

Senate Resolution 1051

By: Senators Echols of the 49th, Hufstetler of the 52nd, Gooch of the 51st, Bearden of the 30th and Goodman of the 8th

A RESOLUTION

1 Creating the Senate Study Committee on Comprehensive Services and Long-term Outcomes
2 for Individuals with Disabilities; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, Georgia offers a variety of programs and services for persons with disabilities
4 and their families, including federally funded programs and services administered across
5 multiple state agencies; and

6 WHEREAS, persons with disabilities and their families report difficulty identifying and
7 accessing all of the programs and services for which they may be eligible, including
8 challenges related to fragmented systems, lack of centralized information, and inconsistent
9 guidance; and

10 WHEREAS, persons with disabilities and their families report complicated application
11 processes, administrative burdens, and significant delays in enrollment and access to critical
12 services, including Medicaid waiver programs and family support services; and

13 WHEREAS, persons with disabilities frequently experience gaps and disruptions in services
14 during key life transitions, particularly upon completion of secondary education and entry

15 into adulthood, due to insufficient coordination among state agencies and service providers;
16 and

17 WHEREAS, schools are increasingly working to integrate students with disabilities into
18 general education settings, and questions remain regarding the availability of appropriate
19 supports, resources, and placements necessary to ensure successful integration, including the
20 ability to appropriately address serious behavioral incidents and maintain a safe and effective
21 learning environment for all; and

22 WHEREAS, the New Options Waiver Program (NOW) and the Comprehensive Supports
23 Waiver Program (COMP) provide essential services but are limited by waiting lists,
24 workforce shortages, and administrative barriers; and

25 WHEREAS, workforce shortages among direct support professionals, therapists, and other
26 providers limit access to care and contribute to delays and reduced quality of services; and

27 WHEREAS, families and caregivers often bear significant financial and caregiving burdens,
28 including providing uncompensated care and navigating complex systems on behalf of their
29 loved ones; and

30 WHEREAS, parents and caregivers of individuals with disabilities face increasing concern
31 regarding long-term planning, including housing, guardianship, financial security, and
32 continuity of care when such caregivers are no longer able to provide support; and

33 WHEREAS, addressing the needs of persons with disabilities requires coordinated
34 collaboration among all stakeholders, including individuals with disabilities, their families,

35 educators and schools, service providers, communities, and the state agencies that administer
36 programs and services; and

37 WHEREAS, a comprehensive examination of programs, services, and long-term outcomes
38 for persons with disabilities is needed to identify systemic challenges and develop effective,
39 sustainable solutions.

40 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE:

41 (1) **Creation of Senate study committee.** There is created the Senate Study Committee
42 on Comprehensive Services and Long-term Outcomes for Individuals with Disabilities.

43 (2) **Members and officers.** The committee shall be composed of five members of the
44 Senate to be appointed by the President of the Senate. The President shall designate a
45 member of the committee as chairperson of the committee.

46 (3) **Powers and duties.** The committee shall undertake a study of the conditions, needs,
47 issues, and problems mentioned above or related thereto and recommend any action or
48 legislation which the committee deems necessary or appropriate. Such study shall
49 include, but shall not be limited to, addressing the following topics:

50 (A) Access to services and administrative barriers, including:

- 51 (i) Availability and accessibility of programs and services across state agencies;
52 (ii) Application processes, enrollment time lines, and administrative burdens; and
53 (iii) Opportunities to streamline processes and to improve access;

54 (B) Transition services and continuity of care, including:

- 55 (i) Gaps in services as individuals transition from school-based services to adulthood;
56 and
57 (ii) Coordination among the Department of Education, the Department of Behavioral
58 Health and Developmental Disabilities, the Department of Community Health, and
59 the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency;

- 60 (C) Medicaid waivers and service capacity, including:
- 61 (i) Administration and availability of the NOW and COMP waiver programs;
- 62 (ii) Waiting lists and planning lists and strategies to reduce such lists; and
- 63 (iii) Flexibility in service delivery and barriers to access;
- 64 (D) Workforce and provider capacity, including:
- 65 (i) Workforce shortages in direct support professionals and specialized providers;
- 66 (ii) Provider reimbursement rates and their impact on access to care; and
- 67 (iii) Regulatory and administrative barriers affecting providers;
- 68 (E) Interagency coordination and information access, including:
- 69 (i) Coordination among state agencies administering programs and services; and
- 70 (ii) Opportunities to develop centralized information systems and improve
- 71 transparency for families;
- 72 (F) Family and caregiver support, including:
- 73 (i) Availability and adequacy of family support services;
- 74 (ii) Financial and caregiving burdens on families;
- 75 (iii) Access to early care and education programs for children with disabilities; and
- 76 (iv) Barriers faced by providers and potential incentives to expand access;
- 77 (G) Long-term planning and lifetime care, including:
- 78 (i) Housing options, including community-based and integrated settings;
- 79 (ii) Guardianship, supported decision-making, and long-term legal planning tools;
- 80 (iii) Financial planning mechanisms, including special needs trusts, ABLE accounts,
- 81 and estate planning tools, and coordination with public benefits eligibility; and
- 82 (iv) Continuity of care when parents or caregivers are no longer able to provide
- 83 support;
- 84 (H) Data, reporting, and accountability, including:
- 85 (i) Availability and use of data regarding services, outcomes, and system
- 86 performance; and

87 (ii) Opportunities to improve transparency and reporting;

88 (I) Integration in educational settings, including:

89 (i) The effectiveness and availability of appropriate supports in general education
90 settings; and

91 (ii) Resources, placements, and behavioral interventions to ensure successful
92 outcomes for such students and a safe and effective learning environment; and

93 (J) Any other issues the committee deems necessary to identify systemic challenges
94 and develop effective and sustainable solutions related to the conditions, needs, issues,
95 and problems mentioned above.

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

100 (5) **Allowances and funding.** The legislative members of the committee shall receive
101 the allowances provided for in Code Section 28-1-8 of the Official Code of Georgia
102 Annotated. The allowances authorized by this resolution shall not be received by any
103 member of the committee for more than five days unless additional days are authorized.
104 Funds necessary to carry out the provisions of this resolution shall come from funds
105 appropriated to the Senate.

106 (6) **Report.**

107 (A) In the event the committee adopts any specific findings or recommendations that
108 include suggestions for proposed legislation, the chairperson shall file a report of the
109 same prior to the date of abolishment specified in this resolution, subject to
110 subparagraph (C) of this paragraph.

111 (B) In the event the committee adopts a report that does not include suggestions for
112 proposed legislation, the chairperson shall file the report, subject to subparagraph (C)
113 of this paragraph.

- 114 (C) No report shall be filed unless the same has been approved prior to the date of
115 abolishment specified in this resolution by majority vote of a quorum of the committee.
116 A report so approved shall be signed by the chairperson of the committee and filed with
117 the Secretary of the Senate.
- 118 (D) In the absence of an approved report, the chairperson may file with the Secretary
119 of the Senate a copy of the minutes of the meetings of the committee in lieu thereof.
- 120 (7) **Abolishment.** The committee shall stand abolished on December 1, 2026.