

Senate Resolution 622

By: Senators Kirkpatrick of the 32nd, Hatchett of the 50th, Parent of the 44th, Payne of the 54th, Brass of the 6th and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Creating the Joint Study Committee on Evaluating Escalating Costs in Georgia's Foster Care
2 System; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, the Georgia Department of Human Services, through its Division of Family and
4 Children Services (DFCS), is the state agency designated to care for Georgia's foster children
5 and child welfare services populations; and

6 WHEREAS, DFCS has custody of nearly 10,000 foster children; and

7 WHEREAS, out of home care services provided by DFCS include transportation and
8 behavioral aides for foster children; and

9 WHEREAS, out of home care services totaled \$141,309,251 in FY25 and are projected to
10 exceed \$164,728,091 in FY26, having increased 159 percent since 2022; and

11 WHEREAS, the rapid escalation of costs jeopardizes the sustainability of existing programs
12 from a state funding perspective; and

13 WHEREAS, the cost of out of home services is impacted by many variables, including
14 judicial orders and the needs of each individual child; and

15 WHEREAS, the functioning of Georgia's foster care system in the best interests of foster
16 children requires an appropriate use of all available provider networks and available funding
17 sources; and

18 WHEREAS, a study committee would be beneficial to examine the existing framework of
19 the delivery of out of home care services, wrap-around services, and all related costs to
20 determine future availability of resources and leverage efficiencies to achieve the best
21 possible outcomes for foster children.

22 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
23 GEORGIA:

24 (1) **Creation of joint study committee.** There is created the Joint Study Committee on
25 Evaluating Escalating Costs in Georgia's Foster Care System.

26 (2) **Members and officers.**

27 (A) The committee shall be composed of 20 members.

28 (B) The Governor shall appoint one member who has served as a special assistant
29 attorney general and represented the state in dependency proceedings within the last six
30 months;

31 (C) The President of the Senate shall appoint six members of the Senate as members
32 of the committee, one of whom shall be a representative of a Georgia licensed child
33 placing agency serving as a statewide service provider. The President of the Senate
34 shall designate one of such members as cochairperson;

35 (D) The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall appoint six members of the
36 House of Representatives as members of the committee, one of whom shall be a

37 representative of a Georgia licensed child caring institution serving as a statewide
38 service provider. The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall designate one of
39 such members as cochairperson; and

40 (E) The committee shall include additional members as follows:

41 (i) The Commissioner of the Department of Human Services or his or her designee;

42 (ii) The Commissioner of the Department of Community Health or his or her
43 designee;

44 (iii) The Commissioner of the Department of Juvenile Justice or his or her designee;

45 (iv) The Commissioner of the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental
46 Disabilities or his or her designee;

47 (v) The President of the Council of Juvenile Court Judges or his or her designee;

48 (vi) The President of the Council of Superior Court Judges or his or her designee; and

49 (vii) The Executive Director of Together Georgia or his or her designee from among
50 its alliance of children and family services providers.

51 (3) **Powers and duties.** The committee shall undertake a study of the conditions, needs,
52 issues, and problems mentioned above or related thereto and recommend any action or
53 legislation which the committee deems necessary or appropriate.

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

58 (5) **Allowances, expenses, and funding.**

59 (A) The legislative members of the committee shall receive the allowances provided
60 for in Code Section 28-1-8 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated.

61 (B) Members of the committee who are state officials, other than legislative members,
62 or state employees shall receive no compensation for their services on the committee,
63 but they may be reimbursed for expenses incurred by them in the performance of their

64 duties as members of the committee in the same manner as they are reimbursed for
65 expenses in their capacities as state officials or employees.

66 (C) Members of the committee who are not legislators, state officials, or state
67 employees shall receive a daily expense allowance in an amount the same as that
68 specified in subsection (b) of Code Section 45-7-21 of the Official Code of Georgia
69 Annotated, as well as the mileage or transportation allowance authorized for state
70 employees.

71 (D) The allowances and expenses authorized by this resolution shall not be received
72 by any member of the committee for more than five days unless additional days are
73 authorized. Funds necessary to carry out the provisions of this resolution shall come
74 from funds appropriated to the Senate and the House of Representatives; except that
75 funds for the reimbursement of the expenses of state officials, other than legislative
76 members, and state employees shall come from funds appropriated to or otherwise
77 available to their respective agencies.

78 **(6) Report.**

79 (A) In the event the committee adopts any specific findings or recommendations that
80 include suggestions for proposed legislation, the cochairpersons shall file a report of the
81 same prior to the date of abolishment specified in this resolution, subject to
82 subparagraph (C) of this paragraph.

83 (B) In the event the committee adopts a report that does not include suggestions for
84 proposed legislation, the cochairpersons shall file the report, subject to
85 subparagraph (C) of this paragraph.

86 (C) No report shall be filed unless the same has been approved prior to the date of
87 abolishment specified in this resolution by majority vote of a quorum of the committee.
88 A report so approved shall be signed by the cochairpersons of the committee and filed
89 with the Secretary of the Senate and the Clerk of the House of Representatives.

90 (D) In the absence of an approved report, the cochairpersons may file with the
91 Secretary of the Senate and the Clerk of the House of Representatives copies of the
92 minutes of the meetings of the committee in lieu thereof.

93 (7) **Abolishment.** The committee shall stand abolished on December 1, 2026.