

Senate Bill 96

By: Senators Echols of the 49th, Hatchett of the 50th, Hufstetler of the 52nd, Payne of the 54th, Robertson of the 29th and others

AS PASSED

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1 To amend various titles of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated so as to modernize and
2 update provisions creating certain boards, panels, authorities, centers, commissions,
3 committees, councils, task forces, and other such bodies; to revise certain provisions relating
4 to the State Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless Commission; to repeal certain provisions
5 relating to the Environmental Advisory Council; to repeal certain provisions relating to the
6 Jekyll Island Citizens Resource Council; to revise certain provisions relating to the Erosion
7 and Sediment Control Overview Council; to repeal certain provisions related to the
8 Stakeholder Advisory Board; to repeal certain provisions relating to the Governor's Office
9 for Children and Families; to revise certain provisions relating to the Georgia Firefighters
10 Standards and Training Council; to repeal certain provisions relating to the Georgia
11 Volunteer Fire Service Council; to repeal certain provisions relating to the Georgia Palliative
12 Care and Quality of Life Advisory Council; to revise certain provisions relating to the Office
13 of Health Strategy and Coordination; to revise and repeal certain provisions relating to the
14 Georgia Council on Lupus Education and Awareness; to revise certain provisions relating
15 to the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency; to repeal certain
16 provisions relating to the Board of Homeland Security; to revise certain provisions relating
17 to the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Services Board; to repeal certain provisions relating
18 to the Employment First Georgia Council; to repeal certain provisions relating to the Georgia

19 State Games Commission; to repeal certain provisions relating to the Lottery Retailer
20 Advisory Board; to make conforming changes throughout the Code; to provide for
21 definitions; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

22 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

23 **PART I**

24 *State Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless Commission*

25 **SECTION 1-1.**

26 Title 8 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to buildings and housing, is
27 amended by revising subsection (a) of Code Section 8-3-306, relating to commission
28 established and membership, as follows:

29 "(a)(1) There is established the State Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless Commission
30 which shall consist of ~~nine~~ eleven members. Two of the ~~nine~~ eleven members shall be
31 the commissioner of community affairs, or his or her designee, and either the chairperson
32 of the Board of Community Affairs or a member of the Board of Community Affairs
33 designated by the chairperson. The Governor shall appoint ~~three~~ five of the public
34 members and the ~~Lieutenant Governor~~ President of the Senate and the Speaker of the
35 House of Representatives shall each appoint two of the public members. The public
36 members shall be knowledgeable in the area of housing and, to the extent practicable,
37 shall represent diverse housing concerns.

38 (2)(A) Public members shall serve for a term of four years except ~~that initial~~
39 ~~appointments shall be staggered as follows: three of the appointees shall serve an initial~~
40 ~~term of four years and four of the appointees shall serve an initial term of two years as~~
41 provided in subparagraphs (C) and (D) of this paragraph. Public members shall
42 continue in office until their successors have been appointed and qualified. In the event

of a vacancy in the office of a public member by death, resignation, or otherwise, the ~~Governor appointing authority~~ shall appoint a successor to serve the balance of the unexpired term.

(B) The terms of the five public members appointed by the Governor pursuant to paragraph (1) of this subsection shall begin on August 23, 2025.

(C) The terms of the two public members appointed by the President of the Senate pursuant to paragraph (1) of this subsection shall begin on August 23, 2025. One of such members and his or her successors shall serve terms of four years and one of such members and his or her successors shall serve terms of two years.

(D) The terms of the two public members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives pursuant to paragraph (1) of this subsection shall begin on August 23, 2025. One of such members and his or her successors shall serve terms of four years and one of such members and his or her successors shall serve terms of two years.

(3) Membership on the commission does not constitute public office, and no member shall be disqualified from holding public office by reason of his or her membership."

PART II

Environmental Advisory Council

SECTION 2-1.

Title 12 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to conservation and natural resources, is amended by revising subsection (b) of Code Section 12-2-2, relating to Environmental Protection Division, Environmental Advisory Council, duties of council and its members and director, appeal procedures generally, permit applications, and inspections, as follows:

~~"(b)(1)~~ The division shall have a director who shall be both appointed and removed by the Board of Natural Resources with the approval of the Governor. The director shall

68 appoint an assistant director of the division. The director and the assistant director shall
69 be qualified professionals, competent in the field of environmental protection. The
70 director and the assistant director shall be in the unclassified service. In the event of a
71 vacancy in the office of the director or in his or her absence or if he or she is disabled, the
72 assistant director shall perform all the duties of the director. The director shall be
73 responsible for enforcing the environmental protection laws of Georgia. The director
74 shall hire the personnel for the division and shall supervise, direct, account for, organize,
75 plan, and execute the functions vested in the division.

76 ~~(2)(A) The Governor shall appoint an Environmental Advisory Council. The council~~
77 ~~shall consist of 15 members who shall be representative of professional and lay~~
78 ~~individuals, organizations, and governmental agencies associated or involved with~~
79 ~~environmental matters. The term of each member of the council shall be for two years,~~
80 ~~provided that of the members first appointed, seven shall be appointed for terms of one~~
81 ~~year and eight for terms of two years. Vacancies shall be filled by similar appointment~~
82 ~~for unexpired terms.~~

83 ~~(B) The council shall advise the Governor, the board, and the director as to the efficacy~~
84 ~~of the state's environmental protection programs, the need for legislation relating to the~~
85 ~~environment, the need for expansion or reduction of specific environmental programs,~~
86 ~~and the need for specific changes in the state's environmental protection programs. The~~
87 ~~council may review and prepare written comments on proposed state plans and on~~
88 ~~standards, rules, and regulations proposed by the division. Such comments may be~~
89 ~~submitted to the director, the board, and any other individual or agency deemed~~
90 ~~appropriate.~~

91 ~~(C) Members of the council shall serve without compensation but shall receive the~~
92 ~~same expense allowance as that received by members of the General Assembly and the~~
93 ~~same mileage allowance for the use of a personal car or a travel allowance of actual~~

94 ~~transportation cost if traveling by public carrier as that received by all other state~~
95 ~~officials and employees."~~

96 **SECTION 2-2.**

97 Any assets of the Environmental Advisory Council existing as of June 30, 2025, shall
98 devolve by operation of law and without further action to the State of Georgia on July 1,
99 2025. Any liabilities and obligations of the Environmental Advisory Council existing as of
100 June 30, 2025, shall be transferred to and assumed by the State of Georgia, by such
101 instruments as may be required to maintain the same.

102 **PART III**

103 *Jekyll Island Citizens Resource Council*

104 **SECTION 3-1.**

105 Said title is further amended by repealing Code Section 12-3-233.1, relating to Jekyll Island
106 Citizens Resource Council, purpose, members, meetings, and reimbursement for expenses.

107 **SECTION 3-2.**

108 Any assets of the Jekyll Island Citizens Resource Council existing as of June 30, 2025, shall
109 devolve by operation of law and without further action to the State of Georgia on July 1,
110 2025. Any liabilities and obligations of the Jekyll Island Citizens Resource Council existing
111 as of June 30, 2025, shall be transferred to and assumed by the State of Georgia, by such
112 instruments as may be required to maintain the same.

PART IV*Stakeholder Advisory Board***SECTION 4-1.**

Said title is further amended by revising subsection (f) of Code Section 12-7-7.1, relating to erosion and sediment control plan prepared, completion, and implementation, as follows:

"(f)(1) There shall be an Erosion and Sediment Control Overview Council which shall approve the Manual for Erosion and Sediment Control in Georgia prior to publication by the commission. In addition, the council shall provide guidance on the best management practices for implementing any erosion and sediment control plan for purposes of this Code section. The council shall be composed of nine members, including one member of the House of Representatives who shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and serve at the pleasure thereof; one member of the Senate who shall be appointed by the ~~Lieutenant Governor~~ President of the Senate and serve at the pleasure thereof; and seven members who shall be appointed by the Governor and serve at the pleasure thereof, including one employee each from the Department of Transportation, the Environmental Protection Division of the Department of Natural Resources, and the State Road and Tollway Authority, a professional engineer licensed to practice in this state from a private engineering consulting firm practicing environmental engineering, one representative of the highway contracting industry certified by the Department of Transportation, one representative of the electric utility industry, and a chairperson. The council shall meet ~~prior to December 1, 2015, to approve the most current version of the manual and at all other times~~ as necessary to approve any subsequent changes or updates to the manual prior to its implementation. Such meetings shall be held at the call of the chairperson. Each council member shall receive a daily allowance in the amount specified in subsection (b) of Code Section 45-7-21; provided, however, that any full-time state employee serving on the council shall draw no compensation but shall

receive necessary expenses. The commissioner is authorized to pay such compensation and expenses from department funds.

