

House Bill 625 (COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE)

By: Representatives Mathis of the 149<sup>th</sup>, Wade of the 9<sup>th</sup>, Gullett of the 19<sup>th</sup>, Stinson of the 150<sup>th</sup>, Taylor of the 173<sup>rd</sup>, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 16 of Title 45 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to  
2 coroners, so as to provide minimum salaries of coroners; to revise compensation provisions  
3 for deputy coroners; to provide for benefits to certain coroners and deputy coroners; to  
4 remove certain death investigation fees; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting  
5 laws; and for other purposes.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

7 **SECTION 1.**

8 Chapter 16 of Title 45 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to coroners, is  
9 amended by revising Code Section 45-16-7, relating to appointment of deputy coroners, oath,  
10 bond, fees, powers, and qualifications, as follows:

11 "45-16-7.

12 (a) As soon as practicable after July 1, 1980, and at the beginning of each term of the  
13 coroner thereafter, the coroner of each county shall appoint a deputy coroner or coroners  
14 as provided in this Code section. A deputy coroner shall be appointed for each county, and  
15 one or more additional deputy coroners may be appointed for any county, in the discretion  
16 of the coroner. Each deputy coroner shall serve at the pleasure of the coroner and may be

H. B. 625 (SUB)

17 replaced by the coroner at any time. Each deputy coroner shall take the same oath, give  
18 the same bond, ~~be entitled to the same fees~~, and have the same powers as the coroner, but  
19 a deputy coroner shall act as coroner only when the coroner is himself or herself unable to  
20 act.

21 (b) No person shall be eligible to hold the office of deputy coroner unless he or she holds  
22 a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent. Any deputy coroner who is in office  
23 on July 1, 1980, however, shall without limitation be eligible to serve as deputy coroner at  
24 any time after said date without regard to whether he or she meets the requirements of this  
25 subsection.

26 (c) Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, there shall be appointed only one deputy  
27 coroner, and, on and after July 1, 1999, there shall only be one deputy coroner in each such  
28 county unless otherwise approved by the local governing authority of the county. Unless  
29 higher compensation is otherwise approved by the local governing authority of the county,  
30 deputy coroners shall receive the following compensation:

31 (1) A fee of \$250.00 for each case worked by the deputy coroner; and

32 (2) A per diem of \$100.00 for each day the deputy coroner does not work a case;  
33 provided, however, that a deputy coroner shall not be entitled to a per diem pursuant to  
34 this paragraph for more than 90 days in a calendar year.

35 (d) As of July 1, 2024, any deputy coroner being compensated by a county in an amount  
36 greater than the compensation formulas provided in subsection (c) of this Code section  
37 shall not have their compensation reduced for the remainder of the term of the coroner."

## 38 SECTION 2.

39 Said chapter is further amended by revising Code Section 45-16-11, relating to compensation  
40 of county coroners, increases, calculation, supplements, and expenses, as follows:

41 "45-16-11.

42 (a)(1) Any other law to the contrary notwithstanding, the minimum annual salary of each  
 43 coroner in any of the counties in this state in the following population brackets shall be  
 44 fixed according to the population of the county in which he or she serves, as determined  
 45 by the United States decennial census of ~~1990~~ 2020 or any future such census. Except  
 46 as otherwise provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, each such coroner shall receive  
 47 an annual salary, payable in equal monthly installments from the funds of the coroner's  
 48 county, of not less than the amount fixed in the following schedule:

<u>Population</u>	<u>Minimum Salary</u>
49 <del>0 — 11,889</del> .....	<del>\$ 1,200.00</del>
50 <del>11,890 — 19,999</del> .....	<del>2,400.00</del>
51 <del>20,000 — 34,999</del> .....	<del>3,600.00</del>
52 <u>0 — 5,999</u> .....	<u>\$17,700.00</u>
53 <u>6,000 — 11,889</u> .....	<u>\$20,000.00</u>
54 <u>11,890 — 19,999</u> .....	<u>\$25,000.00</u>
55 <u>20,000 — 28,999</u> .....	<u>\$30,000.00</u>
56 <u>29,000 — 38,999</u> .....	<u>\$35,000.00</u>
57 <u>39,000 — 49,999</u> .....	<u>\$40,000.00</u>
58 <u>50,000 — 74,999</u> .....	<u>\$45,000.00</u>
59 <u>75,000 — 99,999</u> .....	<u>\$50,000.00</u>
60 <u>100,000 — 149,999</u> .....	<u>\$55,000.00</u>
61 <u>150,000 — 199,999</u> .....	<u>\$70,000.00</u>
62 <u>200,000 — 249,000</u> .....	<u>\$80,000.00</u>
63 <u>250,000 — 299,999</u> .....	<u>\$90,000.00</u>
64 <u>300,000 — 399,999</u> .....	<u>\$95,000.00</u>
65 <u>400,000 — 499,999</u> .....	<u>\$100,000.00</u>

