

House Resolution 768

By: Representatives Hawkins of the 27th, Newton of the 123rd, Cooper of the 43rd, Williams of the 168th, Greene of the 151st, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Creating the House Study Committee on Expanding Long-Term Care Options; and for other
2 purposes.

3 WHEREAS, according to the Bureau of the Census for the United States decennial census
4 of 2020 for the State of Georgia, Georgia has the ninth fastest-growing 60 and older
5 population and more than 20 percent of Georgia's population will be 60 or older by 2030; and

6 WHEREAS, the portion of Georgia population that is 65 and older is expected to grow
7 substantially from 1.7 million in 2020 to 2.8 million in 2040, with the greatest rate of growth
8 among those 80 and older; and

9 WHEREAS, studies show that 33 percent of aging and older adults will at some time require
10 the level of care offered by a skilled nursing care facility, confirming a need for Georgia to
11 retain a viable spectrum of care that includes skilled nursing; and

12 WHEREAS, Georgia nursing home beds grew by a mere 0.63 percent from 40,237 in
13 September 2015, to 40,493 in September 2021, and six of the 12 State Service Delivery
14 Regions forecast continued shortfalls in skilled nursing beds available, ranging from a deficit
15 of 17 percent to 91 percent; and

16 WHEREAS, approximately 72 percent of nursing home residents in Georgia use Medicaid
17 to pay for their nursing home care; and

18 WHEREAS, nearly 30 percent of COVID-19 deaths in Georgia occurred in nursing homes
19 and assisted living facilities; and

20 WHEREAS, the 38 percent death rate among the 1 percent of Americans living in nursing
21 homes has led to a national desire to explore alternative and better models of care; and

22 WHEREAS, federal regulations issued by the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services
23 for nursing homes were extensively revised in 2016, putting person-centered care, built on
24 and operated with respect for the individual's care, dignity, and quality of life as a central
25 theme; and

26 WHEREAS, person-centered, small and household models of care, such as facilities
27 developed through the Eden Alternative, Inc., or the Green House Project, offer small,
28 intentional communities, larger communal areas, private bedrooms and baths, and a space
29 that feels and functions more like a real home; and

30 WHEREAS, studies show that person-centered care adopted in a comprehensive way without
31 compromising appropriate levels of care lead to clinically significant positive impacts on
32 residential health and quality of life; and

33 WHEREAS, in studies conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, Green House and similar
34 smaller homes experienced infections at half the rate of traditional nursing homes and deaths
35 at less than 30 percent of the rate sustained by traditional nursing homes based on facility
36 design and operation; and

37 WHEREAS, occupancy in Green House homes nationally in May 2021, following the worst
38 of the COVID-19 pandemic, was at 93 percent but the average occupancy in nursing homes
39 in Georgia in July 2021 was at 72.2 percent, with 27 percent of Georgia's nursing homes
40 having occupancy at less than or equal to 64 percent, directly impacting revenue; and

41 WHEREAS, Green House homes nationally have a higher mix of privately funded residents
42 than traditional homes and experience lower staff turnover and higher job satisfaction than
43 traditional nursing homes, resulting in a positive impact on revenue and hiring and training
44 costs; and

45 WHEREAS, earlier medical models prevail in existing Georgia nursing homes, and the
46 financing of renovations is often cost-prohibitive; and

47 WHEREAS, options can be explored to use Medicaid reimbursement rates to incentivize the
48 adoption of person-centered models that elevate care in Georgia; and

49 WHEREAS, financing options such as state tax credits and local tax allocation districts are
50 available tools to pursue changes which would elevate and expand long-term care available
51 to Georgians.

52 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

53 (1) **Creation of House study committee.** There is created the House Study Committee
54 on Expanding Long-Term Care Options.

55 (2) **Members and officers.** The committee shall be composed of five members of the
56 House of Representatives to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of
57 Representatives. The Speaker shall designate a member of the committee as chairperson
58 of the committee.

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

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

66 (5) **Allowances and funding.** The legislative members of the committee shall receive
67 the allowances provided for in Code Section 28-1-8 of the Official Code of Georgia
68 Annotated. The allowances authorized by this resolution shall not be received by any
69 member of the committee for more than five days unless additional days are authorized.
70 Funds necessary to carry out the provisions of this resolution shall come from funds
71 appropriated to the House of Representatives.

72 (6) **Report.**

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

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

80 (C) No report shall be filed unless the same has been approved prior to the date of
81 abolishment specified in this resolution by majority vote of a quorum of the committee.
82 A report so approved shall be signed by the chairperson of the committee and filed with
83 the Clerk of the House of Representatives.

84 (D) In the absence of an approved report, the chairperson may file with the Clerk of the
85 House of Representatives a copy of the minutes of the meetings of the committee in lieu
86 thereof.

87 (7) **Abolishment.** The committee shall stand abolished on December 1, 2022.