(2) The ~~council~~ Erosion and Sediment Control Overview Council may develop recommendations governing the preparation of plans and the installation and maintenance of best management practices. If a dispute concerning the requirements of this Code section should arise, the Erosion and Sediment Control Overview Council shall mediate the dispute.

(3) The Erosion and Sediment Control Overview Council shall establish, evaluate, and maintain the education and training programs established pursuant to Code Section 12-7-19, including, but not limited to, reviewing course curricula, educational materials, and exam and testing procedures; evaluating trainer and instructor qualifications; and reviewing audit results performed by the commission."

SECTION 4-2.

Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 12-7-19, relating to education and training requirements, required programs, instructor qualifications, and expiration of certification, as follows:

"12-7-19.

(a)(1) Persons involved in land development design, review, permitting, construction, monitoring, or inspection or any land-disturbing activity shall meet the education and training certification requirements, dependent on his or her level of involvement with the process, as developed by the commission in accordance with this Code section and in consultation with the division and the ~~Stakeholder Advisory Board created pursuant to Code Section 12-7-20~~ Erosion and Sediment Control Overview Council created pursuant to Code Section 12-7-7.1.

(2) On or after May 14, 2007, for each site on which land-disturbing activity occurs, each entity or person acting as either a primary, secondary, or tertiary permittee, as defined in

the state general permit, shall have as a minimum one person who is in responsible charge of erosion and sedimentation control activities on behalf of said entity or person and meets the applicable education or training certification requirements developed by the commission present on site whenever land-disturbing activities are conducted on that site. A project site shall herein be defined as any land disturbance site or multiple sites within a larger common plan of development or sale permitted by an owner or operator for compliance with the state general permit.

(3) Persons or entities involved in projects not requiring a state general permit but otherwise requiring certified personnel on site may contract with certified persons to meet the requirements of this chapter.

(4) If a state general permittee who has operational control of land-disturbing activities for a site has met the certification requirements of paragraph (1) of subsection (b) of this Code section, then any person or entity involved in land-disturbing activity at that site and operating in a subcontractor capacity for such permittee shall have until December 31, 2007, to meet those educational requirements specified in paragraph (4) of subsection (b) of ~~Code Section 12-7-19~~ this Code section and shall not be required to meet any educational requirements that exceed those specified in said paragraph.

(b) No less than the following training programs shall be established:

(1) A fundamentals seminar (Level 1) will be established which provides sufficient training to all participants as to the applicable laws, requirements, processes, and latest means and methods recognized by this state to effectively control erosion and sedimentation;

(2) An advanced fundamentals seminar (Level 1) will be established which provides additional details of installation and maintenance of best management practices for both regulatory and nonregulatory inspectors and others;

(3) An introduction to design seminar (Level 2) will be established which provides required training to design and review a successful erosion, sedimentation, and pollution control plan;

(4) An awareness seminar (Level 1) will be established which does not exceed two hours in duration and which provides information regarding the erosion and sediment control practices and processes in the state and which will include an overview of the systems, laws, and roles of the participants; and

(5) A trainer and instructor seminar will be established for both Level 1 and Level 2 trainers and instructors which will provide the minimum training as to applicable laws and best management practices and design of erosion, sedimentation, and pollution control plans in this state.

(c) Trainer and instructor qualifications will be established with the following minimum requirements:

(1) Level 1 trainers and instructors shall meet at least the following minimum requirements and any other requirements as set by the commission:

(A) Education: four-year college degree or five years' experience in the field of erosion and sediment control;

(B) Experience: five-years' experience in the field of erosion and sediment control. Where years of experience is used in lieu of the education requirement of subparagraph

(A) of this paragraph, a total of ten years' field experience is required;

(C) Approval by the commission and the ~~Stakeholder Advisory Board~~ Erosion and Sediment Control Overview Council; and

(D) Successful completion of the Level 1 trainer and instructor seminar found in paragraph (5) of subsection (b) of this Code section; and

(2) Level 2 trainers and instructors shall meet at least the minimum requirements of a Level 1 trainer or instructor, any other requirements as set by the commission, and

successful completion of the Level 2 trainer and instructor seminar created under paragraph (5) of subsection (b) of this Code section.

(d) In addition to the requirements of subsection (c) of this Code section, the commission shall establish and any person desirous of holding certification must obtain a passing grade, as established by the ~~Stakeholder Advisory Board~~ Erosion and Sediment Control Overview Council, on a final exam covering the material taught in each mandatory seminar; provided, however, that there shall be no final exam requirement for purposes of paragraph (4) of subsection (b) of this Code section. Final exams may, at the discretion of the commission, serve in lieu of attendance at the seminar. Any person shall be authorized to administer a final examination for any seminar for which he or she was the instructor.

(e)(1) A certification provided by achieving the requirements established by the commission shall expire no later than three years after its issuance.

(2) A certified individual shall be required to attend and participate in at least four hours of approved continuing education courses, as established by the commission, every three years.

(3) A certification may be extended or renewed by meeting requirements established by the commission.

(4) Revocation procedures may be established by the commission in consultation with the division and the ~~Stakeholder Advisory Board~~ Erosion and Sediment Control Overview Council.

SECTION 4-3.

Said title is further amended by repealing Code Section 12-7-20, relating to creation of stakeholder advisory board, responsibilities, and procedures, and designating said Code section as reserved.

240

PART V

241

Governor's Office for Children and Families

242

SECTION 5-1.

243 Title 15 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to courts, is amended by revising

244 subsection (a) of Code Section 15-5-81, relating to advisory council commission, as follows:

245 "(a) There shall be an advisory council to the Georgia Courts Automation Commission.

246 The advisory council shall consist of the director of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation

247 or the director's designee, the commissioner of corrections or the commissioner's designee,

248 the commissioner of community supervision or the commissioner's designee, the

249 commissioner of public safety or the commissioner's designee, the chairperson of the State

250 Board of Pardons and Paroles or the chairperson's designee, the director of the

251 Administrative Office of the Courts or the director's designee, the director of the Criminal

252 Justice Coordinating Council or the director's designee, ~~the director of the Governor's~~253 ~~Office for Children and Families or the director's designee,~~ and the executive director of

254 the Georgia Technology Authority or the executive director's designee."

255

SECTION 5-2.

256 Said title is further amended by revising subsection (f) of Code Section 15-11-504, relating

257 to place of detention and data on child detained, as follows:

258 "(f) All facilities shall maintain data on each child detained and such data shall be recorded

259 and retained by the facility for three years and shall be made available for inspection during

260 normal business hours by any court exercising juvenile court jurisdiction, by DJJ, ~~by the~~261 ~~Governor's Office for Children and Families,~~ by the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council,

262 by the Administrative Office of the Courts, and by the Council of Juvenile Court Judges.

263 Such data shall be used by the inspecting agency for official purposes and shall not be

subject to release by such agency pursuant to Article 4 of Chapter 18 of Title 50, nor subject to subpoena. The required data are each detained child's:

- (1) Name;
- (2) Date of birth;
- (3) Sex;
- (4) Race;
- (5) Offense or offenses for which such child is being detained;
- (6) Date of and authority for confinement;
- (7) Location of the offense and the name of the school if the offense occurred in a school safety zone, as defined in Code Section 16-11-127.1;
- (8) The name of the referral source, including the name of the school if the referring source was a school;
- (9) The score on the detention assessment;
- (10) The basis for detention if such child's detention assessment score does not in and of itself mandate detention;
- (11) The reason for detention, which may include, but shall not be limited to, preadjudication detention, detention while awaiting a postdisposition placement, or serving a short-term program disposition;
- (12) Date of and authority for release or transfer; and
- (13) Transfer or to whom released."

