

House Resolution 584

By: Representatives Jones of the 25th, Petrea of the 166th, Hatchett of the 150th, Frye of the 118th, Pirkle of the 155th, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Creating the House Study Committee on Exploring a Floor and Trade Charity Care System;
2 and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, the State of Georgia has more than 1.3 million residents who lack health
4 insurance coverage; and

5 WHEREAS, when uninsured Georgians inevitably need health care, their only option is often
6 the emergency room. Hospitals treat all patients that come to the emergency room,
7 regardless of ability to pay, and this leads to a significant amount of uncompensated indigent
8 or charity care; and

9 WHEREAS, hospitals and other health care facilities are required by the state to provide a
10 certain percentage of revenue in indigent and charity care. If a facility does not provide the
11 requisite percentage of indigent and charity care, it is required to pay an amount equal to the
12 shortfall to the state; and

13 WHEREAS, there is a high level of variability in the amount of indigent and charity care
14 provided by hospitals and other health care facilities. This is the combined result of the
15 geographic distribution of the uninsured population and the tendency for the uninsured to
16 seek treatment in emergency rooms; and

17 WHEREAS, indigent and charity care is only one type of uncompensated care provided by
18 health care providers in the state. Medicare, Medicaid, and other payors of health care
19 services often do not reimburse health care providers enough to cover the cost of care. As
20 the cost of health insurance has increased, so has the amount of uncompensated care
21 provided to patients who cannot afford high deductibles or other out-of-pocket costs; and

22 WHEREAS, the state is working on a plan to make health insurance more affordable and
23 decrease the number of uninsured Georgians; and

24 WHEREAS, part of this plan should include new ideas to distribute the burden of
25 uncompensated care more evenly across the different types of health care providers; and

26 WHEREAS, a floor and trade or tradeable credit program for uncompensated care could
27 provide a market oriented approach for the innovative provision of indigent and charity care;
28 and

29 WHEREAS, any indigent and charity care program should:

- 30 (1) Incentivize the provision of indigent and charity care outside the emergency room;
- 31 (2) Standardize the methodology used for calculating the amount of indigent and charity
32 care provided; and
- 33 (3) Account for the rapidly changing health care environment, including significant
34 changes in the number of uninsured Georgians.

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

36 (1) **Creation of House study committee.** There is created the House Study Committee
37 on Exploring a Floor and Trade Charity Care System.

38 (2) **Members and officers.** The committee shall be composed of ten members to be
39 appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, who shall designate a member
40 of the committee as chairperson of the committee, as follows:

- 41 (A) Five members of the House of Representatives;
- 42 (B) One member representing safety net hospitals;
- 43 (C) One member representing hospitals that provide inpatient psychiatric and substance
44 abuse services;
- 45 (D) One member representing hospitals in rural counties;
- 46 (E) One member representing freestanding ambulatory surgery centers or other
47 freestanding outpatient specialty care providers; and
- 48 (F) One representative from the Department of Community Health knowledgeable in
49 health care financing and Medicaid reimbursement.

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

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

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

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

60 (B) Members of the committee who are state officials, other than legislative members,
61 or state employees shall receive no compensation for their services on the committee,
62 but they may be reimbursed for expenses incurred by them in the performance of their
63 duties as members of the committee in the same manner as they are reimbursed for
64 expenses in their capacities as state officials or employees.

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

70 (D) The allowances and expenses authorized by this resolution shall not be received
71 by any member of the committee for more than five days unless additional days are
72 authorized. Funds necessary to carry out the provisions of this resolution shall come
73 from funds appropriated to the House of Representatives; except that funds for the
74 reimbursement of the expenses of state officials, other than legislative members, and
75 state employees shall come from funds appropriated to or otherwise available to their
76 respective agencies.

77 (6) **Report.**

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

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

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

89 (D) In the absence of an approved report, the chairperson may file with the Clerk of the
90 House of Representatives copies of the minutes of the meetings of the committee in lieu
91 thereof.

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