SENATE SUBSTITUTE TO HR 1023 (LC 41 2448S)

A RESOLUTION

Proposing an amendment to the Constitution so as to waive sovereign immunity and allow petitions to the superior court for relief from certain acts of this state or certain local governments or officers or employees thereof that violate the laws of this state, the Constitution of Georgia, or the Constitution of the United States; to provide for related matters; to provide for the submission of this amendment for ratification or rejection; and for other purposes.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

SECTION 1.

Article I, Section II of the Constitution is amended by revising Paragraph V as follows:

"Paragraph V. What acts void. (a) Legislative acts in violation of this Constitution or the Constitution of the United States are void, and the judiciary shall so declare them.

(b)(1) Sovereign immunity is hereby waived for actions in the superior court seeking declaratory relief from acts of the state or any agency, authority, branch, board, bureau, commission, department, office, or public corporation of this state or officer or employee thereof or any county, consolidated government, or municipality of this state or officer or employee thereof outside the scope of lawful authority or in violation of the laws or the Constitution of this state or the Constitution of the United States. Sovereign immunity is further waived so that a court awarding declaratory relief pursuant to this Paragraph may, only after awarding declaratory relief, enjoin such acts to enforce its judgment. Such waiver of sovereign immunity under this Paragraph shall apply to past, current, and prospective acts which occur on or after January 1, 2021.

(2) Actions filed pursuant to this Paragraph against this state or any agency, authority, branch, board, bureau, commission, department, office, or public corporation of this state or officer or employee thereof shall be brought exclusively against the state and in the name of the State of Georgia. Actions filed pursuant to this Paragraph against any county, consolidated government, or municipality of the state or officer or employee thereof shall be brought exclusively against such county, consolidated government, or
municipality and in the name of such county, consolidated government, or municipality. Actions filed pursuant to this Paragraph naming as a defendant any individual, officer, or entity other than as expressly authorized under this Paragraph shall be dismissed.

(3) Unless otherwise provided herein, this Paragraph shall not affect the power or duty of a court to dismiss any action or deny relief based on any other appropriate legal or equitable ground or other limitation on judicial review, including, but not limited to, administrative exhaustion requirements, ante litem notice requirements, sanctions for frivolous petitions, standing, statutes of limitation and repose, and venue. The General Assembly by an Act may limit the power or duty of a court under this Paragraph to dismiss any action or deny relief.

(4) No damages, attorney's fees, or costs of litigation shall be awarded in an action filed pursuant to this Paragraph, unless specifically authorized by Act of the General Assembly.

(5) This Paragraph shall not limit the power of the General Assembly to further waive the immunity provided in Article I, Section II, Paragraph IX and Article IX, Section II, Paragraph IX. This Paragraph shall not constitute a waiver of any immunity provided to this state or any agency, authority, branch, board, bureau, commission, department, office, or public corporation of this state or officer or employee thereof or any county, consolidated government, or municipality of this state or officer or employee thereof by the Constitution of the United States.”

SECTION 2.

The above proposed amendment to the Constitution shall be published and submitted as provided in Article X, Section I, Paragraph II of the Constitution. The ballot submitting the above proposed amendment shall have written or printed thereon the following:

"( ) YES Shall the Constitution of Georgia be amended to waive sovereign immunity and allow the people of Georgia to petition the superior court for relief from governmental acts done outside the scope of lawful authority or which violate the laws of this state, the Constitution of Georgia, or the Constitution of the United States?"

All persons desiring to vote in favor of ratifying the proposed amendment shall vote "Yes."
All persons desiring to vote against ratifying the proposed amendment shall vote "No." If such amendment shall be ratified as provided in said Paragraph of the Constitution, it shall become a part of the Constitution of this state.