

Senate Bill 291

By: Senators Unterman of the 45th, Wilkinson of the 50th, Hill of the 32nd, Dugan of the 30th, Hill of the 4th and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 1 of Chapter 6 of Title 49 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,  
2 relating to general provisions relative to services for the aging, so as to create the Georgia  
3 Adult and Aging Services Agency; to provide for definitions; to provide for the creation of  
4 the Georgia Adult and Aging Services Board; to provide for membership, powers, and duties;  
5 to provide for an agency executive director; to provide for executive personnel; to provide  
6 for transfer of property, personnel, and funding from the Department of Human Services and  
7 the Division of Aging Services; to provide for further authorizations; to provide for receipt  
8 of funds and appropriations; to provide for an annual report; to provide for related matters;  
9 to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

10 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

11 **SECTION 1.**

12 Article 1 of Chapter 6 of Title 49 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to  
13 general provisions relative to services for the aging, is amended by repealing Code Section  
14 49-6-2, relating to the department designated state agency for federal programs for aging and  
15 development and coordination of state, local, and interstate programs, in its entirety and by  
16 enacting a new Code Section 49-6-2 to read as follows:

17 "49-6-2.

18 As used in this article, the term:

19 (1) 'Adult guardianship services' means the services provided by the agency to adults  
20 when the local probate court has determined that the adult needs a guardian and appoints  
21 the agency as the guardian of last resort.

22 (2) 'Adult services' means programs and services for adults, including but not limited to  
23 programs and services authorized by the federal Older Americans Act of 1965 and other  
24 state and federal laws, regulations, grants, initiatives, demonstration programs, and pilot

25 programs or supported through private initiatives that are provided by the agency, that are  
 26 in addition to aging services.

27 (3) 'Agency' means the Georgia Adult and Aging Services Agency.

28 (4) 'Aging services' means those programs and services for older adults and persons with  
 29 disabilities that are principally focused on home and community based services, including  
 30 but not limited to programs and services authorized by the federal Older Americans Act  
 31 of 1965 and other state and federal laws, regulations, grants, initiatives, demonstration  
 32 programs, and pilot programs or supported through private initiatives that are provided  
 33 by the agency.

34 (5) 'Alzheimer's and Related Dementias State Plan' means the comprehensive state plan  
 35 that addresses Alzheimer's and related dementias developed by the Georgia Alzheimer's  
 36 and Related Dementias State Plan Task Force as presented to the Georgia General  
 37 Assembly in 2014.

38 (6) 'Board' means the Georgia Adult and Aging Services Board.

39 (7) 'Director' means the executive director of the agency selected by the board.

40 (8) 'Older adult' means an individual who is 60 years of age or older or who otherwise  
 41 qualifies for aging services by the terms of the program, grant, or initiative under which  
 42 the individual is being served.

43 (9) 'Person with disabilities' means an individual having a physical or mental impairment  
 44 that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities.

45 (10) 'Regulations' means regulations made by the director with the approval of the board  
 46 and promulgated in the manner prescribed by law."

47 **SECTION 2.**

48 Said article is further amended by repealing Code Section 49-6-3, relating to the powers of  
 49 the department, in its entirety and by enacting a new Code Section 49-6-3 to read as follows:

50 "49-6-3.

51 (a) There is created the Georgia Adult and Aging Services Board. The board shall consist  
 52 of seven members who work or have worked in the area of adult or aging services, who are  
 53 recipients of adult or aging services, or who are eligible to receive services provided by the  
 54 agency; provided, however, that two members shall be older adults.

55 (b) The members of the board shall be appointed as follows: two members shall be  
 56 appointed by the Governor, two members shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House  
 57 of Representatives, two members shall be appointed by the Lieutenant Governor and one  
 58 member shall be appointed by the director. The first members shall be appointed to take  
 59 office on July 1, 2014, for initial terms as follows: three such members shall be appointed  
 60 for terms of one year, two such members shall be appointed for terms of two years, and two

61 such members shall be appointed for terms of three years. Thereafter, the successors shall  
 62 be appointed by the respective appointing authority upon the expiration of the respective  
 63 terms of office for terms of three years. All such members shall serve until their successors  
 64 are appointed and qualified. Such members shall be eligible for reappointment to  
 65 successive terms of office as members of the board.

