

The House Committee on Education offers the following substitute to HR 145:

A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the Department of Education and the Department of Public Health to collaborate to
2 prioritize the expansion of vision and hearing screening at various grade levels to identify
3 students with undiagnosed and untreated vision or hearing problems that may impede their
4 acquisition of literacy skills; and for other purposes.

5 WHEREAS, a significant percentage of school age children, approximately one-third,
6 experience vision problems, yet for many of them the lack of vision screening and necessary
7 follow-up diagnostic evaluations are impairing their ability to acquire literacy skills; and

8 WHEREAS, hearing screening is only required as a newborn before hospital discharge and
9 at entry into a school system, and vision screening is only required at entry into a school
10 system; and

11 WHEREAS, eight percent of children have hearing loss between six and 19 years of age; and

12 WHEREAS, there is a well documented direct link between vision and hearing health and
13 the acquisition of literacy skills; and

14 WHEREAS, Code Section 20-2-771 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated authorizes
15 and requires the Department of Education to collaborate with public health authorities to
16 address health related mandates for students; and

17 WHEREAS, effective screening programs can identify vision and hearing impairments early,
18 allowing timely interventions that support academic success and literacy development.

19 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GEORGIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY
20 that:

21 (1) The Department of Education and Department of Public Health are urged to
22 collaborate in developing a comprehensive strategy and methods to expand vision and
23 hearing screening for students in pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and first, third, fifth, and
24 eighth grades, as well as for transfer students in all grade levels; and

25 (2) Such comprehensive strategy and methods, once developed, shall be presented to the
26 chairpersons of the House Committee on Education and the Senate Education and Youth
27 Committee and the Georgia Council on Literacy to ensure alignment with state literacy
28 goals.

29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
30 and directed to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to
31 representatives of the Department of Education and the Department of Public Health.