

The House Committee on Health and Human Services offers the following substitute to HR 421:

A RESOLUTION

1 Creating the House Study Committee on Infant and Toddler Social and Emotional Health;
2 and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, the Georgia House of Representatives is concerned with the early intervention
4 and prevention of mental health problems in children and adolescents in Georgia and the
5 resulting impact this has on these children, their families, and the citizens of this state; and

6 WHEREAS, in the first years of a baby's life, more than 1 million new neural connections
7 are formed every second; and

8 WHEREAS, babies' earliest relationships and experiences shape the architecture of their
9 brain, creating a foundation on which future development and learning unfolds; and

10 WHEREAS, as children mature, their emotional health supports growth and well-being in
11 other essential areas including physical development and health, cognitive skills, language
12 and literacy, social skills, and even their approach to learning and readiness for school; and

13 WHEREAS, during the infant and toddler years, there are many opportunities to promote
14 emotional health, to prevent emotional disturbances from taking root, and to treat mental
15 health problems before they can manifest into more severe problems later in life; and

16 WHEREAS, while positive early childhood experiences promote strong emotional health,
17 negative experiences can adversely impact brain development, with serious lifelong
18 consequences; and

19 WHEREAS, if untreated, infants' mental health disorders can have detrimental effects on
20 every aspect of a child's development (i.e., physical, cognitive, communication, sensory,
21 emotional, social, and motor skills) and the child's ability to succeed in school and in life; and

22 WHEREAS, when mental health concerns are identified early, there are services that can
23 redirect the course and place children who are at risk on a pathway for healthy development;
24 and

25 WHEREAS, it would be beneficial to study the full continuum of services – from promotion
26 to prevention to treatment – that is needed to best support babies, young children, and the
27 significant adults in their lives; and

28 WHEREAS, attention and resources given to the mental health needs of adolescents and
29 older children are of great importance, it is also important to study the effects of adverse
30 childhood experiences on infants and toddlers and invest in services specifically for those
31 ages.

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

33 (1) **Creation of House study committee.** There is created the House Study Committee
34 on Infant and Toddler Social and Emotional Health.

35 (2) **Members and officers.** The committee shall be composed of five members of the
36 House of Representatives to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of
37 Representatives. The Speaker shall designate a member of the committee as chairperson
38 of the committee.

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

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

46 (5) **Allowances and funding.**

47 (A) Members of the committee who are members of the General Assembly shall
48 receive the allowances provided for in Code Section 28-1-8 of the Official Code of
49 Georgia Annotated.

50 (B) The allowances authorized by this resolution shall not be received by any member
51 of the committee for more than five days unless additional days are authorized. Funds
52 necessary to carry out the provisions of this resolution shall come from funds
53 appropriated to the House of Representatives.

54 (6) **Report.**

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

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

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

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

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