66 (c) Vacancies in office shall be filled by appointment by the respective appointing  
 67 authority in the same manner as the appointment to the position on the board. An  
 68 appointment to fill a vacancy other than by expiration of a term of office shall be for the  
 69 balance of the unexpired term. If a vacancy remains unfilled for six months, the board  
 70 shall be authorized to fill the vacancy in accordance with the process described in this Code  
 71 section.

72 (d) Members of the board may be removed from office under the same conditions for  
 73 removal from office of members of professional licensing boards provided for in Code  
 74 Section 43-1-17.

75 (e) There shall be a chairperson of the board elected by and from the membership of the  
 76 board who shall be the presiding officer of the board. The term of the chairperson shall be  
 77 established by rules of the board.

78 (f) A quorum for transacting business shall be determined by the members of the board.

79 (g) The members of the board shall receive a per diem allowance and expenses as shall be  
 80 set and approved by the Office of Planning and Budget in conformance with rates and  
 81 allowances set for members of other state boards.

82 (h) In addition to the powers and duties set forth in this article, the board shall recommend  
 83 to the Governor and the General Assembly changes in state programs, statutes, policies,  
 84 budgets, and standards relating to aging services, the improvement of coordination among  
 85 state and local agencies that provide aging services, and the improvement of the condition  
 86 of citizens who are in need of the services of the agency."

87 **SECTION 3.**

88 Said article is further amended by repealing Code Section 49-6-4, relating to acceptance of  
 89 federal and other grants, gifts, bequests, or devises, in its entirety and by enacting a new  
 90 Code Section 49-6-4 to read as follows:

91 "49-6-4.

92 (a) The board shall select a director. The director shall have experience with adult or  
 93 aging services provided by the agency with particular, demonstrated experience with home  
 94 and community based services. The director shall serve at the pleasure of the board.

95 (b) In carrying out his or her duties under this article, the director shall:

- 96 (1) Be authorized to convene one or more panels of experts to address various adult and  
 97 aging issues, including but not limited to health, employment, volunteering, long-term  
 98 care, home and community based services, protective services, caregiver support, adult  
 99 education, transportation, and housing, and may consult with experts on aging issues;  
 100 (2) Establish policies and procedures for the operation of the agency as the director finds  
 101 necessary for the purposes of this article, including appropriate subordinate  
 102 administrative units within the agency;  
 103 (3) Establish personnel requirements and hire executive personnel, including a deputy  
 104 director, chief financial officer, and chief operating officer, and other personnel as the  
 105 director deems necessary for the efficient performance of all functions of the agency;  
 106 (4) Prepare and submit to the board:  
 107 (A) The annual Alzheimer's and Related Dementias State Plan;  
 108 (B) Annual reports of activities and expenditures;  
 109 (C) Such plans for restructuring of the agency as the director determines appropriate  
 110 for action by the board;  
 111 (D) Estimates of sums required for carrying out this article and the proposed budget  
 112 request for comment by the board prior to the director's presentation to the Governor  
 113 and General Assembly for their action;  
 114 (E) Such other actions as the director believes necessary for board approval;  
 115 (F) Prepare and present to the Governor, General Assembly, and their respective  
 116 designees the agency's budget reports, requests, and any other financial information  
 117 requested by the Governor, General Assembly, or their respective designees; and  
 118 (G) Prepare and submit certification for disbursement, in accordance with regulations,  
 119 of funds available for carrying out the purposes of this article; and  
 120 (5) Delegate to any executive officer or other employee of the agency such of the  
 121 director's powers and duties, except the making of regulations and the appointment of  
 122 executive personnel, as he or she finds necessary to carry out the purposes of this article."

123 **SECTION 4.**

124 Said article is further amended by repealing Code Section 49-6-5, relating to the creation of  
 125 the Division of Aging Services within the department, in its entirety and by enacting a new  
 126 Code Section 49-6-5 to read as follows:

127 "49-6-5.

