

House Bill 920

By: Representatives Roberts of the 52<sup>nd</sup>, Park of the 107<sup>th</sup>, Jones of the 143<sup>rd</sup>, Heffner of the 130<sup>th</sup>, Myles of the 126<sup>th</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 prohibit individuals who have been  
3 members of hate groups from serving in law enforcement and the organized militia under  
4 certain circumstances; to provide for definitions; to provide for enforcement and screening;  
5 to provide for appeals; to provide for public reporting; to provide for related matters; to  
6 provide for a short title; to provide for legislative findings; to repeal conflicting laws; and for  
7 other purposes.

8 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

9 **SECTION 1.**

10 This Act shall be known and may be cited as the "Hate-Free Heroes Act."

11 **SECTION 2.**

12 The General Assembly finds that:

13 (1) Public safety officials play a critical role in maintaining trust, security, and fairness in  
14 diverse communities;

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- 15 (2) Membership in hate groups undermines the principles of equality, dignity, and respect  
16 required for such roles; and
- 17 (3) Prohibiting recent members of hate groups from serving in public safety positions  
18 strengthens community trust and upholds democratic values.

19 **SECTION 3.**

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

22 "35-8-8.1.

23 (a) As used in this Code section, the term:

24 (1) 'Hate group' means an organization that promotes or engages in hatred, violence, or  
25 discrimination against individuals based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual  
26 orientation, or other protected characteristics.

27 (2) 'State militia role' means any member of the organized militia as defined in Code  
28 Section 38-2-2.

29 (3) 'Voluntary associate' means, with respect to a hate group's activities, active  
30 participation, formal affiliation, financial support, or public endorsement.

31 (b)(1) Any person who has been a voluntary associate of a hate group within the past ten  
32 years is prohibited from serving as a peace officer or in a state militia role.

33 (2) Any person currently serving as a peace officer or in a state militia role who is found  
34 to have been a hate group member within the past ten years shall be subject to immediate  
35 investigation and potential removal from his or her position.

36 (c) In addition to the requirements set forth in Code Section 35-8-8, all applicants for  
37 peace officer roles and state militia roles shall undergo comprehensive background checks,  
38 including screening for whether such applicants have been voluntary associates of a hate  
39 group. The council shall oversee compliance of such screening requirements, establish and  
40 maintain a list of identified hate groups, and update screening protocols as necessary.

41 (d)(1) An individual may appeal a finding of hate group affiliation by providing evidence  
42 to the council demonstrating:

43 (A) His or her departure from the group and disavowal of its principles; and

44 (B) Actions taken to counteract or rectify harm caused by his or her past affiliation.

45 (2) The council shall have the discretion to approve appeals on a case-by-case basis.

46 (e) Annual reports detailing the enforcement of this Code section shall be published by the  
47 council, including:

48 (1) The number of individuals denied peace officer roles and state militia roles based on  
49 hate group affiliation;

50 (2) Appeals filed and outcomes of such cases; and

51 (3) Updates to the list of identified hate groups."

52 **SECTION 4.**

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