

House Bill 738

By: Representatives Hilton of the 48th, Jackson of the 128th, Rhodes of the 124th, Jasperse of the 11th, and Pirkle of the 169th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 2 of Title 34 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the
2 Department of Labor, so as to create the Task Force on Workforce and Safety Net
3 Integration; to provide for legislative findings; to provide for membership and appointment
4 of members; to provide for duties and responsibilities; to provide for a report and
5 recommendations; to provide for automatic repeal; to provide for related matters; to repeal
6 conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

8 **SECTION 1.**

9 Chapter 2 of Title 34 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the Department
10 of Labor, is amended by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

11 "34-2-17.

12 (a) The General Assembly finds and determines that:

13 (1) According to data from the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, Georgia's
14 economy has begun to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and, as evidenced by
15 Georgia's unemployment rate of 3.0 percent as of December, 2022, many residents who
16 lost their jobs due to the pandemic have regained meaningful employment;

17 (2) Despite this encouraging statistic, many Georgians have not returned to the
18 workforce as evidenced by data from the Research Department at the Federal Reserve
19 Bank of St. Louis that indicates a labor force participation rate of 61.5 percent in
20 December, 2022, as compared to 62.8 percent in February, 2020, prior to the pandemic;

21 (3) The Georgia Department of Labor reports more than 124,000 jobs listed on the
22 Employ Georgia website as of February, 2023;

23 (4) While Georgia continues to grow and attract new residents, ensuring that our
24 economy remains robust and supportive of a strong and capable workforce is of
25 paramount concern;

26 (5) Gainful employment is the best way to lift our residents out of poverty and provide
27 for increased well-being for individuals and their families;

28 (6) Often, federal safety net programs force individuals to choose between a pay raise
29 and the safety net benefits necessary to support their families; and

30 (7) Therefore, there exists a need in this state to study the intersection of workforce
31 development programs and safety net programs.

32 (b) The Task Force on Workforce and Safety Net Integration is created within the
33 Department of Labor, which shall be composed of nine members as follows:

34 (1) A chairperson appointed by the Governor;

35 (2) Three members appointed by the Governor, one of whom shall represent the business
36 community of Georgia;

37 (3) Two members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

38 (4) Two members appointed by the President of the Senate; and

39 (5) The chairperson of the State Workforce Development Board or his or her designee.

40 In making such appointments, the appointing individuals are encouraged to appoint either
41 members of the legislature or individuals from the private sector.

42 (c) The chairperson shall convene the first meeting of the task force before July 31, 2023.

43 (d) At the first meeting of the task force, the members shall adopt rules governing the
44 transaction of business and record keeping. The task force shall meet on the call of the
45 chairperson or upon the call of three or more members.

46 (e) The Department of Labor shall provide to the task force necessary staff, research, and
47 meeting facilities.

48 (f) The duties of the task force shall be to:

49 (1) Determine how state agencies and departments that administer workforce
50 development programs and safety net programs can best serve Georgians and help them
51 improve their employment situation;

52 (2) Explore the potential benefits of merging certain state agencies or departments to
53 better serve the citizens of Georgia;

54 (3) Explore how to best integrate the delivery of Georgia's various workforce
55 development programs and safety net programs; and

56 (4) Create an implementation strategy for an integrated delivery system, which may
57 include, but shall not be limited to, the following:

58 (A) A customer-driven platform that treats individuals and their families holistically;

59 (B) Simplified program governance and operations;

60 (C) A system that is administratively unified and coordinated, measures results,
61 remains accountable throughout the process, is based on continuous improvement, and
62 has time limits where appropriate;

63 (D) Safeguards to ensure program integrity;

64 (E) A system designed to assume personal and parental responsibility and to utilize
65 good case management and excess and untapped resource tests;

66 (F) Promotion of a work-first policy that reinforces rather than substitutes for natural
67 support systems;

68 (G) Funding for services that is commensurate with essential needs;

69 (H) Education and training services provided under the system are market-driven; and

70 (I) The system engages employers and maintains an ecosystem of opportunities for
71 career building to include, but not be limited to, website links to economic and
72 education policies.

73 (g) The task force shall consult with the Commissioner of Labor, the State School
74 Superintendent, and the commissioners of human services, community affairs, community
75 health, early care and learning, and public health, and any other state agency or department
76 as necessary to accomplish the task force's responsibilities under this Code section.

77 (h) Members of the task force shall serve without compensation and shall not be
78 reimbursed for their expenses.

79 (i) The task force shall submit a final report with its recommendations to the office of the
80 Governor and the General Assembly no later than December 31, 2024.

81 (j) The task force shall be abolished and this Code section shall stand repealed on
82 December 31, 2024."

83

SECTION 2.

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