128 (a)(1) The Georgia Adult and Aging Services Agency is created and established to  
 129 perform the functions and assume the duties, powers, and authority exercised by the  
 130 Division of Aging Services within the department on June 30, 2014. The agency  
 131 established by this Code section shall have the functions, duties, powers, and

132 responsibilities assigned by the board and the commissioner and as assigned by or as  
133 provided by law.

134 (2) The agency shall be assigned to the department for administrative purposes only, as  
135 prescribed in Code Section 50-4-3 except that the agency shall not be subject to  
136 paragraph (2) of subsection (a) and paragraph (4) of subsection (b) of said Code Section  
137 providing for budget submission through the department. The agency shall submit its  
138 budget separately and directly to the Governor and the General Assembly.

139 (3) On July 1, 2014, the powers, functions, duties, programs, institutions, and authority  
140 of the agency relating to the former Division of Aging Services within the department  
141 shall be transferred to the agency pursuant to this article. The agency shall take all  
142 necessary steps to ensure continuity of services for the older adults and persons with  
143 disabilities the agency serves during such transfer. The policy-making functions which  
144 were vested in the department as they pertained to the Division of Aging Services shall  
145 be vested in the agency effective July 1, 2014.

146 (b) The agency shall be administered by a director appointed pursuant to Code Section  
147 49-6-4.

148 (c) Any proceedings or other matters pending before the Division of Aging Services of the  
149 department on June 30, 2014, which relate to the functions transferred to the agency shall  
150 be transferred to the agency on July 1, 2014.

151 (d) The agency shall assume possession and control of all records, papers, equipment,  
152 supplies, office space, and all other tangible property possessed and controlled by the  
153 department as of June 30, 2014, in the department administration of the Division of Aging  
154 Services. All funds attributable to the Division of Aging Services and its programs from  
155 state, federal, and any other public or private source shall be transferred to the agency on  
156 July 1, 2014.

157 (e) On July 1, 2014, the agency shall receive custody of any state owned property in the  
158 custody of the department on June 30, 2014, which pertains to the functions transferred  
159 from the Division of Aging Services to the agency.

160 (f) Prior to July 1, 2014, the Office of Planning and Budget shall calculate, in consultation  
161 with the department and the Division of Aging Services, the amount of all funds of, or  
162 attributable to, the Division of Aging Services and its programs from any source that is  
163 used to provide administrative or other services within the department. The amount  
164 calculated shall be transferred to the agency on July 1, 2014.

165 (g) All officers, employees, and agents of the Division of Aging Services who, on June 30,  
166 2014, are engaged in the performance of a function or duty which shall be vested in the  
167 agency on July 1, 2014, by this article, shall be automatically transferred to the agency on  
168 July 1, 2014. An equivalent number of positions or funds of the department which provide

169 administrative support to the Division of Aging Services shall be transferred to the agency  
170 on July 1, 2014. Such persons shall be subject to the employment practices and policies  
171 of the agency on and after July 1, 2014, but shall receive compensation and benefits  
172 consistent with the compensation and benefits of other employees of the department  
173 holding positions substantially the same as the transferred employees; the compensation  
174 and benefits of such transferred employees shall not be reduced. Employees who are  
175 subject to the rules of the State Personnel Board and who are transferred to the agency shall  
176 retain all existing rights under such rules. Accrued annual and sick leave shall be retained  
177 by such employees as employees of the agency. The department shall be responsible for  
178 payment of the accrued Fair Labor Standards Act compensatory time possessed by such  
179 employees. Such accrued compensatory time shall be used by or paid to such employees  
180 prior to July 1, 2014.

181 (h)(1) The agency is the designated state unit for purposes of administering the Older  
182 Americans Act of 1965 and related programs and services, the Alzheimer's and Related  
183 Dementias State Plan, long-term services and supports, adult guardianship services  
184 provided by the Division of Aging Services, all other services provided by the Division  
185 of Aging Services, and all other programs and services appropriate to the agency.