SECTION 5-3.

Said title is further amended by revising subsection (d) of Code Section 15-11-704, relating to public inspection of court files and records and use in subsequent juvenile or criminal prosecution, as follows:

"(d) A judge shall permit authorized representatives of DJJ, ~~the Governor's Office for Children and Families,~~ the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, the Administrative

290 Office of the Courts, and the Council of Juvenile Court Judges to inspect and extract data
291 from any court files and records for the purpose of obtaining statistics on children and to
292 make copies pursuant to the order of the court. Such data shall be used by the inspecting
293 agency for official purposes and shall not be subject to release by such agency pursuant to
294 Article 4 of Chapter 18 of Title 50, nor subject to subpoena."

295 **SECTION 5-4.**

296 Said title is further amended by revising subsection (d) of Code Section 15-11-708, relating
297 to separation of juvenile and adult records for law enforcement, inspection, and limited
298 fingerprint access, as follows:

299 "(d) The court shall allow authorized representatives of DJJ, ~~the Governor's Office for~~
300 ~~Children and Families~~, the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, the Administrative
301 Office of the Courts, and the Council of Juvenile Court Judges to inspect and copy law
302 enforcement records for the purpose of obtaining statistics on children. Such data shall be
303 used by the inspecting agency for official purposes and shall not be subject to release by
304 such agency pursuant to Article 4 of Chapter 18 of Title 50, nor subject to subpoena."

305 **SECTION 5-5.**

306 Title 49 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to social services, is amended
307 by revising paragraph (3) of subsection (b) of Code Section 49-4A-2, relating to Board of
308 Juvenile Justice created, membership, appointment, terms, chairperson, and duties, as
309 follows:

310 "(3) Ensure that detention assessment, risk assessment, and risk and needs assessment
311 instruments that are utilized by intake personnel and courts are developed in consultation
312 with the ~~Governor's Office for Children and Families~~, the Criminal Justice Coordinating
313 Council; and the Council of Juvenile Court Judges and ensure that such instruments are
314 validated at least every five years;"

SECTION 5-6.

Said title is further amended by revising paragraph (1) of subsection (n) of Code Section 49-4A-8, relating to commitment of delinquent children and procedures, as follows:

"(n)(1) The department shall conduct a continuing inquiry into the effectiveness of treatment methods it employs in seeking the rehabilitation of maladjusted children. To this end, the department shall maintain a statistical record of arrests and commitments of its wards subsequent to their discharge from the jurisdiction and control of the department and shall tabulate, analyze, and publish annually in print or electronically ~~annually~~ these data so that they may be used to evaluate the relative merits of methods of treatment. The department shall cooperate and coordinate with courts, juvenile court clerks, ~~the Governor's Office for Children and Families~~, the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, and public and private agencies in the collection of statistics and information regarding:

- (A) Juvenile delinquency;
- (B) Arrests made;
- (C) Detentions made, the offense for which such detention was authorized, and the reason for each detention;
- (D) Complaints filed;
- (E) Informations filed;
- (F) Petitions filed;
- (G) The results of complaints, informations, and petitions, including whether such filings were dismissed, diverted, or adjudicated;
- (H) Commitments to the department, the length of such commitment, and releases from the department;
- (I) The department's placement decisions for commitments;
- (J) Placement decisions to institutions, camps, or other facilities for delinquent children operated under the direction of courts or other local public authorities;
- (K) Community programs utilized and completion data for such programs;

342 (L) Recidivism;
343 (M) Data collected by juvenile court clerks pursuant to Code Section 15-11-64; and
344 (N) Other information useful in determining the amount and causes of juvenile
345 delinquency in this state."

346 **SECTION 5-7.**

347 Said title is further amended in Article 6 of Chapter 5, relating to programs and protections
348 for children, by repealing Part 1, relating to Governor's Office for Children and Families, and
349 designating said part as reserved.

350 **SECTION 5-8.**

351 Said title is further amended by revising subsection (b) of Code Section 49-5-155, relating
352 to effect of article on Department of Juvenile Justice and office as recipient entity for federal
353 grants, as follows:

354 "(b) Other than the Department of Juvenile Justice, ~~the Governor's Office for Children and~~
355 ~~Families created pursuant to Code Section 49-5-132 and~~ the Criminal Justice Coordinating
356 Council shall be the only other authorized controlling recipient entity for grants under the
357 United States Department of Justice Juvenile Justice Delinquency and Prevention Grants."

358 **SECTION 5-9.**

359 Said title is further amended by replacing "Governor's Office for Children and Families",
360 with "Department of Human Services" wherever the former occurs in Code Section
361 49-5-156, relating to the "Georgia Mentoring Act of 2000."

SECTION 5-10.

Said title is further amended by repealing Code Section 49-5-227, relating to Governor's Office for Children and Families to comment on plan for Coordinated System of Care and provide recommendations.

SECTION 5-11.

Any assets of the Governor's Office for Children and Families existing as of June 30, 2025, shall devolve by operation of law and without further action to the State of Georgia on July 1, 2025. Any liabilities and obligations of the Governor's Office for Children and Families existing as of June 30, 2025, shall be transferred to and assumed by the State of Georgia, by such instruments as may be required to maintain the same.

PART VI*Georgia Volunteer Fire Service Council***SECTION 6-1.**

Title 25 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to fire protection and safety, is amended by revising paragraph (2) of Code Section 25-3-21, relating to definitions, as follows:

"(2)(A) 'Fire department' means any fire department, including, but not limited to, a fire department solely utilizing volunteer firefighters, which is authorized to exercise the general and emergency powers enumerated in Code Sections 25-3-1 and 25-3-2.

(B) 'Fire department' also means any department, agency, organization, or company operating in this state with the intent and purpose of carrying out the duties, functions, powers, and responsibilities normally associated with a fire department. These duties, functions, powers, and responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the protection of life and property against fire, explosions, or other hazards."

SECTION 6-2.

Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 25-3-22, relating to notification and documentation that fire department meets requirements and issuance of certificate of compliance, as follows:

"25-3-22.

(a) In order for a fire department ~~employing full-time firefighters or part-time firefighters~~ to be legally organized to operate in the State of Georgia, the chief administrative officer of the fire department shall notify and submit all required documentation to the executive director that demonstrates that the organization meets the minimum requirements specified in Code Section 25-3-23 and the rules and regulations of the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council to function as a fire department. If the executive director is satisfied that ~~the~~ such fire department meets the minimum requirements contained in Code Section 25-3-23 and the rules and regulations of the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council, he or she shall recommend to the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council that a certificate of compliance be issued by the council to the fire department. If the council issues such certificate of compliance, the fire department shall be authorized to exercise the general and emergency powers set forth in Code Sections 25-3-1 and 25-3-2.

~~(b) In order for a volunteer fire department to be legally organized to operate in the State of Georgia, the chief administrative officer of the fire department shall notify and submit all required documentation to the executive director that demonstrates that the organization meets the minimum requirements specified in Code Section 25-3-23 and the rules and regulations of the Georgia Volunteer Fire Service Council to function as a volunteer fire department. If the executive director is satisfied that the volunteer fire department meets the minimum requirements contained in Code Section 25-3-23 and the rules and regulations of the Georgia Volunteer Fire Service Council, he or she shall recommend to the Georgia Volunteer Fire Service Council that a certificate of compliance be issued by~~

~~such council to the volunteer fire department. If the Georgia Volunteer Fire Service Council issues such certificate of compliance, the fire department shall be authorized to exercise the general and emergency powers set forth in Code Sections 25-3-1 and 25-3-2."~~

SECTION 6-3.

