

House Bill 1043

By: Representatives Scott of the 76th, Schofield of the 63rd, Davis of the 87th, Bazemore of the 69th, Alexander of the 66th, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 3 of Chapter 5 of Title 16 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
2 relating to kidnapping, false imprisonment and related offenses, so as to create a unified,
3 trauma informed state-wide system regarding youth trafficking; to provide for legislative
4 findings; to provide for definitions; to establish a state-wide care coordination office; to
5 provide for training in hospitals, schools, the Division of Family and Children Services, law
6 enforcement, and local governments; to provide for reporting requirements; to provide for
7 related matters; to provide for a short title; to provide for an effective date; to repeal
8 conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

10 **SECTION 1.**

11 This Act shall be known and may be cited as the "Georgia Trauma Informed Child and Youth
12 Trafficking Response Act."

SECTION 2.

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14 The General Assembly finds that:

- 15 (1) Children and youth who experience sex trafficking, labor trafficking, or online
16 exploitation suffer devastating trauma;
- 17 (2) Trafficking increasingly occurs within families, requiring specialized responses;
- 18 (3) Georgia lacks a unified state-wide system;
- 19 (4) Survivors often enter hospitals, schools, the Division of Family and Children Services,
20 law enforcement, or courts without coordination;
- 21 (5) Local governments, hospitals, and schools need standardized trauma informed
22 protocols; and
- 23 (6) Georgia can become the national and global leader in protecting trafficked children.

SECTION 3.

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25 Article 3 of Chapter 5 of Title 16 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
26 kidnapping, false imprisonment and related offenses, is amended by adding a new Code
27 section to read as follows:

28 "16-5-48.29 (a) As used in this Code section, the term:

- 30 (1) 'Certified human trafficking victim assistance organization' means any provider that
31 is certified by the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council.
- 32 (2) 'Child' means any individual under the age of 18.
- 33 (3) 'Designated healthcare facility' means any hospital, emergency department, urgent
34 care, or inpatient facility in this state.
- 35 (4) 'DFCS' means the Division of Family and Children Services within the Department
36 of Human Services.
- 37 (5) 'Familial trafficking' means trafficking committed by a parent, guardian, custodian,
38 person in loco parentis, relative, or caregiver's partner.

39 (6) 'Human trafficking' means an offense provided for under Code Section 16-5-46.

40 (7) 'Multidisciplinary team (MDT)' means DFCS, law enforcement, prosecutors, courts,
41 hospitals, schools, and behavioral health and service providers.

42 (8) 'Office' means the state-wide Georgia Child and Youth Trafficking Care
43 Coordination Office created under this Code section.

44 (9) 'Regional navigator' means the individual or entity coordinating victim services.

45 (10) 'Trauma informed approach' means practices primarily based in understanding
46 trauma and avoiding re-traumatization.

47 (11) 'Youth' means any individual under the age of 21 who is a survivor or at risk.

48 (b) There is created within the Department of Human Services the Georgia Child and
49 Youth Trafficking Care Coordination Office, and, subject to appropriations, such office
50 shall:

51 (1) Operate a state-wide hotline and reporting portal for child victims of trafficking for
52 labor or sexual servitude;

53 (2) Develop a trauma informed care coordination system;

54 (3) Assign regional navigators; and

55 (4) Maintain a state-wide data system and provide training and protocols for hospitals,
56 schools, DFCS, courts, and law enforcement.

57 (c) The office shall divide the state into regions and appoint regional navigators who shall:

58 (1) Respond to referrals;

59 (2) Coordinate MDTs;

60 (3) Ensure trauma informed service plans; and

61 (4) Prioritize familial trafficking safety measures.

62 (d) Each region shall maintain at least one MDT, and such MDTs shall:

63 (1) Coordinate investigations;

64 (2) Provide resources that avoid re-traumatization; and

65 (3) Develop integrated service plans.

- 66 (e) All agencies shall screen for familial trafficking indicators.
- 67 (f)(1) The DFCS shall consider familial trafficking as aggravated child abuse and may
68 order emergency removal of the child.
- 69 (2) Courts shall not order reunification without clear and convincing evidence of safety.
- 70 (g) No child victim shall be prosecuted for offenses resulting from trafficking.
- 71 (h)(1) All designated healthcare facilities shall adopt written trauma informed protocols,
72 including private screenings, advocate access, referrals to regional navigators, and safety
73 planning.
- 74 (2) Hospitals shall train emergency department, pediatric, obstetric, behavioral health,
75 and social work staff.
- 76 (3) Designated healthcare facilities shall not contact law enforcement for the purpose of
77 arresting a child victim.
- 78 (i) Counties and municipalities shall adopt trafficking response protocols aligned with this
79 Code section, and each shall designate a local coordinator.
- 80 (j) The office shall develop model trafficking policies for use in schools. Local school
81 boards shall adopt aligned policies and training, and school counselors and social workers
82 shall receive training.
- 83 (k) Nothing contained in this Code section shall prevent the state from receiving grants,
84 gifts, or bequests for the purposes of this Code section and appropriating any such moneys
85 for such purposes.
- 86 (l) The Department of Human Services shall prepare an annual report detailing:
- 87 (1) The number of referrals for resources;
- 88 (2) Familial trafficking data;
- 89 (3) Activity of MDTs;
- 90 (4) Designated healthcare facility compliance;
- 91 (5) School compliance; and
- 92 (6) Recommendations for improvement.

93 (m) The report provided for in subsection (l) of this Code section shall be submitted to the
94 Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the President of the Senate by
95 December 31 of each year and made available on the website of the Department of Human
96 Services."

97 **SECTION 4.**

98 This Act shall become effective July 1, 2026.

99 **SECTION 5.**

100 All laws in conflict with this Act are hereby repealed.