

House Resolution 1093 (COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE)

By: Representatives Alexander of the 66th, Chandler of the 105th, Dempsey of the 13th, Tanner of the 9th, Gravley of the 67th, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Creating the House Study Committee on Mental Illness Initiative, Reform, Public Health,
2 and Safety; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, mental illness affects the emotional and behavioral well-being of individuals
4 and conditions and disorders can include depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorder, and
5 schizophrenia; and

6 WHEREAS, one in five adults experiences mental illness in some form in any given year.
7 Data indicate that at least 1.4 million adults in Georgia have some form of mental illness; and

8 WHEREAS, the National Alliance on Mental Illness reports that Georgia has close
9 to 349,000 adults and about 111,000 children living with serious mental health conditions;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, the Georgia Department of Corrections indicates that one in six prisoners has
12 been diagnosed with a mental illness; and

13 WHEREAS, Mental Health America (MHA), formerly the National Mental Health
14 Association, indicates the following:

15 (A) Georgia ranks twenty-ninth for adults with any mental illness with a total
16 of 1,360,000;

17 (B) Georgia ranks near the bottom in spending among state mental health agencies, at
18 a rate of \$59.00 per capita in fiscal 2013;

19 (C) Georgia ranks thirty-seventh for uninsured adults (313,000) with any mental illness;

20 (D) Georgia ranks last in the availability of mental health professionals with 1 for every
21 1,440 people; and

22 WHEREAS, local counties are able to implement accountability courts through the Georgia
23 Council on Criminal Justice Reform resulting in mental health courts; and

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24 WHEREAS, in 2015, data compiled by the Georgia Sheriffs' Association indicate that in 73
25 of 159 counties, law enforcement officials traveled nearly 2 million miles and spent more
26 than 12,000 hours transporting mental health patients. This impedes law enforcement's
27 availability to respond elsewhere within communities they serve; and

28 WHEREAS, the closing of mental hospitals has added to the increase of mentally ill adults
29 housed in the local and county jails. Coupled with the decrease in state psychiatric hospital
30 beds, this has forced law enforcement to maintain and treat mentally ill adults in the jails,
31 rather than specialized facilities; and

32 WHEREAS, research indicates that when mental illness is treated appropriately with
33 medication and supervision, patients can lead productive lives; and

34 WHEREAS, a study of initiatives, reforms, public health, and safety concerning mentally ill
35 individuals in this state needs to be undertaken, including, but not limited to, a consideration
36 of efforts in treating and supporting mentally ill individuals, community based housing,
37 residential mental health facilities, and examining county and municipality infrastructures
38 inclusive of residential and congregate care housing options.

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

40 (1) **Creation of House study committee.** There is created the House Study Committee
41 on Mental Illness Initiative, Reform, Public Health, and Safety.

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

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

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

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

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

56 (B) The allowances and expenses authorized by this resolution shall not be received
57 by any member of the committee for more than five days unless additional days are
58 authorized. Funds necessary to carry out the provisions of this resolution shall come
59 from funds appropriated to the House of Representatives.

60 **(6) Report.**

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

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

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

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

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