Said title is further amended by revising subsections (a) and (c) of Code Section 25-3-23, relating to general requirements, equipment and clothing, and insurance, as follows:

"(a) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (c) of this Code section, in order to be legally organized:

(1) A fire department shall comply with the following requirements:

(A) Be established to provide fire and other emergency and nonemergency services in accordance with standards specified by the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council, ~~for fire departments employing full-time firefighters or part-time firefighters, or the Georgia Volunteer Fire Service Council, for fire departments solely utilizing volunteer firefighters,~~ and the applicable local government;

(B) Be capable of providing fire protection 24 hours a day, 365 days per year;

(C) Be responsible for a defined area of operations depicted on a map located at the fire station, which area of operations shall have been approved and designated by the governing authority of the applicable county, municipality, or other political subdivision in the case of any ~~county, municipal, or volunteer~~ county or municipal fire department or any fire department solely utilizing volunteer firefighters; and

(D) Be staffed with a sufficient number of ~~full-time, part-time, or volunteer~~ firefighters who have successfully completed basic firefighter training as specified by the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council, ~~for fire departments employing full-time firefighters or part-time firefighters, or the Georgia Volunteer Fire Service Council, for fire departments solely utilizing volunteer firefighters;~~ and

(2) A fire department shall possess the following items of approved equipment and protective clothing:

(A) A minimum of one fully equipped, operable pumper with a capacity of at least 750 GPM at 150 PSI and a tank capacity of a minimum of 250 gallons; provided, however, that previously approved fire apparatus which does not meet such minimum standards may be used in lieu of the minimum required pumper until replaced by the local authority;

(B) A minimum of equipment, appliances, adapters, and accessories necessary to perform and carry out the duties and responsibilities of a fire department set forth in Code Sections 25-3-1 and 25-3-2 as approved by the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council, ~~for fire departments employing full-time firefighters or part-time firefighters, or the Georgia Volunteer Fire Service Council, for fire departments solely utilizing volunteer firefighters;~~

(C) A minimum of two approved self-contained breathing apparatus for each pumping apparatus as approved by the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council, ~~for fire departments employing full-time firefighters or part-time firefighters, or the Georgia Volunteer Fire Service Council, for fire departments solely utilizing volunteer firefighters;~~ and

(D) A minimum issue of sufficient personal protective clothing to permit each member to perform safely the duties of a firefighter."

~~"(c)(1)~~ The Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council shall be authorized to adopt such rules and regulations for all fire departments ~~employing full-time firefighters or part-time firefighters~~ as are reasonable and necessary to implement the provisions of this Code section and to establish and modify minimum requirements for all fire departments operating in this state, provided that such requirements are equal to or exceed the requirements provided in subsections (a) and (b) of this Code section.

(2) ~~The Georgia Volunteer Fire Service Council shall be authorized to adopt such rules and regulations for fire departments solely utilizing volunteer firefighters as are reasonable and necessary to implement the provisions of this Code section and to establish and modify minimum requirements for all volunteer fire departments operating in this state, provided that such requirements are equal to or exceed the requirements provided in subsections (a) and (b) of this Code section."~~

SECTION 6-4.

Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 25-3-25, relating to suspension or revocation of certification of compliance, hearing by aggrieved departments, and enforcement of suspensions or revocations, as follows:

"25-3-25.

(a) ~~The~~ Any certificate of compliance issued by the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council ~~or the Georgia Volunteer Fire Service Council~~ shall be subject to suspension or revocation by ~~the applicable~~ such council at any time it receives satisfactory evidence that the fire department is not maintaining sufficient personnel, equipment, or insurance required by Code Section 25-3-23, or the rules and regulations of the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council, ~~for fire departments employing full-time firefighters or part-time firefighters, or the Georgia Volunteer Fire Service Council, for fire departments solely utilizing volunteer firefighters,~~ pursuant to subsection (c) of Code Section 25-3-23.

(b) The chief administrative officer of any fire department aggrieved by a decision of the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council, ~~for fire departments employing full-time firefighters or part-time firefighters, or the Georgia Volunteer Fire Service Council, for fire departments solely utilizing volunteer firefighters,~~ under subsection (a) of this Code section may, within 30 days of the date of such decision, request a hearing on the matter before ~~the applicable~~ such council. Following a hearing before the ~~applicable~~

council, the chief administrative officer of the fire department affected shall be served with a written decision of the ~~applicable~~ council announcing whether the certificate of compliance shall remain revoked or suspended or whether it shall be reinstated.

(c) The Georgia Firefighters Standards and Training Council, ~~for fire departments employing full-time firefighters or part-time firefighters, or the Georgia Volunteer Fire Service Council, for fire departments solely utilizing volunteer firefighters,~~ shall not suspend or revoke any certificate of compliance for failure to meet firefighter training requirements when such failure was due to unavailability of required training from or through the Georgia Fire Academy.

(d) The Georgia Firefighters Standards and Training Council, ~~for fire departments employing full-time firefighters or part-time firefighters, or the Georgia Volunteer Fire Service Council, for fire departments solely utilizing volunteer firefighters,~~ may refer suspensions or revocations to the Attorney General for enforcement. Upon referral from ~~a~~ the council, the Attorney General may bring a civil action to enjoin any organization which is not in compliance with the ~~applicable~~ requirements of this chapter from performing any or all firefighting functions until such requirements are met by such organization."

SECTION 6-5.

Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 25-4-2, relating to definitions relative to firefighter standards and training, as follows:

"25-4-2.

As used in this chapter, the term:

- (1) 'Airport' means any airport located in this state which has regularly scheduled commercial air carrier service or commuter airline service as required for certification under Section 139.49 of the Federal Aviation Administration regulations.

(2) 'Airport firefighter' means any person assigned to any airport located in this state who performs the duties of aircraft fire fighting or rescue.

(3) 'Candidate' means a prospective firefighter who has not yet been certified by the council as having met the requirements of this chapter.

(4) 'Certified firefighter' or 'state certified firefighter' means any firefighter who has been certified by the council as having met the requirements of this chapter.

(5) 'Council' means the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council.

(5.1) 'Fire department' shall have the same meaning as ~~provided~~ set forth in Code Section 25-3-21.

(6) 'Firefighter' means a recruit or a trained individual who is a full-time employee, part-time employee, or volunteer for a municipal, county, state, or private incorporated fire department and as such has duties of responding to mitigate a variety of emergency and nonemergency situations where life, property, or the environment is at risk, which may include, without limitation, fire suppression; fire prevention activities; emergency medical services; hazardous materials response and preparedness; technical rescue operations; search and rescue; disaster management and preparedness; community service activities; response to civil disturbances and terrorism incidents; nonemergency functions, including training, preplanning, communications, maintenance, and physical conditioning; and other related emergency and nonemergency duties as may be assigned or required; provided, however, that a firefighter's assignments may vary based on geographic, climatic, and demographic conditions or other factors, including training, experience, and ability. Such term includes an airport firefighter.

(7) 'Full-time' means employed for compensation on a basis of at least 40 hours per week by any municipal, county, state, or private incorporated fire department.

(8) 'Part-time' means employed for compensation on less than a full-time basis by any municipal, county, state, or private incorporated fire department.

(8.1) 'Recruit' means a prospective firefighter who has not yet been certified or registered by the council as having met the requirements of Code Section 25-4-8 and the rules and regulations to be a firefighter as provided for by the council.

(9) 'Volunteer' means not employed for compensation on an hourly or salaried basis, but appointed and regularly enrolled to serve as a firefighter for any municipal, county, state, or private incorporated fire department.

~~(10) 'Volunteer council' means the Georgia Volunteer Fire Service Council established by Code Section 25-4-3.1."~~

SECTION 6-6.