186 (2) The agency shall conform to federal standards in all respects necessary for receiving  
187 federal grants, and the director is authorized and empowered to effect such changes as  
188 may, from time to time, be necessary in order to comply with such standards.

189 (3) The agency shall take all necessary steps to secure at a minimum the same level of  
190 benefits provided pursuant to relevant federal statutes and appropriations received by the  
191 Division of Aging Services of the department prior to June 30, 2014. The department  
192 shall also amend the Alzheimer's and Related Dementias State Plan if necessary to meet  
193 federal funding requirements.

194 (4) The agency is authorized to employ, on a full-time or part-time basis, such medical,  
195 psychiatric, social work, supervisory, institutional, and other professional personnel and  
196 such clerical and other employees as may be necessary to discharge the duties of the  
197 agency under this article. The agency is also authorized to contract for such professional  
198 services as may be necessary.

199 (5) Classified employees of the agency under this article shall in all instances be  
200 employed and dismissed in accordance with rules and regulations of the State Personnel  
201 Board.

202 (i) The agency shall succeed to all rules, regulations, policies, procedures, and  
203 administrative orders of the department which are in effect on June 30, 2014, and which  
204 relate to the functions of the Division of Aging Services. Such rules, regulations, policies,

205 procedures, and administrative orders shall remain in effect until amended, repealed,  
 206 superseded, or nullified by proper authority or as otherwise provided by law.

207 (j) The rights, privileges, entitlements, and duties of parties to contracts, leases,  
 208 agreements, and other transactions entered into before July 1, 2014, by the department or  
 209 the Division of Aging Services pertaining to the Division of Aging Services shall continue  
 210 to exist, and none of such rights, privileges, entitlements, and duties are impaired or  
 211 diminished by reason of the transfer of the functions to the agency provided for in this  
 212 article. In all such instances, the agency shall be substituted for the department or the  
 213 Division of Aging Services, and the agency shall succeed to the rights, privileges,  
 214 entitlements, and duties under such contracts, leases, agreements, and other transactions.

215 (k) The agency shall design service delivery regions as appropriate to the programs and  
 216 services it administers and shall be exempt from Code Section 50-4-7.

217 (1)(1) The agency shall oversee the independent operation of the long-term care  
 218 ombudsman program through the office of the state long-term care ombudsman.

219 (2) The long-term care ombudsman shall be hired by the director and shall act  
 220 independently of the director, agency, and board.

221 (3) The agency shall support the office of the state long-term care ombudsman with  
 222 administrative functions.

223 (4) Determination and implementation of policies and procedures and other substantive  
 224 operations of the long-term care ombudsman program shall be the responsibility of the  
 225 office of the state long-term care ombudsman and shall be separate and independent of  
 226 the director, agency, and board."

227 **SECTION 5.**

228 Said article is further amended by repealing Code Section 49-6-6, relating to the annual  
 229 report, in its entirety and by enacting a new Code Section 49-6-6 to read as follows:

230 "49-6-6.

231 (a) The agency shall constitute the designated state agency to handle all programs of the  
 232 federal government relating to the aging and requiring acts within this state which are not  
 233 the specific responsibility of another state agency under provisions of federal or state law.  
 234 Authority is conferred upon the agency to accept and disburse any funds available or which  
 235 might become available pursuant to the purposes set out in this article.

236 (b) The agency shall study, investigate, promote, plan, and execute a program to meet the  
 237 present and future needs of older adults of this state, and it shall receive the cooperation of  
 238 all other state departments and agencies in carrying out a coordinated program.

239 (c) It shall also be the duty of the agency to encourage and assist in the development of  
 240 programs for older adults in the counties, towns, and cities of this state. The agency shall

241 consult and cooperate with public and private agencies, county and municipal officers and  
 242 agencies, and any federal or state agency or officer for the purpose of promoting  
 243 coordination between state and local plans and programs and between state and interstate  
 244 plans and programs for older adults.

245 (d) The agency shall provide such adult services as the Governor or General Assembly  
 246 shall determine appropriate to the agency, including adult guardianship services."

