

House Resolution 888

By: Representatives Spencer of the 180th, Glanton of the 75th, Greene of the 151st, Ealum of the 153rd, Holcomb of the 81st, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Creating the Joint Study Committee on Converting Closed Hospitals to Veterans Homes; and
2 for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, since 2010, according to the CEO of the National Rural Health Association, 82
4 rural hospitals have closed nation-wide and as many as 700 more are at risk of closing within
5 the next ten years; and

6 WHEREAS, six rural hospitals have closed in Georgia since 2013; and

7 WHEREAS, according to a 2016 report on rural hospital strength prepared for the National
8 Rural Health Association, more than half of this state's remaining rural hospitals are
9 vulnerable to closure; and

10 WHEREAS, many of this state's closed hospitals can be considered stranded assets, sitting
11 empty and unused for any governmental or public purpose; and

12 WHEREAS, state veterans homes fill an important need for low income veterans and
13 veterans who desire to spend their last years with fellow service members; and

14 WHEREAS, every state has at least one veterans home and some states, such as Oklahoma,
15 have six or seven; and

16 WHEREAS, there is great demand for the services that can be provided through such
17 veterans homes, but lack of federal and state funding has created a building backlog of more
18 than 130 such veterans homes; and

19 WHEREAS, according to the Armed Forces Veterans Homes Foundation, this nation is home
20 to the largest aging veteran population in its history, accommodating roughly 10 million
21 veterans aged 65 and over; and

22 WHEREAS, it would be beneficial to study the possibility of converting closed hospitals in
23 Georgia, particularly in rural areas, into state veterans homes. It would further be beneficial
24 for the U.S. Veterans Administration to work collaboratively with the committee to further
25 its goals.

26 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
27 GEORGIA:

28 (1) **Creation of joint study committee.** There is created the Joint Study Committee on
29 Converting Closed Hospitals to Veterans Homes.

30 (2) **Members and officers.** The committee shall be composed of six members, as
31 follows:

32 (A) Three members of the House of Representatives to be appointed by the Speaker
33 of the House of Representatives, who shall designate one of such members as
34 cochairperson; and

35 (B) Three members of the Senate to be appointed by the President of the Senate, who
36 shall designate one of such members as cochairperson.

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

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

44 (5) **Allowances and funding.** The members of the committee shall receive the
45 allowances provided for in Code Section 28-1-8 of the Official Code of Georgia
46 Annotated. The allowances authorized by this resolution shall not be received by any
47 member of the committee for more than five days unless additional days are authorized.
48 Funds necessary to carry out the provisions of this resolution shall come from funds
49 appropriated to the House of Representatives and the Senate.

50 (6) **Report.**

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

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

- 58 (C) No report shall be filed unless the same has been approved prior to the date of
59 abolishment specified in this resolution by majority vote of a quorum of the committee.
60 A report so approved shall be signed by the cochairpersons of the committee and filed
61 with the Clerk of the House of Representatives and the Secretary of the Senate.
- 62 (D) In the absence of an approved report, the cochairpersons may file with the Clerk
63 of the House of Representatives and the Secretary of the Senate copies of the minutes
64 of the meetings of the committee in lieu thereof.
- 65 (7) **Abolishment.** The committee shall stand abolished on December 1, 2018.