Said title is further is amended by revising subsection (b) of Code Section 25-4-3, relating to establishment of Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council, as follows:

"(b) The members of the council appointed by the Governor pursuant to subsection (a) of this Code section shall be appointed at the sole discretion of the Governor; provided, however, that at least one member appointed by the Governor shall be a representative of a volunteer fire department. ~~However, the~~ For the remaining members of the council to be appointed by the Governor, the Governor may consider ~~for appointment to the council~~ persons suggested ~~for membership thereon~~ as follows:

(1) The Association County Commissioners of Georgia may suggest the names of three persons for each appointment pursuant to paragraph (1) of subsection (a) of this Code section;

(2) The Georgia Municipal Association may suggest the names of three persons for each appointment pursuant to paragraph (2) of subsection (a) of this Code section;

(3) The Georgia City and County Management Association may suggest the names of three persons for each appointment pursuant to paragraph (3) of subsection (a) of this Code section;

566 (4) The Georgia Association of Fire Chiefs may suggest the names of three persons for
567 each appointment pursuant to paragraph (4) of subsection (a) of this Code section; and
568 (5) The Executive Board of the Georgia State Firemen's Association may suggest the
569 names of three persons for each appointment pursuant to paragraph (5) of subsection (a)
570 of this Code section."

571 **SECTION 6-7.**

572 Said title is further is amended by repealing Code Section 25-4-3.1, relating to establishment
573 of Georgia Volunteer Fire Service Council.

574 **SECTION 6-8.**

575 Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 25-4-4, relating to eligibility of
576 council and volunteer council members for public office, as follows:

577 "25-4-4.

578 Membership on the council ~~or volunteer council~~ does not constitute public office, and no
579 member shall be disqualified from holding public office by reason of his or her
580 membership."

581 **SECTION 6-9.**

582 Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 25-4-5, relating to administrative
583 assignment to Department of Public Safety, source of funds, and authority to accept gifts and
584 other items of value, as follows:

585 "25-4-5.

586 The council ~~and volunteer council are~~ is assigned to the Department of Public Safety for
587 administrative purposes. The funds necessary to carry out this chapter shall come from
588 funds appropriated to and available to the council ~~and volunteer council~~ and from any other
589 available funds. The council ~~and volunteer council are~~ is authorized to accept and use
590 gifts;; grants;; ~~and donations;~~ property, both real and personal; and services for the purpose
591 of carrying out this chapter. ~~The council and volunteer council are also authorized to~~
592 ~~accept and use property, both real and personal, and services for the purpose of carrying~~
593 ~~out this chapter."~~

594 **SECTION 6-10.**

595 Said title is further revised by amending Code Section 25-4-6, relating to meetings, quorum,
596 and annual reporting of council and volunteer council, as follows:

597 "25-4-6.

598 (a) The business of the council shall be conducted in the following manner:

599 (1) The council shall hold at least two regular meetings each year at the call of the
600 chairperson or upon the written request of six members of the council. Six members of
601 the council shall constitute a quorum. The council shall adopt such rules for the
602 transaction of its business as it shall desire and may appoint such committees as it
603 considers necessary to carry out its business and duties; and

604 (2) The council shall make an annual report of its activities to the Governor and to the
605 General Assembly and shall include in ~~the~~ such report its recommendations for
606 appropriate legislation. The council shall not be required to distribute copies of ~~the~~
607 ~~annual~~ such report to the members of the General Assembly but shall notify the members
608 of the availability of the report in the manner ~~which~~ it deems to be most effective and
609 efficient.

610 ~~(b) The business of the volunteer council shall be conducted in the following manner:~~

~~(1) The volunteer council shall hold at least two regular meetings each year at the call of the chairperson or upon written request of four members of the volunteer council. Four members of the volunteer council shall constitute a quorum. The volunteer council shall adopt such rules for the transaction of its business as it shall desire and may appoint such committees as it considers necessary to carry out its business and duties; and~~
~~(2) The volunteer council shall make an annual report of its activities to the Governor and to the General Assembly and shall include in the report its recommendations for appropriate legislation. The volunteer council shall not be required to distribute copies of the annual report to the members of the General Assembly but shall notify the members of the availability of the report in the manner which it deems to be most effective and efficient."~~

SECTION 6-11.

Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 25-4-7, relating to functions and powers of council and volunteer council, as follows:

"25-4-7.

(a) The council is vested with the following functions and powers:

- (1) To promulgate rules and regulations for the administration of the council;
- (2) To provide rules of procedure for its internal management and control;
- (3) To enter into contracts or do such things as may be necessary and incidental to the administration of its authority pursuant to this chapter;
- (4) To establish uniform minimum standards for the employment and training of full-time firefighters, part-time firefighters, airport firefighters, fire and life safety educators, fire inspectors, fire investigators, and other such firefighting service professionals as determined by the council, including qualifications, certifications, recertifications, decertifications, and probations for certified individuals and suspensions for noncertified individuals, and requirements, which are consistent with this chapter;

(5) To establish minimum curriculum requirements for schools operated by or for any employing agency for the specific purpose of training ~~firefighter recruits or full-time firefighters, part-time firefighters, airport~~ firefighters, fire and life safety educators, fire inspectors, and fire investigators;

(6) To approve institutions and facilities for school operation by or for any employing agency for the specific purpose of training ~~full-time and part-time firefighters and full-time and part-time firefighter recruits, including airport~~ firefighters;

(7) To make or support studies on any aspect of firefighter education and training or recruitment;

(8) To make recommendations concerning any matter within its purview;

(9) To establish basic firefighter training requirements ~~for full-time, part-time, and contract firefighters, including airport~~ firefighters;

(10) To certify any person satisfactorily complying with the training program established in accordance with paragraph (9) of this subsection and the qualifications for employment covered in this chapter; and

(11) To issue a certificate to any person who has received training in another state or who has received training as a federal firefighter by the United States government, when the council has determined that the training was at least equivalent to that required by the council for approved firefighter education and training programs in this state and when the person has satisfactorily complied with all other requirements of this chapter.

~~(b) The volunteer council is vested with the following functions and powers:~~

~~(1) To promulgate rules and regulations for the administration of the volunteer council;~~

~~(2) To provide rules of procedure for its internal management and control;~~

~~(3) To enter into contracts or do such things as may be necessary and incidental to the administration of its authority pursuant to this chapter;~~

~~(4) To establish uniform minimum standards for the training of volunteer firefighters, including qualifications, certifications, and requirements, which are consistent with this chapter;~~

~~(5) To make or support studies on any aspect of firefighter education and training or recruitment;~~

~~(6) To make recommendations concerning any matter within its purview;~~

~~(7) To establish basic firefighter training requirements for volunteer firefighters;~~

~~(8) To certify any person satisfactorily complying with the training program established in accordance with paragraph (7) of this subsection and the qualifications for serving as a volunteer firefighter covered in this chapter; and~~

~~(9) To issue a certificate to any person who has received training in another state or who has received training as a federal firefighter by the United States government, when the volunteer council has determined that the training was at least equivalent to that required by the volunteer council for approved volunteer firefighter education and training programs in this state and when the person has satisfactorily complied with all other requirements of this chapter.~~

~~(c) All rules and regulations promulgated by the volunteer council may be overturned by a two-thirds' vote of the council. In such instance, the rule or regulation shall be returned to the volunteer council for reconsideration."~~

SECTION 6-12.

Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 25-4-7.1, relating to appointment of executive director and employment of other personnel, as follows:

"25-4-7.1.

(a) The council, ~~in conjunction with the volunteer council,~~ shall appoint and establish the compensation of an executive director who shall serve at the pleasure of the council.

(b) The executive director may contract for such services and employ such other professional, technical, and clerical personnel as may be necessary and convenient to carry out the purposes of this chapter.

~~(c) The executive director shall provide the same services in support of the volunteer council as provided to the council.~~

~~(d) The executive director shall bring all issues involving volunteer firefighters and volunteer fire departments to the volunteer council."~~

SECTION 6-13.

