

Senate Bill 170

By: Senators Jackson of the 41st, Robertson of the 29th, Summers of the 13th and Halpern of the 39th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 12 of Title 50 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
2 commissions and other agencies, so as to create the Georgia Interagency Council for the
3 Homeless; to provide for the purpose, membership, and duties of such council; to provide for
4 reporting of activities; to provide for compensation; to provide for legislative findings; to
5 provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

7 **SECTION 1.**

8 The General Assembly finds that:

- 9 (1) Every Georgian has the right to life, liberty, and property under the Constitution of the
10 State of Georgia;
- 11 (2) The protection of persons and property is the paramount duty of government;
- 12 (3) No Georgian shall be denied equal protection under the law;
- 13 (4) The government of the State of Georgia is instituted for the protection, security, and
14 benefit of the people;
- 15 (5) In 2022, the Georgia State Senate created a Study Committee on Unsheltered
16 Homelessness to study the issue, assess evidence for different policies, solicit input, and

17 develop recommendations for improvements to the law that would aid those experiencing
18 homelessness;

19 (6) In 2022, the Georgia State Senate found that the state should continue to oppose the
20 criminalization of homelessness, and the Study Committee on Unsheltered Homelessness
21 did not recommend any legal action against unsheltered or sheltered homeless individuals
22 based on housing status; and

23 (7) This Act reinforces the General Assembly's commitment to the safety and security of
24 those state residents who remain unhoused.

25 **SECTION 2.**

26 Chapter 12 of Title 50 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to commissions
27 and other agencies, is amended by adding a new article to read as follows:

28 "ARTICLE 9

29 50-12-140.

30 (a) There is created the Georgia Interagency Council for the Homeless for the purpose of
31 ensuring a coordinated state-wide approach to addressing homelessness.

32 (b) As used in this Code section, the term 'council' means the Georgia Interagency Council
33 for the Homeless.

34 (c) The council shall consist of the following 21 members who shall be appointed to serve
35 at the pleasure of the Governor:

36 (1) The commissioner of community affairs or his or her designee;

37 (2) One member from the Attorney General's office;

38 (3) One member from the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental
39 Disabilities;

40 (4) One member from the Department of Corrections;

- 41 (5) One member from the Division of Aging Services within the Department of Human
42 Services;
- 43 (6) One member from the Governor's Office for Children and Families;
- 44 (7) One member from the Department of Veterans Service;
- 45 (8) One member from the Georgia Housing and Finance Authority;
- 46 (9) One member from the Department of Community Affairs;
- 47 (10) One member from the Department of Transportation;
- 48 (11) One member from the Department of Public Health;
- 49 (12) One member from the Department of Public Safety;
- 50 (13) One member from the State Board of Pardons and Paroles;
- 51 (14) One member from the Continuum of Care Network;
- 52 (15) One member from the Department of Community Supervision;
- 53 (16) Three members who have personally experienced homelessness; and
- 54 (17) Three members representing service providers to the homeless.
- 55 (d) Councilmembers appointed pursuant to paragraphs (14) and (15) of subsection (c) of
56 this Code section shall serve for a period of three years.
- 57 (e) A vacancy on the council shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment
58 was made.
- 59 (f) The commissioner of community affairs or his or her appointee shall serve as the
60 chairperson of the council.
- 61 (g) The council shall:
- 62 (1) Survey current resources for services for the homeless in this state;
- 63 (2) Initiate an evaluation of the current and future needs for the services;
- 64 (3) Assist in coordinating and providing state-wide services for all homeless individuals
65 in this state;
- 66 (4) Increase the flow of information among separate providers and appropriate
67 authorities;

- 68 (5) Develop guidelines to monitor the provision of services for the homeless and the
69 methods of delivering those services;
- 70 (6) Coordinate with the State Workforce Development Board, homeless shelters, and
71 public and private entities to provide homeless individuals information on services
72 available to assist them in obtaining employment and job training;
- 73 (7) Establish a central resource and information center for the homeless in this state;
- 74 (8) Coordinate state-wide efforts to combat the criminalization of homelessness;
- 75 (9) Ensure that local or state-wide nonprofit organizations perform the duties under this
76 subsection that the council is unable to perform; and
- 77 (10) Meet at least once per quarter to set the goals of the council and review the work
78 described in this Code section.
- 79 (h) The council, no later than October 1, 2025, and annually thereafter, shall submit to the
80 office of the Governor a report detailing the council's activities, findings, and any
81 recommendations. Any reports generated by the council shall be made available on an
82 annual basis by the department to the members of the General Assembly, all departments
83 and agencies of state government, all county and municipal governments, and members of
84 the general public by posting such reports on the appropriate state agency public websites.
- 85 (i) Councilmembers shall receive no compensation for their services but shall be allowed
86 actual and necessary expenses in the performance of their duties. Citizen members shall
87 receive a daily expense allowance in the amount specified in subsection (b) of Code
88 Section 45-7-21 as well as the mileage or transportation allowance authorized for state
89 employees. If any members selected to serve on the council are state officials or are state
90 employees, they shall receive no compensation for their services on the council but shall
91 be reimbursed for expenses incurred in the performance of their duties as members of the
92 council in the same manner as reimbursements are made in their capacity as state officials
93 or state employees. The funds necessary for the reimbursement of the expenses of state

94 officials and state employees shall come from funds appropriated to or otherwise available
95 to their respective departments."

96 **SECTION 3.**

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