

Senate Resolution 680

By: Senators Jones of the 10th, Jackson of the 41st, Kemp of the 38th, Wicks of the 34th, Harrell of the 40th and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing and commemorating the Georgia School of Orthodontics on the occasion of its
2 10th anniversary and inviting its leadership to be recognized by the Georgia Senate; and for
3 other purposes.

4 WHEREAS, the Georgia School of Orthodontics (GSO), founded in 2014 by Mr. Chris
5 Lazzara and Dr. Gasper Lazzara, was established to expand access to advanced orthodontic
6 education while providing affordable, high-quality orthodontic care to the citizens of
7 Georgia; and

8 WHEREAS, the Georgia School of Orthodontics was conceived with a dual mission of
9 post-secondary professional education and community-based public service, addressing
10 critical workforce needs while improving access to oral healthcare for underserved
11 populations; and

12 WHEREAS, in 2015, the late Congressman John Lewis, a revered civil rights leader and
13 longtime public servant, supported GSO's accreditation efforts as one of the first signatories
14 of a congressional letter to the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA), recognizing
15 the institution's commitment to equity, representation, and opportunity within the dental
16 profession; and

17 WHEREAS, in 2016, the Georgia School of Orthodontics officially opened its Atlanta clinic
18 and received initial accreditation from CODA, welcoming its inaugural class of 18 residents
19 and two fellows, while committing to provide \$100,000 in complimentary orthodontic
20 treatment to underserved communities; and

21 WHEREAS, in 2017, GSO expanded its footprint with the opening of a state-of-the-art clinic
22 in Duluth, Georgia, doubling its capacity to educate residents and serve patients throughout
23 the Atlanta metropolitan region; and

24 WHEREAS, in that same year, the Georgia School of Orthodontics launched Purple Heart
25 Smiles in partnership with the Georgia Dental Foundation, providing complimentary
26 orthodontic care to children-and now grandchildren-of Purple Heart recipients, honoring the
27 sacrifices of America's military families; and

28 WHEREAS, in 2018, GSO became the first orthodontic institution in the nation to be
29 officially designated a Purple Heart School, further demonstrating its deep and sustained
30 commitment to veterans and military families; and

31 WHEREAS, in 2019, the Georgia School of Orthodontics celebrated its first graduating class
32 and earned CODA Approval Without Reporting Requirements, the highest level of
33 accreditation status; and

34 WHEREAS, during the COVID-19 pandemic from 2020 through 2022, GSO implemented
35 innovative educational and clinical models that ensured uninterrupted resident education,
36 patient care, and research, demonstrating resilience, leadership, and adaptability during a
37 public health crisis; and

38 WHEREAS, in 2021, GSO expanded its community outreach through the Gift of a Smile
39 Heroes initiative, extending complimentary orthodontic care to adult community heroes who
40 serve and strengthen Georgia's communities; and

41 WHEREAS, in 2022, CODA approved an expansion of GSO's residency program, increasing
42 class size from 36 to 45 residents to meet growing national demand for orthodontic
43 specialists; and

44 WHEREAS, in 2024, the Class of 2026 achieved a 100 percent pass rate on the American
45 Board of Orthodontics written examination, marking the fifth consecutive year of this
46 distinction, and GSO graduated its largest class to date; and

47 WHEREAS, in 2025, GSO opened the Lazzara Orthodontic Center for Research, positioning
48 the State of Georgia as a national leader in orthodontic research, innovation, and scholarly
49 publication; and

50 WHEREAS, in 2025, the Georgia School of Orthodontics partnered with the John and Lillian
51 Miles Lewis Foundation to establish the \$8.5 million John Lewis Legacy Scholarship,
52 expanding access to orthodontic education while honoring the enduring legacy of
53 Congressman John Lewis; and

54 WHEREAS, since its founding, the Georgia School of Orthodontics has treated more than
55 14,600 patients, generated an estimated \$46.6 million in savings for Atlanta-area families,
56 awarded over \$5 million in scholarships to 73 recipients, provided more than \$290,000 in
57 complimentary orthodontic care, and educated 172 alumni, including 34 Diplomats of the
58 American Board of Orthodontics; and

59 WHEREAS, the Georgia School of Orthodontics operates more than 36,753 square feet of
60 clinical, educational, and research facilities across two campuses, contributing significantly
61 to Georgia's healthcare infrastructure, workforce development, and national reputation in
62 orthodontic education.

63 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
64 commend and congratulate the Georgia School of Orthodontics on the occasion of its 10th
65 anniversary and recognize its outstanding contributions to public service, healthcare access,
66 professional education, and community impact in the State of Georgia and across the nation.

67 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Georgia School of Orthodontics, its founders,
68 leadership, faculty, residents, and staff be formally invited to the floor of the Georgia Senate
69 on a date designated by the Secretary of the Senate to be recognized for these achievements.

70 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
71 to make an appropriate copy of this resolution available for distribution to the Georgia
72 School of Orthodontics.