

Senate Resolution 429

By: Senators Burns of the 23rd, McLaurin of the 14th, Jones II of the 22nd, Payne of the 54th and Halpern of the 39th

A RESOLUTION

1 Creating the Senate Addressing Felony Disenfranchisement in Georgia's Constitution Study
2 Committee; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, the civil rights of all individuals should be protected and respected; and

4 WHEREAS, felony disenfranchisement is a significant barrier to full reintegration into
5 society for individuals who have been convicted of a crime, but who have completed their
6 custodial sentence and are actively contributing to their community by paying taxes and
7 fulfilling other civic duties and responsibilities; and

8 WHEREAS, Georgia has one of the longest parole and probationary periods in the nation and
9 the highest number of individuals under supervision per capita of any state, which should not
10 serve as a barrier to the successful reintegration of individuals who have been released from
11 incarceration and are working to rebuild their lives and be invested in their communities; and

12 WHEREAS, Georgia's Constitution, under the felony disenfranchisement clause, currently
13 prevents individuals from fully participating in democracy by denying them the right to vote,
14 even after they have been released into their communities to serve the remainder of their
15 sentences and are engaged in their communities as law-abiding citizens; and

16 WHEREAS, a study committee is needed to explore possible reforms that would promote
17 public safety by removing barriers to civic participation for individuals released from
18 incarceration and ensure that Georgia's election laws are in alignment with the principles of
19 justice and equality.

20 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE:

21 (1) **Creation of Senate study committee.** There is created the Senate Addressing
22 Felony Disenfranchisement in Georgia's Constitution Study Committee.

23 (2) **Members and officers.** The committee shall be composed of six members of the
24 Senate to be appointed by the President of the Senate. The President of the Senate shall
25 designate a member of the committee as chairperson of the committee.

26 (3) **Powers and duties.** The committee shall undertake a study of the conditions, needs,
27 issues, and problems mentioned above or related thereto and recommend any action or
28 legislation which the committee deems necessary or appropriate, including, but not
29 limited to, the following:

30 (A) Examining the current application and legal reasoning behind the felony
31 disenfranchisement clause in the Georgia Constitution and assessing its ongoing
32 relevance in today's society;

33 (B) Reviewing Georgia's current laws regarding disenfranchisement and evaluating
34 how they impact individuals released from incarceration who are working and paying
35 taxes while serving the remainder of their sentences in the community;

36 (C) Studying potential reforms allowing individuals who have served the custodial
37 portion of their sentences and are living in the community, even if they have not
38 completed their sentences, to regain their right to vote and strengthen their ability to
39 participate in civic life;

40 (D) Considering the economic, legal, and societal impacts of restoring voting rights to
41 individuals who are released from incarceration; and

42 (E) Recommending a practical framework for the successful reintegration of
43 individuals into society, ensuring that they are able to resume civic engagement as
44 responsible members of their communities.

45 (4) **Meetings.** The chairperson shall call all meetings of the committee. The committee
46 may conduct such meetings at such places and at such times as it may deem necessary or
47 convenient to enable it to exercise fully and effectively its powers, perform its duties, and
48 accomplish the objectives and purposes of this resolution.

49 (5) **Allowances and funding.** The legislative members of the committee shall receive
50 the allowances provided for in Code Section 28-1-8 of the Official Code of Georgia
51 Annotated. The allowances authorized by this resolution shall not be received by any
52 member of the committee for more than five days unless additional days are authorized.
53 Funds necessary to carry out the provisions of this resolution shall come from funds
54 appropriated to the Senate.

55 (6) **Report.**

56 (A) In the event the committee adopts any specific findings or recommendations that
57 include suggestions for proposed legislation or amendments to the Georgia
58 Constitution, the chairperson shall file a report of the same prior to the date of
59 abolishment specified in this resolution, subject to subparagraph (C) of this paragraph.

60 (B) In the event the committee adopts a report that does not include suggestions for
61 proposed legislation or amendments to the Georgia Constitution, the chairperson shall
62 file the report, subject to subparagraph (C) of this paragraph.

63 (C) No report shall be filed unless the same has been approved prior to the date of
64 abolishment specified in this resolution by majority vote of a quorum of the committee.
65 A report so approved shall be signed by the chairperson of the committee and filed with
66 the Secretary of the Senate.

67 (D) In the absence of an approved report, the chairperson may file with the Secretary
68 of the Senate a copy of the minutes of the meetings of the committee in lieu thereof.

69 (7) **Abolishment.** The committee shall stand abolished on December 1, 2025.