

Senate Resolution 188

By: Senators Unterman of the 45th, Burke of the 11th, Kirk of the 13th and Orrock of the 36th

ADOPTED SENATE

A RESOLUTION

1 Creating the Senate Study Committee on Barriers to Georgians' Access to Adequate
2 Healthcare; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, Georgia falls below national averages in rankings of state population health,
4 with higher than average death rates from diabetes, heart disease, and HIV; and

5 WHEREAS, Georgia has the highest rate of pregnancy related maternal deaths in the nation,
6 and higher than average infant death rates; and

7 WHEREAS, Georgia has a significant percent of primary health care needs and mental health
8 care needs that are currently unmet; and

9 WHEREAS, advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) have acquired, through
10 graduate-level education, advanced clinical knowledge and skills to provide direct patient
11 care; and

12 WHEREAS, Georgia laws and regulations have not kept pace with advanced practice
13 nursing's evolution over the past 40 years, compromising Georgians' access to care; and

14 WHEREAS, Georgia is one of only 12 states with laws restricting the autonomy of APRNs;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, 21 other states have adopted full practice authority for APRNs, and removed
17 requirements for physician supervision, without any evidence of patient harm; and

18 WHEREAS, APRNs make up the fastest-growing segment of the primary care professional
19 workforce in the United States and could significantly increase the primary care professional
20 workforce that would be available to practice in underserved areas, lower-income areas, and
21 districts with lower scores on the high school proficiency assessments; and

22 WHEREAS, licensed APRNs in Georgia are nationally certified to practice in family
 23 medicine, pediatrics, geriatrics, mental health, women's health, and midwifery, with many
 24 new graduates every year and more than 11,300 APRNs licensed in Georgia as of September,
 25 2016; and

26 WHEREAS, in Georgia there are 79 counties that have no OB/GYN physicians, 63 counties
 27 have no pediatricians, 31 counties have no internal medicine physicians, and six counties
 28 have no family physicians, and APRNs have many overlapping skills sets with the physician
 29 providers for which there is a shortage most pronounced in rural Georgia.

30 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE:

31 (1) **Creation of Senate study committee.** There is created the Senate Study Committee
 32 on Barriers to Georgians' Access to Adequate Healthcare.

33 (2) **Members and officers.** The committee shall be composed of nine members to be
 34 appointed by the President of the Senate as follows:

35 (A) Two members of the Senate, including the chairperson of the Senate Health and
 36 Human Services Committee;

37 (B) The commissioner of the Department of Public Health, or his or her designee;

38 (C) The commissioner of the Department of Community Health, or his or her designee;

39 (D) One member of the Board of Nursing;

40 (E) One advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) who works full time in Georgia;

41 (F) One dean, director, or professor from a school of nursing in Georgia;

42 (G) One physician who works full time in Georgia; and

43 (I) The president of the Georgia Nurses Association, or his or her designee.

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

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

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

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

54 (B) Members of the committee who are state officials, other than legislative members,
 55 or who are state employees shall receive no compensation for their services on the
 56 committee, but they may be reimbursed for expenses incurred by them in the

57 performance of their duties as members of the committee in the same manner as they
58 are reimbursed for expenses in their capacities as state officials or employees.

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

64 (D) The allowances authorized by this resolution shall not be received by any member
65 of the committee for more than five days unless additional days are authorized. Funds
66 necessary to carry out the provisions of this resolution shall come from funds
67 appropriated to the Senate; except that funds for the reimbursement of the expenses of
68 state officials, other than legislative members, and for the reimbursement of the
69 expenses of state employees shall come from funds appropriated to or otherwise
70 available to their respective agencies.

71 **(6) Report.**

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

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

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

83 (D) In the absence of an approved report, the chairperson may file with the Secretary
84 of the Senate a copy of the minutes of the meetings of the committee in lieu thereof.

85 **(7) Abolishment.** The committee shall stand abolished on December 1, 2017.