

House Resolution 642

By: Representatives Dempsey of the 13th, Epps of the 144th, Harden of the 148th, Cooper of the 43rd, Oliver of the 82nd, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Creating the Joint Study Committee on Postsecondary Education and Employment Options
2 for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, young Georgians with intellectual and developmental disabilities finish high
4 school each year to become frustrated "couch kids" with nothing to do and nowhere to go;
5 and

6 WHEREAS, postsecondary educational opportunities have the same benefits for individuals
7 with intellectual and developmental disabilities as they do for traditional students: academic
8 and personal skills building, independence, self-advocacy, friendships, and employment
9 skills; and

10 WHEREAS, inclusive postsecondary programs provide opportunities for students with
11 intellectual and developmental disabilities to further their education beyond high school,
12 which prepares them to blossom in their careers and lives; and

13 WHEREAS, the Georgia Inclusive Post-Secondary Education Consortium seeks to create
14 opportunities for students who have historically not had access to postsecondary educational
15 opportunities; and

16 WHEREAS, there are currently three inclusive postsecondary education programs in
17 Georgia: The Academy for Inclusive Learning and Social Growth (Kennesaw State
18 University); GOALS Program (Columbus State University); and CHOICE Program (East
19 Georgia State College); and two new programs at Georgia Tech and the University of
20 Georgia will begin in the 2015-2016 school year; and

21 WHEREAS, Georgians with disabilities want jobs and careers, but the current system
22 disincentivizes employment; and

23 WHEREAS, as a result, most Georgians with disabilities who want to work are unemployed;
24 and

25 WHEREAS, an "Employment First" policy provides that employment should be the first and
26 preferred option for all people, regardless of their disability, and that employment in the
27 general workforce at or above the minimum wage is the first and preferred option for all
28 working age citizens with disabilities; and

29 WHEREAS, an Employment First policy would benefit Georgians with disabilities, Georgia
30 families, Georgia employers, and Georgia taxpayers; and

31 WHEREAS, the average gain for Georgia taxpayers when a person with intellectual
32 disabilities receives vocational rehabilitation employment services that helps him or her work
33 is \$260 per month; and

34 WHEREAS, an Employment First policy established by the State of Georgia would require
35 the collaboration of all involved state agencies, including the Department of Behavioral
36 Health and Developmental Disabilities, Department of Education, Georgia Vocational
37 Rehabilitation Agency, and the Department of Community Health, in aligning their programs
38 and resources to such end.

39 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
40 GEORGIA:

41 (1) **Creation of joint study committee.** There is created the Joint Study Committee on
42 Postsecondary Education and Employment Options for Individuals with Intellectual and
43 Developmental Disabilities.

44 (2) **Members and officers.**

45 (A) The committee shall be composed of nine members.

46 (B) The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall appoint three members of the
47 House of Representatives as members of the committee and shall designate one of such
48 members as cochairperson.

49 (C) The President of the Senate shall appoint three members of the Senate as members
50 of the committee and shall designate one of such members as cochairperson.

51 (D) The Governor shall appoint three members of the committee.

52 (E) The committee may elect other officers as deemed necessary.

53 (3) **Powers and duties.** The committee shall undertake a study of the conditions, needs,
54 issues, and problems mentioned above or related thereto and recommend any action or
55 legislation which the committee deems necessary or appropriate.

56 (4) **Meetings.** The cochairpersons shall call all meetings of the committee. The
57 committee may conduct such meetings at such places and at such times as it may deem
58 necessary or convenient to enable it to exercise fully and effectively its powers, perform
59 its duties, and accomplish the objectives and purposes of this resolution.

60 (5) **Allowances, expenses, and funding.**

61 (A) The legislative members of the committee shall receive the allowances provided
62 for in Code Section 28-1-8 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated.

63 (B) Members of the committee who are state officials, other than legislative members,
64 or state employees shall receive no compensation for their services on the committee,
65 but they may be reimbursed for expenses incurred by them in the performance of their
66 duties as members of the committee in the same manner as they are reimbursed for
67 expenses in their capacities as state officials or employees.

68 (C) Members of the committee who are not legislators, state officials, or state
69 employees shall receive a daily expense allowance in an amount the same as that
70 specified in subsection (b) of Code Section 45-7-21 of the Official Code of Georgia
71 Annotated, as well as the mileage or transportation allowance authorized for state
72 employees.

73 (D) The allowances and expenses authorized by this resolution shall not be received
74 by any member of the committee for more than five days unless additional days are
75 authorized. Funds necessary to carry out the provisions of this resolution shall come
76 from funds appropriated to the House of Representatives and Senate; except that funds
77 for the reimbursement of the expenses of state officials, other than legislative members,
78 and state employees shall come from funds appropriated to or otherwise available to
79 their respective agencies.

80 (6) **Report.**

81 (A) In the event the committee adopts any specific findings or recommendations that
82 include suggestions for proposed legislation, the cochairpersons shall file a report of the
83 same prior to the date of abolishment specified in this resolution, subject to
84 subparagraph (C) of this paragraph.

85 (B) In the event the committee adopts a report that does not include suggestions for
86 proposed legislation, the cochairpersons shall file the report, subject to subparagraph
87 (C) of this paragraph.

88 (C) No report shall be filed unless the same has been approved prior to the date of
89 abolishment specified in this resolution by majority vote of a quorum of the committee.

90 A report so approved shall be signed by the cochairpersons of the committee and filed
91 with the Clerk of the House of Representatives and the Secretary of the Senate.

92 (D) In the absence of an approved report, the cochairpersons may file with the Clerk
93 of the House of Representatives and the Secretary of the Senate copies of the minutes
94 of the meetings of the committee in lieu thereof.

95 (7) **Abolishment.** The committee shall stand abolished on December 1, 2015.