and corrections  
 173 agencies, offices, and departments may timely furnish information acquired relating to  
 174 criminal street gangs and criminal gang activity to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation to  
 175 be included in the Georgia Criminal Street Gang Database according to the reporting  
 176 format developed by the Georgia Bureau of Investigation.

177 (e) Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 4 of Chapter 18 of Title 50, the information  
 178 and related records associated with the Georgia Criminal Street Gang Database shall not  
 179 be open to inspection by or made available to the public."

180 **SECTION 8.**

181 Title 17 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to criminal procedure, is  
 182 amended by revising subsection (a) of Code Section 17-6-1, relating to where offenses are  
 183 bailable, by striking "and" at the end of paragraph (11), striking the period at the end of  
 184 paragraph (12) and inserting "; and" in lieu thereof, and adding a new paragraph to read as  
 185 follows:

186 "(13) Violations of the 'Georgia Street Gang Terrorism and Prevention Act.'"

187 **SECTION 9.**

188 Said title is further amended by revising paragraph (4) of subsection (f) of Code Section  
 189 17-6-1, relating to where offenses are bailable, as follows:

190 "(4) ~~If probable cause is shown that the offense charged is in furtherance of a pattern of~~  
 191 ~~criminal gang activity as defined by Code Section 16-15-3~~ For violations of Code Section  
 192 16-15-4, the court shall require increased bail and shall include as a condition of bail or  
 193 pretrial release that the defendant shall not have contact of any kind or character with any  
 194 other member or associate of a criminal street gang and, in cases involving a victim, that  
 195 the defendant shall not have contact of any kind or character with ~~the~~ any such victim or  
 196 any member of ~~the~~ any such victim's family or household."

197 **SECTION 10.**

198 Said title is further amended by revising paragraph (2) of subsection (a) of Code Section  
 199 17-10-1, relating to fixing of sentence, as follows:

