

House Resolution 1553

By: Representatives Pruett of the 149th, Clark of the 98th, Clark of the 101st, Deffenbaugh of the 1st, Beskin of the 54th, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Creating the House Study Committee on Homes for Georgia's Families; and for other
2 purposes.

3 WHEREAS, the Georgia General Assembly affirmed by law that it is "the state's policy to
4 provide decent, safe, and affordable housing to all segments of the population of this state";
5 and

6 WHEREAS, the Georgia General Assembly further found and declared that "housing is an
7 issue of paramount concern to this state which affects the health, welfare, and safety of the
8 citizens of this state and the economic viability and planned growth of its communities"; and

9 WHEREAS, 25 years later Georgians continue to struggle with homelessness and lack of
10 affordable housing on a massive scale; and

11 WHEREAS, the Department of Community Affairs counted at least 13,790 people literally
12 homeless on a single night in 2015, with almost 8,000 in emergency shelter, but the
13 remaining 42 percent entirely unsheltered with unsheltered homeless persons found in every
14 county of the state and nearly two-thirds of Georgia counties having no emergency or
15 transitional beds to provide shelter at all; and

16 WHEREAS, 30 percent of the homeless people in Georgia are families with children, and
17 nearly one in five of all homeless persons in Georgia is a child under the age of 18, and one
18 out of every eight of Georgia's homeless are youth between the ages of 18 and 24; and

19 WHEREAS, Georgia schools have reported at least 74,000 homeless school children during
20 the most recent count with increases of 5,000 or more each year, and Georgia ranked 49th
21 out of the 50 states at risk for child homelessness; and

22 WHEREAS, persons most at risk of homelessness are those experiencing poverty, as well
23 as personal vulnerability due to family violence, physical disability, chronic medical
24 problems, mental illness, substance abuse, developmental disability, brain injury, or history
25 of incarceration; and

26 WHEREAS, 16 percent of Georgia's homeless have a disability and have been homeless for
27 a year or more or have been homeless on multiple occasions; and

28 WHEREAS, 12 percent of Georgia's homeless population are veterans, while only 7 percent
29 of the state's overall population are veterans; and

30 WHEREAS, the key to ending homelessness lies in prevention and the Georgia Department
31 of Community Affairs states that the solution to homelessness "must include affordable
32 housing" and "the goal of programs that serve homeless families and individuals is
33 permanent, stable housing"; and

34 WHEREAS, Georgia has a severe shortage of affordable housing in urban and rural areas,
35 with 561,000 Georgia households (16 percent) spending more than half their income on
36 housing costs, rendering them severely cost burdened, and another 18 percent of Georgia
37 households spending between 30 and 50 percent of their income on housing, rendering them
38 cost burdened; and

39 WHEREAS, more than one out of every three Georgia children lives in a household with a
40 high housing cost burden (36 percent or 908,000 children); and

41 WHEREAS, there is a deficit of rental units that are affordable and available to extremely
42 low income households with incomes at 30 percent or below area median income across
43 Georgia; and

44 WHEREAS, the combination of stagnating wages over the past decade, combined with
45 increasing rents, and extreme shortage of affordable housing caused by newly constructed
46 rental units being overwhelmingly for high income households, older units being upgraded
47 to serve a higher income market, and dramatic decreases in the supply of low cost housing
48 and subsidized rental housing; and

49 WHEREAS, best practices in other states and new sources of federal funding are available
50 to address the issue of homelessness by providing affordable housing options in cost

51 effective ways that support child health and well-being, increased graduation rates, improved
52 child outcomes, increased employment, reduced reliance on emergency room services,
53 reduced recidivism and incarceration rates, and stronger, economically vibrant communities;
54 and

55 WHEREAS, it would be beneficial to study the issue of homelessness and affordable housing
56 in this state and identify best practices, funding opportunities, the need for comprehensive
57 and coordinated planning, and possible solutions or improvements in the delivery of services
58 that will be cost effective, particularly concerning the needs of children, people with
59 disabilities, veterans, seniors, people with a history of incarceration, and persons in rural
60 communities.

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

62 (1) **Creation of House study committee.** There is created the House Study Committee
63 on Homes for Georgia's Families.

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

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

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

75 (5) **Allowances and funding.**

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

78 (B) The allowances authorized by this resolution shall not be received by any member
79 of the committee for more than three days unless additional days are authorized. Funds
80 necessary to carry out the provisions of this resolution shall come from funds
81 appropriated to the House of Representatives.

82 (6) **Report.**

83 (A) In the event the committee adopts any specific findings or recommendations that
84 include suggestions for proposed legislation, the chairperson shall file a report of the

85 same prior to the date of abolishment specified in this resolution, subject to
86 subparagraph (C) of this paragraph.

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

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

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

97 (7) **Abolishment.** The committee shall stand abolished on December 1, 2016.