

House Resolution 406

By: Representatives LaHood of the 175th, Petrea of the 166th, Kirby of the 114th, Taylor of the 173rd, and Gambill of the 15th

A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the Georgia Emergency Operations Plan to prioritize the continuum of the long-term
2 services and support system; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, the Georgia Emergency Operations Plan is a comprehensive state emergency
4 operations plan developed to ensure mitigation, preparedness, appropriate response, and
5 timely recovery from natural and manmade hazards that may affect residents of Georgia; and

6 WHEREAS, the proportion of the Georgia population aged 65 and older is projected to grow
7 substantially from 1.7 million in 2020 to 2.4 million in 2030; and

8 WHEREAS, census data shows that 28 percent of adults aged 65 and older live alone, and
9 that proportion increases with advanced age. Among women aged 75 and older, 44 percent
10 live alone; and

11 WHEREAS, the need for care giving increases with age. In 2018, the percentage of older
12 adults aged 85 and older who needed help with personal care (21 percent) was more than
13 twice the percentage for adults aged 74 to 84 (8 percent) and five times the percentage for
14 adults aged 65 to 74 (4 percent); and

15 WHEREAS, persons reaching age 65 have an average life expectancy of an additional 19.5
16 years; and

17 WHEREAS, older adults and people with disabilities who require frequent care and services
18 to remain independent in their homes have additional challenges in complying with pandemic
19 mitigation strategies, such as personal protective equipment and social distancing; and

20 WHEREAS, many of these vulnerable individuals rely on services that cannot be performed
21 without in-person contact; and

22 WHEREAS, without access to these services, many of these individuals rapidly decline and
23 have a high likelihood of requiring care that will place additional stress on emergency, acute,
24 and long-term care providers and facilities; and

25 WHEREAS, long-term services and support system (LTSS) providers need to be able to
26 continue to directly and safely serve older adults and people with disabilities in face-to-face
27 visits even in times of disaster and emergency, including those who are served in their
28 homes; and

29 WHEREAS, during the current COVID-19 pandemic, the deputy secretary of health and
30 human services has requested that all states provide the continuum of LTSS workers with
31 resources needed to continue serving older adults and people with disabilities and that these
32 workers be classified as Level 1 emergency responders along with other essential health care
33 and public health workers; and

34 WHEREAS, as of January 18, 2021, 85 percent of all 11,032 COVID-19 deaths in Georgia
35 have occurred among people aged 60 and older; and

36 WHEREAS, the authority for the Georgia Emergency Operations Plan is based on the
37 Georgia Emergency Management Act of 1981, O.C.G.A. § 38-3-1 to § 38-3-10, which
38 establishes legal authority for the development and maintenance of Georgia's Emergency
39 Management Program and organization and defines the emergency powers, authorities, and
40 responsibilities of the Governor and director of Georgia Emergency Management
41 Agency/Homeland Security; and

42 WHEREAS, the Georgia Emergency Operations Plan disaster response is managed through
43 Emergency Support Functions (ESF), which is made up of multiple organizational
44 representatives who identify needs and distribute resources; and

45 WHEREAS, ESF8 Public Health and Medical Services, coordinated by the Department of
46 Public Health, is charged with emergency preparedness for the state's health and medical
47 processes.

48 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
49 the members of this body urge the Georgia Emergency Operations Plan to recognize the
50 importance of long-term services and support system providers and their direct care workers
51 and assign them equitable priority to that of other essential health care and public health
52 workers.

53 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that as part of this plan and the state's planning process,
54 ESF8 should include representatives from the long-term services and support system,
55 including but not limited to assisted living facilities, personal care homes, regional area
56 agencies on aging, home health agencies, congregate and home-delivered meal providers,
57 Adult Day service providers, the Adult Protective Services agency, the Long-Term Care
58 Ombudsman Program, and the Public Guardianship Office.

59 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Public Health is urged to authorize
60 its regional health care coalitions to include these long-term services and support system
61 providers in their care networks for the purpose of administering the Georgia Emergency
62 Operations Plan.

63 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
64 and directed to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the
65 staff of the Georgia Emergency Operations Plan and the Department of Public Health.