Said title is further amended by revising subsection (c) of and adding a new subsection to Code Section 25-4-8, relating to qualifications of firefighters generally, to read as follows:

"(c)(1) For the purposes of making determinations relating to eligibility of full-time or part-time firefighters under this Code section, a local fire department shall provide information relative to prospective employees to the local law enforcement agency and a state fire department shall provide information relative to prospective employees to a state law enforcement agency. Such local or state law enforcement agency shall be authorized to obtain conviction data with respect to such prospective employees of a local or state fire department as authorized in this subsection. The local or state law enforcement agency shall submit to the Georgia Crime Information Center two complete sets of fingerprints of the applicant for ~~appointment or~~ employment, the required records search fees, and such other information as may be required. Upon receipt thereof, the Georgia Crime Information Center shall promptly transmit one set of fingerprints to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for a search of bureau records and an appropriate report and shall retain the other set and promptly conduct a search of its own records and records to which it has access. The Georgia Crime Information Center shall notify the local or state law enforcement agency in writing of any derogatory finding, including, but not limited to, any conviction data regarding the fingerprint records check or if there is

no such finding. All conviction data received by the local or state law enforcement agency shall not be a public record, shall be privileged, and shall not be disclosed to any other person or agency except as provided in this subsection and except to any person or agency which otherwise has a legal right to inspect the employment file. All such records shall be maintained by the local or state law enforcement agency pursuant to laws regarding such records and the rules and regulations of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Georgia Crime Information Center, as applicable. As used in this subsection, the term 'conviction data' means a record of a finding or verdict of guilty or plea of guilty or plea of nolo contendere with regard to any crime, regardless of whether an appeal of the conviction has been sought.

(2) The local or state law enforcement agency shall provide to the chief of the fire department which requested information on an applicant for employment any criminal data indicating that the applicant was convicted of a felony. Such information may be provided to the council. The provisions of paragraph (1) of this subsection relating to privileged information and records of conviction data shall apply to any information provided by a law enforcement agency to a fire department under this subsection.

(d)(1) For purposes of making determinations relating to eligibility of volunteer firefighters under this Code section, a local fire department shall provide information relative to prospective volunteers to the local law enforcement agency or other agency having access to the Georgia Crime Information Center to determine if a prospective volunteer has been convicted of a felony in this state. Such local agency or other agency shall be authorized to obtain conviction data with respect to prospective volunteers of a local volunteer fire department as authorized in this subsection. All conviction data received by the local agency or other agency shall not be a public record, shall be privileged, and shall not be disclosed to any other person or agency except as provided in this subsection and except to any person or agency which otherwise has a legal right to inspect the file. All such records shall be maintained by the local agency or other

agency pursuant to laws regarding such records and the rules and regulations of the Georgia Crime Information Center, as applicable. As used in this subsection, the term 'conviction data' means a record of a finding or verdict of guilty or plea of guilty or plea of nolo contendere with regard to any crime, regardless of whether an appeal of the conviction has been sought.

(2) The council shall create a form upon which may be indicated only whether a prospective volunteer was convicted of a felony or has no felony convictions. The local agency shall complete and provide such form to the chief of the fire department which requested information on a prospective volunteer. Such information may be provided to the council. The provisions of paragraph (1) of this subsection relating to privileged information and records of conviction data shall apply to any information provided by a local agency or other agency to a local fire department under this subsection."

SECTION 6-14.

Said title is further amended by repealing Code Section 25-4-8.1, relating to qualifications for volunteer firefighters.

SECTION 6-15.

Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 25-4-9, relating to basic firefighter training course and transfer of certification, as follows:

"25-4-9.

(a)(1)(A) Except as otherwise provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, full-time, and part-time firefighters, ~~including airport firefighters~~, shall successfully complete a basic training course. The council shall determine the course content, number of hours, and all other matters relative to basic firefighter training, including airport rescue firefighter training ~~for full-time and part-time firefighters~~. Upon satisfactory completion of such basic training, a firefighter shall be issued a certificate of

completion ~~evidencing the same~~. Each firefighter shall be required to successfully complete such basic training course within 12 months after being employed or appointed as a firefighter or, in the case of airport firefighters, within such time period as the council may prescribe by rule or regulation.

(B) The ~~volunteer~~ council shall determine the course content, number of hours, and all other matters relative to basic firefighter training for volunteer firefighters. Each volunteer firefighter shall be required to complete such basic training course within 18 months after being appointed as volunteer firefighter.

(2) Each firefighter who presents to the council, ~~or to the volunteer council in the case of volunteer firefighters~~, satisfactory documentation, as determined by the council ~~or volunteer council~~, of his or her training as a member of the United States armed forces, the Georgia National Guard, or the Georgia Air National Guard shall be issued a certificate of completion by the council ~~or volunteer council~~.

(b) A firefighter certified by the council may, upon termination of employment ~~or volunteer arrangement~~ from any fire department and upon agreement with a ~~subsequently employing subsequent~~ fire department, transfer such certification to the ~~employing subsequent~~ fire department for the purpose of employment or volunteering.

(c) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (b) of this Code section, any local fire department may refuse to accept the transfer of previously acquired certification and may require any ~~newly employed new~~ firefighter who is an employee or a volunteer to complete the basic training course provided for in subsection (a) of this Code section."

SECTION 6-16.

Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 25-4-10, relating to mandatory training, as follows:

789 "25-4-10.

790 (a) As a condition of continued certification, all ~~full-time and part-time~~ firefighters shall
791 train, drill, or study at schools, classes, or courses at the local, area, or state level, as
792 specified by the council. Authorized leaves of absence are expected.

793 ~~(b) As a condition of continued certification, all volunteer firefighters shall train, drill, or~~
794 ~~study at schools, classes, or courses at the local, area, or state level, as specified by the~~
795 ~~volunteer council. Authorized leaves of absence are expected."~~

796 **SECTION 6-17.**

797 Title 45 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to public officers and employees,
798 is amended by revising paragraph (3) of Code Section 45-9-101, relating to definitions
799 relative to temporary disability compensation program for law enforcement officers, firemen,
800 prison guards, and publicly employed emergency medical technicians, as follows:

801 "(3) 'Firefighter' means:

802 (A) Any person who is employed as a professional firefighter on a full-time or
803 part-time basis by any municipal, county, or state government fire department certified
804 in writing by the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council pursuant to Code
805 Section 25-3-22 employing three or more firefighters and who has the responsibility of
806 preventing and suppressing fires; protecting life and property; enforcing municipal,
807 county, and state fire prevention codes; enforcing any law pertaining to the prevention
808 and control of fires, or who performs any acts or actions while on duty or when
809 responding to a fire or emergency during any fire or other emergency or while
810 performing duties intended to protect life and property;

811 (B) Any individual serving as an officially recognized or designated member of a
812 legally organized volunteer fire department certified in writing by the ~~Georgia~~
813 ~~Volunteer Fire Service Council~~ Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council
814 pursuant to Code Section 25-3-22 who performs any acts or actions while on duty and

815 when responding to a fire or emergency during any fire or other emergency or while
816 performing duties intended to protect life and property; or
817 (C) Any employee at the State Forestry Commission whose job duties include fire
818 mitigation."

819 **SECTION 6-18.**

820 Title 47 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to retirement and pensions, is
821 amended by revising subparagraph (A) of paragraph (4) of Code Section 47-7-1, relating to
822 definitions relative to the Georgia Firefighters' Pension Fund, as follows:

823 "(A) A permanent, compensated employee of a fire department who in the course of
824 his or her employment by and within a department either is a candidate for or holds a
825 current firefighter's certificate issued under ~~Article 1 of~~ Chapter 4 of Title 25 and has
826 as incident to his or her position of employment the principal duty of, and actually
827 performs the function of, preventing and suppressing fires and who works at least 1,040
828 hours per year; provided, however, that such term shall not include persons whose
829 primary responsibility is the performance of emergency medical services; or"

830 **SECTION 6-19.**

831 Any assets of the Georgia Volunteer Fire Service Council existing as of June 30, 2025, shall
832 devolve by operation of law and without further action to the State of Georgia on July 1,
833 2025. Any liabilities and obligations of the Georgia Volunteer Fire Service Council existing
834 as of June 30, 2025, shall be transferred to and assumed by the State of Georgia, by such
835 instruments as may be required to maintain the same.

PART VII*Georgia Palliative Care and Quality of Life Advisory Council***SECTION 7-1.**

Title 31 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to health, is amended by revising Code Section 31-7-191, relating to definitions relative to patient centered and family focused palliative care, as follows:

"31-7-191.

