The House Committee on Higher Education offers the following substitute to HR 642:

A RESOLUTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, Georgians with disabilities want jobs and careers, but the current system disincentivizes employment; and
WHEREAS, as a result, most Georgians with disabilities who want to work are unemployed; and

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

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

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

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

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

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

(2) **Members and officers.** The committee shall be composed of five members of the House of Representatives to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The Speaker shall designate a member of the committee as chairperson of the committee.

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

(4) **Meetings.** The chairperson shall call all meetings of the committee. The committee may conduct such meetings at such places and at such times as it may deem necessary or convenient to enable it to exercise fully and effectively its powers, perform its duties, and accomplish the objectives and purposes of this resolution.
(5) **Allowances and funding.** The legislative members of the committee shall receive the allowances provided for in Code Section 28-1-8 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated. The allowances authorized by this resolution shall not be received by any member of the committee for more than five days unless additional days are authorized. Funds necessary to carry out the provisions of this resolution shall come from funds appropriated to the House of Representatives.

(6) **Report.**

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

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

(C) No report shall be filed unless the same has been approved prior to the date of abolishment specified in this resolution by majority vote of a quorum of the committee. A report so approved shall be signed by the chairperson of the committee and filed with the Clerk of the House of Representatives.

(D) In the absence of an approved report, the chairperson may file with the Clerk of the House of Representatives a copy of the minutes of the meetings of the committee in lieu thereof.

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