

Senate Resolution 432

By: Senators Harrell of the 40th, Hickman of the 4th and Burns of the 23rd

**ADOPTED SENATE**

**A RESOLUTION**

1 Creating the Senate Higher Education in Prison Study Committee; and for other purposes.

2 WHEREAS, higher education is a strong determinant of employment outcomes, social  
3 mobility, and future income because it equips individuals with the knowledge and skills  
4 needed to contribute effectively to society; and

5 WHEREAS, the 2023 overhaul of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid program  
6 allotted federal Pell Grants to people in prisons and increased total spending by \$617 million,  
7 giving the nation the greatest opportunity to expand higher education in prison since such  
8 grants were cut in 1994; and

9 WHEREAS, there are currently more than 47,000 Georgians in our state prisons, which cost  
10 taxpayers \$1.32 billion in 2024; and

11 WHEREAS, the rate of recidivism in Georgia is at least 30 percent, and postsecondary  
12 education has been found to be the most effective educational program at reducing  
13 recidivism with multiple studies finding that education in prison reduces its rate by 43  
14 percent; and

15 WHEREAS, providing postsecondary education to people in prisons will add specialized  
16 laborers to Georgia's economy, bolstering our workforce to remain the number one state to  
17 do business; and

18 WHEREAS, providing postsecondary education in prison will allow people in prisons to use  
19 their time more productively, boost self-motivation and mental health, and develop real  
20 career skills to apply after release; and

21 WHEREAS, entire communities benefit when people released from prison return as more  
22 productive and educated individuals ready to contribute to their community; and

23 WHEREAS, previous studies have found that states ultimately offset all costs of  
24 implementing postsecondary education in prisons with future savings from reduced rates of  
25 recidivism; and

26 WHEREAS, other southern states have taken action in the form of expanding the number of  
27 colleges, universities, and technical schools offering small business training; and

28 WHEREAS, the Georgia Coalition for Higher Education in Prison and its associated  
29 organizations have started groundbreaking programs in Georgia's prisons, but their ability  
30 to expand educational opportunities and provide transition services is limited; and

31 WHEREAS, the aforesaid coalition and other organizations have identified five categories  
32 of challenges and obstacles for people in prisons continuing their postsecondary education  
33 after release, including issues related to scholarship eligibility, housing obtainment,  
34 behavioral health services, medical care, and access to employment; and

35 WHEREAS, a study is needed to further investigate the social and economic impacts of  
36 increasing postsecondary opportunities in Georgia's prisons and to thoroughly determine  
37 what measures may be necessary and appropriate to increase postsecondary education.

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

39 (1) **Creation of Senate study committee.** There is created the Senate Higher Education  
40 in Prison Study Committee.

41 (2) **Members and officers.** The committee shall be composed of five members of the  
42 Senate to be appointed by the President of the Senate, of whom one member may  
43 represent a district in which there is a private nonprofit prison education program. The  
44 President of the Senate shall designate two members to serve as cochairpersons, one from  
45 the majority party and one from the minority party.

46 (3) **Powers and duties.**

47 (A) The committee shall undertake a study of the conditions, needs, issues, and  
48 problems mentioned above or related thereto and recommend any action or legislation  
49 which the committee deems necessary or appropriate.

50 (B) The duties of the committee shall also include, but not be limited to:

- 51 (i) Examining the state's current postsecondary and transition offerings; and  
52 (ii) Studying the most recent data on postsecondary offerings in prisons and  
53 successful models around the country.

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 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) The allowances authorized by this resolution shall not be received by any member  
62 of the committee for more than five days unless additional days are authorized. Funds  
63 necessary to carry out the provisions of this resolution shall come from funds  
64 appropriated to the Senate.

65 **(6) Report.**

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

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

73 (C) No report shall be filed unless the same has been approved prior to the date of  
74 abolishment specified in this resolution by majority vote of a quorum of the committee.  
75 A report so approved shall be signed by the cochairpersons of the committee and filed  
76 with the Secretary of the Senate.

77 (D) In the absence of an approved report, the cochairpersons may file with the  
78 Secretary of the Senate a copy of the minutes of the meetings of the committee in lieu  
79 thereof.

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