As used in this article, the term:

~~(1) 'Commissioner' means the commissioner of community health.~~

~~(2)~~(1) 'Department' means the Department of Community Health.

~~(3) 'Georgia Palliative Care and Quality of Life Advisory Council' or 'council' means the advisory council created pursuant to Code Section 31-7-192.~~

~~(4)~~(2) 'Health care Healthcare facility' means hospitals; other special care units, including but not limited to podiatric facilities; skilled nursing facilities; intermediate care facilities; assisted living communities; personal care homes; ambulatory surgical or obstetrical facilities; health maintenance organizations; home health agencies; and diagnostic, treatment, or rehabilitation centers.

~~(5)~~(3) 'Palliative care' means those interventions which are intended to alleviate suffering and to achieve relief from, reduction of, or elimination of pain and of other physical, emotional, social, or spiritual symptoms of distress to achieve the best quality of life for the patients and their families."

SECTION 7-2.

Said title is further amended by repealing Code Section 31-7-192, relating to Georgia Palliative Care and Quality of Life Advisory Council, and designating said Code section as reserved.

SECTION 7-3.

Said title is further amended by revising subsection (a) of Code Section 31-53-6, relating to compiling of reports and public dissemination of data by the Office of Health Strategy and Coordination, as follows:

"(a) The office shall compile reports received from the following boards, commissions, committees, councils, and offices pursuant to each such entity's respective statutory reporting requirements:

(1) The Maternal Mortality Review Committee;

(2) The Hemophilia Advisory Board;

(3) The Georgia Council on Lupus Education and Awareness;

~~(4) The Georgia Palliative Care and Quality of Life Advisory Council;~~

~~(5)~~(4) The Georgia Trauma Care Network Commission;

~~(6)~~(5) The Behavioral Health Coordinating Council;

~~(7)~~(6) The Department of Public Health on behalf of the Georgia Coverdell Acute Stroke Registry;

~~(8)~~(7) The Office of Cardiac Care; and

~~(9)~~(8) The Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission."

SECTION 7-4.

Any assets of the Georgia Palliative Care and Quality of Life Advisory Council existing as of June 30, 2025, shall devolve by operation of law and without further action to the State of Georgia on July 1, 2025. Any liabilities and obligations of the Georgia Palliative Care and Quality of Life Advisory Council existing as of June 30, 2025, shall be transferred to and assumed by the State of Georgia, by such instruments as may be required to maintain the same.

PART VIII*Georgia Council on Lupus Education and Awareness***SECTION 8-1.**

Chapter 49 of Title 31 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to Georgia Council on Lupus Education and Awareness, is amended by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

"31-49-1.1.

As used in this chapter, the term:

(1) 'Commissioner' means the commissioner of public health.

(2) 'Council' means the Georgia Council on Lupus Education and Awareness created pursuant to Code Section 31-49-2.

(3) 'Department' means the Department of Public Health."

SECTION 8-2.

Said chapter is further amended by revising subsections (a) and (b) of Code Section 31-49-2, relating creation of Council on Lupus Education and Awareness, membership, and organization, as follows:

"(a) There is created the Georgia Council on Lupus Education and Awareness within the ~~Department of Community Health~~ department.

(b) The council shall consist of six members as follows:

(1) The commissioner of ~~community health~~, or the commissioner's designee, as an ex officio member;

(2) Three members to be appointed by the Governor. The Governor shall appoint two members to serve for one year and one to serve for two years. Thereafter, successors to such initial appointees shall serve for two years. Of these three members, one shall be a physician who treats patients with lupus and one shall be a lupus patient;

- 910 (3) One member to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives to serve
911 for two years; and
912 (4) One member to be appointed by the Lieutenant Governor to serve for two years;”

913 **SECTION 8-3.**

914 Said chapter is further amended by revising subsection (a) of Code Section 31-49-3, relating
915 to duties and responsibilities, as follows:

916 “(a) The council shall have the following duties and responsibilities:

917 (1) To initially investigate the level of education concerning lupus in this state; and

918 (2) Based on the results of its initial investigation pursuant to paragraph (1) of this Code
919 section, to develop information on lupus endorsed by government agencies, including,
920 but not limited to, the National Institutes of Health and the federal Centers for Disease
921 Control and Prevention; and

922 (3) To make recommendations to the department regarding the distribution of funds for
923 lupus education, awareness, and research.”

924 **SECTION 8-4.**

925 Said chapter is further amended by repealing Code Section 31-49-6, relating to donations,
926 in its entirety.

927 **PART IX**

928 *Board of Homeland Security*

929 **SECTION 9-1.**

930 Chapter 3 of Title 38 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to emergency
931 management, is amended by revising subsection (e) of Code Section 38-3-20, relating to

932 Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency created, director, staff,
933 offices, director's duties, and disaster coordinator, as follows:

934 "(e) The director, subject to the direction and control of the Governor, shall:

935 (1) Be the executive head of the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland
936 Security Agency and shall be responsible to the Governor for carrying out the program
937 for emergency management and homeland security in this state;

938 (2) Serve as the central authority reporting to the Governor on all matters relating to
939 homeland security;

940 (3) Have authority over areas involving imminent or current terrorist activity within this
941 state, including, but not limited to, leading and directing the actions of the Homeland
942 Security Task Force and the Emergency Operations Command where such Emergency
943 Operations Command shall not usurp the operational authority of participating agencies
944 but shall be responsible only for coordinating the public safety response to natural
945 disasters, homeland security activities, and other emergencies within the state;

946 (4) Coordinate the activities of all organizations for emergency management and
947 homeland security within the state;

948 (5) Maintain liaison with and cooperate with emergency management agencies and
949 organizations of other states and of the federal government;

950 (6) Through risk and threat assessments, coordinate plans for timely and complete
951 responses through a network of state, local, and federal organizations, including, but not
952 limited to, the coordination of efficient and timely flow of information;

953 (7) Be responsible for crisis and consequence management planning, including, but not
954 limited to, measures to identify, acquire, and plan the use of resources needed to
955 anticipate, prevent, or resolve a threat or act of terrorism;

956 (8) Coordinate and review activities involving homeland security within any agency,
957 authority, or entity of this state, including, but not limited to, homeland security activities
958 found within the Department of Public Safety, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, the

Georgia National Guard, the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Community Health, and the Department of Public Health;

(9) Evaluate information developed by the criminal justice community in regard to threats or potential threats of terrorism;

(10) Serve as ~~this~~ the state's security manager for the purpose of identifying and processing state personnel for security clearances through the United States Department of Homeland Security; ~~and~~

(11) Have such additional authority, duties, and responsibilities authorized by Article 1, this article, and Article 3 of this chapter as may be prescribed by the Governor and such additional authority, duties, and responsibilities as described in Article 9 of Chapter 3 of Title 35 and Part 4 of Article 2 of Chapter 5 of Title 46, the 'Georgia Emergency Telephone Number 9-1-1 Service Act of 1977,' as amended; and

(12) As deemed necessary by the Governor, develop a new state-wide homeland security strategy; provided, however, that such strategy shall, in the Governor's discretion, improve the state's ability to protect against, respond to, and recover from domestic terrorism and other homeland security threats and hazards and mitigate loss of life and property by lessening the impact of future homeland security threats and hazards."

SECTION 9-2.

Said chapter is further amended by repealing Article 2A, relating to Board of Homeland Security.

SECTION 9-3.

Any assets of the Board of Homeland Security existing as of June 30, 2025, shall devolve by operation of law and without further action to the State of Georgia on July 1, 2025. Any liabilities and obligations of the Board of Homeland Security existing as of June 30, 2025,

983 shall be transferred to and assumed by the State of Georgia, by such instruments as may be
984 required to maintain the same.

