

The House Committee on Industry and Labor offers the following substitute to HB 738:

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 3.2 percent as of July 2023, many residents who lost  
16 their jobs due to the pandemic have regained meaningful employment;

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- 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 61.6 percent in  
20 December 2023, as compared to 62.9 percent in February 2020, prior to the pandemic;  
21 (3) The Georgia Department of Labor reports over 11,000 active jobs and more than  
22 300,000 current openings on the Workforce Georgia website as of February 2024;  
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 Technical College System of Georgia, which shall be composed of nine members as  
34 follows:
- 35 (1) A chairperson appointed by the Governor;  
36 (2) Three members appointed by the Governor, one of whom shall represent the business  
37 community of Georgia;  
38 (3) Two members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;  
39 (4) Two members appointed by the President of the Senate; and  
40 (5) The chairperson of the State Workforce Development Board or his or her designee.  
41 In making such appointments, the appointing individuals are encouraged to appoint either  
42 members of the legislature or individuals from the private sector.

43 (c) 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 (d) The Technical College System of Georgia shall provide to the task force necessary  
47 staff, research, and meeting facilities.

48 (e) 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 (f) 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 (g) Members of the task force shall serve without compensation and shall not be  
78 reimbursed for their expenses.

79 (h) 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, 2025.

81 (i) The task force shall be abolished and this Code section shall stand repealed on  
82 December 31, 2025."

83 **SECTION 2.**

84 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.