

House Bill 1597

By: Representatives Jackson of the 68th, Mitchell of the 88th, Reese of the 140th, Clark of the 108th, and Bazemore of the 69th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 8 of Title 50 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the
2 Department of Community Affairs, so as to provide for maximum loan amounts for certain
3 home buying assistance programs; to provide for loan structure and forgiveness; to provide
4 for certain qualifications for eligibility; to provide for certain minimum fund allocation; to
5 provide for definitions; to provide for a short title; to provide for legislative findings; to
6 provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

8 **SECTION 1.**

9 This Act shall be known and may be cited as the "Georgia Dream Expansion and Housing
10 Affordability Act of 2026."

11 **SECTION 2.**

12 The General Assembly finds that:

13 (1) Homeownership is the primary vehicle for generational wealth building in this state;

14 (2) Rising interest rates and historic increases in home prices have placed the "Georgia
 15 Dream" out of reach for a significant portion of the workforce, including, but not limited
 16 to, teachers, healthcare workers, and veterans;

17 (3) The current home down payment assistance levels of \$10,000.00 to \$12,500.00 are
 18 no longer sufficient to bridge the affordability gap in a market where median home prices
 19 in metropolitan areas exceed \$400,000.00; and

20 (4) Providing bold, front-end financial support reduces the long-term need for state
 21 subsidized rental assistance and helps stabilize local economies.

22 **SECTION 3.**

23 Chapter 8 of Title 50 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the Department
 24 of Community Affairs, is amended by adding a new article to read as follows:

25 "ARTICLE 14

26 50-8-310.

27 As used in this article, the term:

28 (1) 'First-generation homebuyer' means an individual who has not owned a home in the
 29 last three years and whose parents or guardians do not currently hold an ownership
 30 interest in a residential property.

31 (2) 'Qualified public service professional' means any educator, law enforcement officer,
 32 firefighter, emergency medical technician, or healthcare professional employed full-time
 33 in this state.

34 50-8-311.

35 For department managed loan programs providing technical assistance and financing
 36 options for the purchase of a residence, including, but not limited to, the Georgia Dream
 37 Loan Program, the department shall provide to applicants of the program:

38 (1) Down payment assistance consisting of a loan of \$30,000.00 to be applied to the
39 purchase price of a primary residence; and

40 (2) Closing cost assistance consisting of a loan of \$15,000.00 to be applied to loan
41 origination fees, inspections, and other standard closing costs.

42 50-8-312.

43 (a) To encourage community stability, loans granted pursuant to this article shall be
44 structured as zero interest, nonamortizing loans. Ten percent of the total balance of such
45 loans shall be forgiven annually on the anniversary of the closing date of the purchase of
46 the primary residence. After ten years of primary residency, any remaining loan balance
47 shall be forgiven.

48 (b) The department shall adjust income eligibility limits of department managed loan
49 programs providing technical assistance and financing options for the purchase of a
50 primary residence to applicants who earn up to 140 percent of the area median income of
51 high-cost counties in this state to ensure middle-income families in rapidly growing
52 districts remain eligible.

53 (c) Not less than 20 percent of annual program funding shall be reserved for
54 first-generation homebuyers and qualified public service professionals."

55 **SECTION 4.**

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