

## Senate Resolution 217

By: Senators Ligon, Jr. of the 3rd and Unterman of the 45th

## A RESOLUTION

1 Creating the Senate Study Committee on Prescribing Patterns for Antidepressants and Other  
2 Psychotropic Medications; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) released a report in October  
4 of 2011 stating that antidepressant use in the United States among people 12 years of age and  
5 older had increased nearly 400 percent from 1988-1994 through 2005-2008; and

6 WHEREAS, the NCHS further stated that antidepressants were the third most common  
7 prescription drug taken by Americans in the study period of 2005-2008 and the most frequent  
8 by people aged 18-44; and

9 WHEREAS, the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey has documented that between 1999  
10 and 2013, psychiatric drug prescriptions (including sedatives, antidepressants,  
11 psychostimulants, and antipsychotics) increased from 197,247,557 to 427,837,506 while at  
12 the same time death rates from overdose of prescription psychiatric drugs climbed 240  
13 percent; and

14 WHEREAS, the British Medical Journal released its finding in December of 2015 that  
15 antidepressant use, particularly those classes of drugs known as SSRIs and SNRIs, results  
16 in a doubling of both suicidality and aggression in children and adolescents, recommending  
17 that there should be minimal use of antidepressants for children, adolescents, and young  
18 adults; and

19 WHEREAS, despite the known risks and the FDA's strongest black box warning regarding  
20 the dangers of antidepressant use by those aged 24 or younger, psychiatric drugs are being  
21 prescribed at an ever-increasing rate, with more than 8 million American children under the  
22 age of 17 using at least one psychiatric drug in 2013; and

23 WHEREAS, the Journal of the American Medical Association Pediatrics (JAMA Pediatrics)  
24 published a study in 2015 which revealed that expectant mothers who took antidepressants  
25 were 87 percent more likely to have a baby born with autism; and

26 WHEREAS, according to a 2013 survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and  
27 Prevention, about one-half of U.S. adolescents using psychotropic drugs in the past month  
28 had seen a mental health professional in the past year (53.3 percent) and approximately 6  
29 percent of U.S. adolescents aged 12-19 reported psychotropic drug use in the month  
30 preceding the survey. The use of antidepressants (3.2 percent) and attention deficit  
31 hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) drugs (3.2 percent) was highest, followed by antipsychotics  
32 (1.0 percent); anxiolytics, sedatives, and hypnotics (0.5 percent); and antimaniacs (0.2  
33 percent); and

34 WHEREAS, a 2011 report by the U.S. General Accountability Office found that between 20  
35 percent and 39 percent of foster children in five states (Florida, Massachusetts, Michigan,  
36 Oregon, and Texas) were prescribed psychotropic drugs compared with between 5 percent  
37 and 10 percent of children receiving Medicaid.

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

39 (1) **Creation of Senate study committee.** There is created the Senate Study Committee  
40 on Prescribing Patterns for Antidepressants and Other Psychotropic Medications.

41 (2) **Members and officers.** The committee shall be composed of three members of the  
42 Senate to be appointed by the President of the Senate. The President shall also appoint  
43 an additional four nonlegislative members of the committee as follows: one Georgia  
44 board licensed practicing psychiatrist; one Georgia board licensed practicing  
45 psychologist; one representative from a mental health advocacy group; and one registered  
46 pharmacist. The President shall designate a legislative member of the committee as  
47 chairperson of the committee.

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

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

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

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

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

63 (C) The allowances authorized by this resolution shall not be received by any member  
64 of the committee for more than five days unless additional days are authorized. Funds  
65 necessary to carry out the provisions of this resolution shall come from funds  
66 appropriated to the Senate.

67 (6) **Report.**

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

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

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

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

81 (7) **Abolishment.** The committee shall stand abolished on December 1, 2019.