67 500,000 or more . . . . . \$105,000.00

68 (2) Whenever the state employees subject to compensation plans authorized and  
69 approved in accordance with Code Section 45-20-4 receive a cost-of-living increase or  
70 general performance based increase of a certain percentage or a certain amount, the  
71 amounts fixed in the minimum salary schedule in paragraph (1) of this subsection, and  
72 in Code Section 45-16-11.1, or the amounts derived by increasing each of said amounts  
73 through the application of longevity increases pursuant to subsection (b) of this Code  
74 section, where applicable, shall be increased by the same percentage or same amount  
75 applicable to such state employees. If the cost-of-living increase or general performance  
76 based increase received by state employees is in different percentages or different  
77 amounts as to certain categories of employees, the amounts fixed in the minimum salary  
78 schedule in paragraph (1) of this subsection, and in Code Section 45-16-11.1, or the  
79 amounts derived through the application of longevity increases, shall be increased by a  
80 percentage or an amount not to exceed the average percentage or average amount of the  
81 general increase in salary granted to the state employees. The Office of Planning and  
82 Budget shall calculate the average percentage increase or average amount increase when  
83 necessary. The periodic changes in the amounts fixed in the minimum salary schedule  
84 in paragraph (1) of this subsection, and in Code Section 45-16-11.1, or the amounts  
85 derived through the application of longevity increases, as authorized by this paragraph  
86 shall become effective on the first day of January following the date that the  
87 cost-of-living increases received by state employees become effective; provided,  
88 however, that if the cost-of-living increases or general performance based increases  
89 received by state employees become effective on January 1, such periodic changes in the  
90 amounts fixed in the minimum salary schedule in paragraph (1) of this subsection, and  
91 in Code Section 45-16-11.1, or the amounts derived through the application of longevity  
92 increases, as authorized by this paragraph shall become effective on the same date that

93 the cost-of-living increases or general performance based increases received by state  
94 employees become effective.

95 (3) The county governing authority may supplement the minimum annual salary of the  
96 coroner in such amount as it may fix from time to time; but no coroner's compensation  
97 supplement shall be decreased during any term of office. Any prior expenditure of  
98 county funds to supplement the coroner's salary in the manner authorized by this  
99 paragraph is ratified and confirmed. Nothing contained in this paragraph shall prohibit  
100 the General Assembly by local law from supplementing the annual salary of the coroner.

101 (a.1)(1) In the event that the coroner or his or her immediate predecessor spent at  
102 least 2,080 hours on duties related to his or her role as the coroner and the coroner's office  
103 in such county administered at least 75 cases in the preceding calendar year, the county  
104 governing authority shall provide the coroner the same employment benefits it provides  
105 the clerk of the superior court, judge of the probate court, sheriff, and tax commissioner.

106 (2) In the event that a deputy coroner worked at least 75 cases and spent at least 2,080  
107 hours on duties related to his or her role as a deputy coroner in the preceding calendar  
108 year, the county governing authority may provide the deputy coroner the same  
109 employment benefits it provides to full-time county employees.

110 (b) The amounts provided in paragraph (1) of subsection (a) of this Code section and Code  
111 Section 45-16-11.1, as increased by paragraph (2) of subsection (a) of this Code section,  
112 shall be increased by multiplying said amounts by the percentage which equals 5 percent  
113 times the number of completed four-year terms of office served by any coroner after  
114 December 31, 2000, effective the first day of January following the completion of each  
115 such period of service.

116 ~~(c) The minimum salaries provided for under this Code section shall be in addition to any~~  
117 ~~fees, including the death investigation fee provided for under subsection (b) of Code~~  
118 ~~Section 45-16-27, paid by the county governing authority to the coroner on a per-call basis~~  
119 ~~and in addition to any expenses~~ Reserved.

120 (d) The minimum salaries provided for in this Code section shall be considered as salary  
121 only. Expenses for deputies, equipment, supplies, copying equipment, and other necessary  
122 and reasonable expenses for the operation of a coroner's office shall come from funds other  
123 than the funds specified as salary in this Code section.

124 (e) This Code section shall not be construed to reduce the salary of any coroner in office  
125 on July 1, ~~2001~~ 2024; provided, however, that successors to such coroners in office on  
126 July 1, ~~2001~~ 2024, shall be governed by the provisions of this Code section. All local  
127 legislation in effect on July 1, ~~2001~~ 2024, or enacted thereafter affecting compensation for  
128 coroners of the various counties shall be of full force and effect except where the same  
129 provides for a salary lower than provided in this Code section, in which event this Code  
130 section shall prevail."

131 **SECTION 3.**

132 Said chapter is further amended by repealing subsection (b) of Code Section 45-16-27,  
133 relating to when inquest to be held, special situations, coroner's fee, issuance of subpoenas,  
134 cost of copying, and limited disclosure of photographs, and designating said subsection as  
135 reserved.

136 **SECTION 4.**

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