

House Bill 1204

By: Representatives Scott of the 76<sup>th</sup>, Schofield of the 60<sup>th</sup>, Burnough of the 77<sup>th</sup>, Beverly of the 143<sup>rd</sup>, Bazemore of the 63<sup>rd</sup>, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 8 of Title 35 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to  
2 employment and training of peace officers, so as to require training on de-escalation  
3 techniques for peace officers; to provide for related matters; to provide for a short title; to  
4 repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

6 style="text-align:center">**SECTION 1.**

7 This Act shall be known and may be cited as the "Preventing Tragedies Between Police and  
8 Communities Act."

9 style="text-align:center">**SECTION 2.**

10 Chapter 8 of Title 35 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to employment and  
11 training of peace officers, is amended by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

12 "35-8-28.

13 The basic training course provided for under this chapter and every law enforcement unit  
14 within each calendar year beginning in 2021 shall render training on de-escalation  
15 techniques, including, but not limited to:

16 (1) The use of alternative, nonlethal methods of applying force and techniques that  
17 prevent the peace officer from escalating any situation where force is likely to be used;

18 (2) Verbal and physical tactics to minimize the need for the use of force, with an  
19 emphasis on communication, negotiation, and de-escalation techniques, providing the  
20 time needed to resolve the incident safely for everyone;

21 (3) The use of the lowest level of force that is a possible and safe response to an  
22 identified threat, then re-evaluating the threat as it progresses;

23 (4) Techniques that provide all officers with awareness and recognition of mental health  
24 and substance abuse issues with an emphasis on communication strategies, training

25 officers simultaneously in teams on de-escalation and use of force to improve group  
26 dynamics and diminish excessive use of force during critical incidents;  
27 (5) Principles of using distance, cover, and time when approaching and managing critical  
28 incidents, and elimination of the use of concepts like the '21-foot rule' and 'drawing a line  
29 in the sand' in favor of using distance and cover to create a reaction gap; and  
30 (6) Crisis intervention strategies to appropriately identify and respond to individuals  
31 suffering from mental health or substance abuse issues, with an emphasis on  
32 de-escalation tactics and promoting effective communication."

33 **SECTION 3.**

34 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.