985 **PART X**

986 *Employment First Georgia Council*

987 **SECTION 10-1.**

988 Chapter 9 of Title 49 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to Georgia
989 Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, is amended by adding new paragraphs to Code Section
990 49-9-1, relating to definitions, to read as follows:

991 "(3.1) 'Competitive integrated employment' means work, including self-employment, in
992 the labor market performed on a full-time or part-time basis in a setting in which an
993 individual with a disability interacts with individuals without disabilities in all aspects of
994 the job function and for which such individual with a disability is compensated at or above
995 the level of salary and benefits paid by the employer for the same or similar work
996 performed by individuals without disabilities."

997 "(4.1) 'Disability' means a permanent physical, cognitive, or behavioral condition that
998 significantly limits one or more functions of daily living."

999 **SECTION 10-2.**

1000 Said chapter is further amended by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

1001 "49-9-2.1.

1002 (a) The board shall advise the Governor, General Assembly, and state agencies as to the
1003 adoption and integration of a policy that recognizes that competitive integrated
1004 employment is the first and preferred option of all state funded services provided to
1005 working age individuals with disabilities. Such policy shall be known as the Employment
1006 First Policy or Employment First.

(b) The board shall have the following powers, duties, and responsibilities with respect to the Employment First Policy provided for in subsection (a) of this Code section:

(1) Develop an Employment First training plan for providers of services to individuals with disabilities;

(2) Conduct educational activities to increase awareness of the Employment First Policy;

(3) Evaluate the funding mechanism for services in this state for individuals with disabilities and for students attending inclusive postsecondary institutions; and

(4) Make recommendations in a biannual report to the Governor and the General Assembly with regard to issues and necessary steps surrounding the adoption and implementation of the Employment First Policy, including, but not limited to:

(A) Proposed legislative or administrative changes to policies and programs that are integral to the full implementation of the Employment First Policy;

(B) Proposed changes to or creation of funding mechanisms and other initiatives for services in this state for individuals with disabilities and for students attending inclusive postsecondary institutions; and

(C) State-wide best practices to ensure that providers of services in this state for individuals with disabilities are facilitating competitive integrated employment in the workforce."

SECTION 10-3.

Said chapter is further amended by repealing Article 3, relating to the Employment First Georgia Council.

SECTION 10-4.

Any assets of the Employment First Georgia Council existing as of June 30, 2025, shall devolve by operation of law and without further action to the State of Georgia on July 1, 2025. Any liabilities and obligations of the Employment First Georgia Council existing as

1032 of June 30, 2025, shall be transferred to and assumed by the State of Georgia, by such
1033 instruments as may be required to maintain the same.

1034 **PART XI**

1035 *Georgia State Games Commission*

1036 **SECTION 11-1.**

1037 Article 3 of Chapter 12 of Title 50 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
1038 Georgia State Games Commission, is amended by revising Code Section 50-12-40, relating
1039 to definitions, as follows:

1040 "50-12-40.

1041 As used in this article, the term:

1042 ~~(1) 'Direct-support~~ 'direct-support organization' means a Georgia nonprofit corporation
1043 organized and operated to receive, hold, invest, and administer property and to make
1044 expenditures to or for the benefit of the Georgia State Games, Olympic training facilities,
1045 and the promotion of national and international amateur sports competition.

1046 ~~(2) 'Physical fitness' means good or improved habits relating to recreation, exercises,~~
1047 ~~sports, and the use of leisure time and instructions for these purposes and for improving~~
1048 ~~the physique and health of the residents of the state."~~

1049 **SECTION 11-2.**

1050 Said article is further amended by repealing Code Sections 50-12-41 through 50-12-44 and
1051 Code Section 50-12-48, relating to creation, purpose of article, membership, appointment,
1052 terms, chairperson, powers and duties, and annual report, respectively, relative to the Georgia
1053 State Games Commission, and designating said Code sections as reserved.

SECTION 11-3.

Said article is further amended by revising Code Section 50-12-45, relating to assistance by direct-support organization, contract with organization, pattern and design of games, frequency and sites, and subsidiary corporations, as follows:

"50-12-45.

~~(a) The commission may authorize a direct-support organization as defined by Code Section 50-12-40 to assist the operation of the Georgia State Games, the promotion of national and international amateur athletic competitions, and the development of Olympic training centers. The direct-support organization shall operate under contract with the Department of Natural Resources.~~

~~(b) The contract between the direct-support organization and the Department of Natural Resources shall, at a minimum, provide for:~~

~~(1) Approval of the articles of incorporation of the direct-support organization by the commission, and for the governance of the direct-support organization by members appointed by the commission and approved by the Governor;~~

~~(2) Submission of an annual budget for the approval of the commission and the Governor. The budget shall be in accordance with rules adopted by the commission;~~

~~(3) Certification by the Governor or his designee, after conducting an annual financial and performance review, that the direct-support organization is operating in compliance with the terms of the contract and in a manner consistent with the goals of the commission and in the best interest of the state. Such certification shall be made to the commission annually and reported in the official minutes of a meeting of the commission;~~

~~(4) The release and conditions for the expenditure of any state revenues;~~

~~(5) The reversion to the state of funds held in trust by the direct-support organization if the contract is terminated; and~~

~~(6) The fiscal year of the direct-support organization as beginning on July 1 and ending June 30 in each and every year.~~

(c) The Georgia State Games shall be patterned after the Summer Olympic games with variations as necessitated by the availability of facilities, equipment, and expertise. The games shall be designed to encourage the participation of athletes representing a broad range of age groups, skill levels, and Georgia communities. Participants shall be residents of this state. Regional competitions shall be held throughout the state, and the top qualifiers in each sport shall proceed to the final competitions to be held at a site in ~~the~~ this state having the necessary facilities and equipment for conducting the competitions.

~~(d) The commission shall determine the frequency of the Georgia State Games and shall select the sites of the final competition and regional competitions.~~

~~(e) The commission is authorized to incorporate one or more nonprofit corporations as subsidiary corporations of the commission for the purpose of carrying out any of the powers of the commission and to accomplish any of the purposes of the commission. Any subsidiary corporations created pursuant to this subsection shall be created pursuant to Chapter 3 of Title 14, the 'Georgia Nonprofit Corporation Code,' and the Secretary of State shall be authorized to accept such filings. Upon dissolution of any subsidiary corporation of the commission, any assets shall revert to the commission or to any successor to the commission or, failing such succession, to the State of Georgia."~~

SECTION 11-4.

Said article is further amended by revising Code Section 50-12-47, relating to audit of Georgia State Games direct-support organization, as follows:

"50-12-47.

The Georgia State Games direct-support organization shall make provisions for an annual financial and compliance audit of its financial accounts and records by an independent certified public accountant in accordance with ~~rules~~ standards established by the ~~commission~~ Department of Audits and Accounts. The annual audit report shall be submitted to the Governor ~~and the commission~~ for review and approval. Upon approval,

1107 the Governor ~~and the commission~~ shall certify the audit report to the Department of Audits
1108 and Accounts for review and approval."

1109 **SECTION 11-5.**

1110 Any assets of the Georgia State Games Commission existing as of June 30, 2025, shall
1111 devolve by operation of law and without further action to the State of Georgia on July 1,
1112 2025. Any liabilities and obligations of the Georgia State Games Commission existing as
1113 of June 30, 2025, shall be transferred to and assumed by the State of Georgia, by such
1114 instruments as may be required to maintain the same.

1115 **PART XII**

1116 *Lottery Retailer Advisory Board*

1117 **SECTION 12-1.**

1118 Title 50 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to state government, is amended
1119 by repealing Code Section 50-27-6, relating to Lottery Retailer Advisory Board, and
1120 designating said Code section as reserved.

1121 **SECTION 12-2.**

1122 Any assets of the Lottery Retailer Advisory Board existing as of June 30, 2025, shall devolve
1123 by operation of law and without further action to the State of Georgia on July 1, 2025. Any
1124 liabilities and obligations of the Lottery Retailer Advisory Board existing as of
1125 June 30, 2025, shall be transferred to and assumed by the State of Georgia, by such
1126 instruments as may be required to maintain the same.

1127

PART XIII

1128

General Repealer

1129

SECTION 13-1.

1130 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.