247 **SECTION 6.**

248 Said article is further amended by repealing Code Section 49-6-7, relating to the funds for  
 249 expenses, in its entirety and by enacting a new Code Section 49-6-7 to read as follows:

250 "49-6-7.

251 The agency is authorized to:

252 (1) Promote the health of and medical services for older adults by working with  
 253 professional associations, hospitals, and institutions;

254 (2) Promote the rehabilitation of incapacitated adults and older adults;

255 (3) Establish a state-wide coordinated program with participation of employers,  
 256 employee's organizations, and state and local agencies to promote greater and more  
 257 suitable employment opportunities for older adults;

258 (4) Establish a program of research and education on housing by either public or private  
 259 means as well as by the establishment of self-sustaining cooperative dwelling projects for  
 260 older adults;

261 (5) Plan and promote recreational facilities for older adults;

262 (6) Develop a program of education designed for older adults on subjects of particular  
 263 concern to them;

264 (7) Encourage further research in the colleges and universities of this state on problems  
 265 of older adults;

266 (8) Encourage training of personnel to handle problems of older adults;

267 (9) Promote community education in the problems of older adults through institutions,  
 268 publications, radio, television, and the press;

269 (10) Provide consultation to communities and groups developing state-wide or local  
 270 services for older adults;

271 (11) Provide consultation to the various departments of state government concerning  
 272 matters relating to older adults;

273 (12) Inquire into and make recommendations to the appropriate agencies, public or  
 274 private, on any matter affecting the behavior, care, or welfare of older adults;

275 (13) Enlist the aid of public and private agencies concerned with the welfare of older  
 276 adults and study and report on the functions and facilities of governmental agencies and  
 277 institutions charged with the care, control, protection, and rehabilitation of older adults;  
 278 (14) Serve as a communications clearing-house for information in the large and complex  
 279 fields of human relationships with respect to older adults;  
 280 (15) Conduct or participate financially in conducting demonstration projects with  
 281 counties, municipalities, or public or private agencies concerned with problems of older  
 282 adults; and  
 283 (16) Appoint such committees as it deems necessary for carrying out the purposes of this  
 284 article. Members of such committees shall not be entitled to compensation."

285 **SECTION 7.**

286 Said article is further amended by adding five new Code sections to read as follows:

287 "49-6-8.

288 The agency is authorized to utilize funds made available from appropriations by Congress,  
 289 gifts or grants from private sources, appropriations by the General Assembly, or transfer  
 290 of funds from other state agencies or departments, including funds from the Home  
 291 Delivered Meals, Transportation Services for the Elderly, and Preschool Children with  
 292 Special Needs Fund provided for in Code Section 49-1-7, provided that such special  
 293 funding relates to providing adult and aging services.

294 49-6-9.

295 The agency may receive and accept on behalf of the state any grant or grant-in-aid from the  
 296 federal government or any grant, gift, bequest, or devise from any other source and title  
 297 shall pass to the state unless otherwise specified by the grantor.

298 49-6-10.

299 It shall be the duty of the agency to submit an annual report to the Governor and to notify  
 300 the General Assembly of such report on or before January 1 of each year. Such report shall  
 301 set forth the results of the agency's studies, accomplishments, and recommendations, if any,  
 302 for legislation. The agency shall not be required to distribute copies of the annual report  
 303 to the members of the General Assembly but shall notify the members of the availability  
 304 of the report in the manner which it deems to be most effective and efficient.

305 49-6-11.

306 All expenses incurred in administering and carrying this article into effect shall be paid out  
307 of funds appropriated by the General Assembly for such purpose or out of such other funds  
308 as may be made available.

309 49-6-12.

310 The director is authorized and empowered, with the approval of the board, to accept and  
311 use gifts made unconditionally, by will or otherwise, for carrying out the purposes of this  
312 article. Gifts made under such conditions as are proper and consistent with this article may  
313 be so accepted and shall be held, invested, reinvested, and used in accordance with the  
314 conditions of the gift."

315 **SECTION 8.**

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