

Senate Resolution 19

By: Senator Hill of the 32nd

## A RESOLUTION

1 Creating the Senate Study Committee on Advance Directives; and for other purposes.

2 WHEREAS, over the past 30 years, "advance directives" for health care have been  
3 increasingly embraced by individuals seeking to have their wishes respected at the end of life  
4 by the medical community and its facilities, practitioners, clinicians, and first responders; and

5 WHEREAS, all 50 states currently have some version of advance directive legislation  
6 reflecting the consensus within the legal, political, and medical communities that patient  
7 autonomy and self-determination at the end of life should be recognized and legally  
8 protected; and

9 WHEREAS, hospitals throughout Georgia vary the title and format of the paradigm designed  
10 to convey patient advance directives to health care professionals and to honor the treatment  
11 decisions made by the patient; and

12 WHEREAS, Physician Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (POLST) are endorsed in the  
13 federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) as critical medical  
14 documents used to disclose patient wishes to all health care providers upon a patient's  
15 admission to a medical facility and whenever a patient is transferred; and

16 WHEREAS, the POLST form enables physicians to document patient wishes as clear,  
17 specific medical orders regarding the types of life-sustaining treatment desired or refused by  
18 the individual with an advanced life-limiting illness; and

19 WHEREAS, it would be beneficial to study the issue of establishing a uniform format for  
20 POLST forms and considering mandating the use of POLST forms in all hospitals in this  
21 state to ensure that the patient and physician discuss and develop clear medical treatment  
22 plans that are based upon patient decisions and that respect patient wishes for a peaceful  
23 death with dignity.

24 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that there is created the Senate  
25 Study Committee on Advance Directives to study the establishment of a uniform format for  
26 POLST forms and to consider mandating the use of such forms in all hospitals. The study  
27 committee shall be composed of five members of the Senate to be appointed by the Senate  
28 Committee on Assignments. The Senate Committee on Assignments shall designate a  
29 member of the committee to serve as chairperson of the committee. The chairperson shall  
30 call all meetings of the committee.

31 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the committee shall undertake a study of the conditions,  
32 needs, and issues mentioned above or related thereto and recommend any action or  
33 legislation which the committee deems necessary or appropriate. The committee may  
34 conduct such meetings at such places and at such times as it may deem necessary or  
35 convenient to enable it to exercise fully and effectively its powers, perform its duties, and  
36 accomplish the objectives and purposes of this resolution. The members of the committee  
37 shall receive the allowances provided for in Code Section 28-1-8 of the Official Code of  
38 Georgia Annotated. The allowances authorized by this resolution shall not be received by  
39 any member of the committee for more than five days unless additional days are authorized.  
40 The funds necessary to carry out the provisions of this resolution shall come from the funds  
41 appropriated to the Senate. In the event the committee makes a report of its findings and  
42 recommendations, with suggestions for proposed legislation, if any, such report shall be  
43 made on or before December 31, 2011, and the committee shall stand abolished on  
44 December 31, 2011.