

## House Resolution 746

By: Representatives Randall of the 142<sup>nd</sup>, Bell of the 58<sup>th</sup>, Hugley of the 136<sup>th</sup>, Fludd of the 64<sup>th</sup>, and Abrams of the 89<sup>th</sup>

## A RESOLUTION

1 Expressing the sense of the General Assembly regarding public policies that will help  
2 Georgia families thrive; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, strong families are the foundation for a prosperous Georgia and are necessary  
4 for a dynamic and healthy workforce, robust economy, entrepreneurial opportunities, and  
5 supportive communities; and

6 WHEREAS, strong families can only thrive in Georgia with policies designed to address  
7 families' many challenges and foster safety, health, wellness, and opportunities for all  
8 families and their children; and

9 WHEREAS, Georgia would prosper by enacting policies to alleviate the challenges families  
10 face from discrimination against pregnant women in the workplace, a shortage of  
11 obstetricians and gynecologists – particularly outside of the Atlanta area, a high teen  
12 pregnancy rate, a lack of insurance coverage, and racial disparities in accessing prenatal and  
13 postnatal care, reproductive health care, mental health care, and other health care services;  
14 and

15 WHEREAS, access to proper health care and high-quality providers before, during, and after  
16 pregnancy ensures healthy births, healthy babies, and healthy mothers, but Georgia's severe  
17 shortage of health care providers prevents such care, with only 20.8 doctors per 100,000  
18 working age population compared to the national average of 35.7 doctors per 100,000; and

19 WHEREAS, women who lack adequate prenatal care are three to four times more likely to  
20 die of pregnancy-related complications, and 18 percent of all live births in Georgia are to  
21 women receiving inadequate prenatal care, with a larger percentage of African American, 24  
22 percent, and Hispanic women, 29 percent, receiving inadequate prenatal care; and

23 WHEREAS, African American women, who comprise almost one-third of Georgia women,  
24 are 3.4 times more likely to die of pregnancy-related complications than white women; and  
25 WHEREAS, nearly half of pregnancies in the United States are unintended; women who lack  
26 insurance coverage or access to subsidized services have increased numbers of unintended  
27 pregnancies and childbearing, and unintended childbearing is associated with negative  
28 consequences such as delayed prenatal care, increased risk of physical violence during  
29 pregnancy, maternal depression, decreased likelihood of breastfeeding, low birth weight,  
30 decreased mental and physical health during childhood, and lower education attainment for  
31 the child; and

32 WHEREAS, Georgia's teen pregnancy rate of 33 pregnancies per 1,000 women is higher than  
33 the national average, and implementation of comprehensive, evidence-based sex education  
34 could reduce the risk of unintended teen pregnancy by 50 percent, increase contraceptive use  
35 by 25 percent or more, and delay the initiation of sex; and

36 WHEREAS, Georgia's sexually transmitted infection rates are among the highest in the  
37 nation, with Georgia ranking 1st in the nation for syphilis, 5th in the nation for HIV/AIDS,  
38 6th for gonorrhea, and 8th in the nation for chlamydia, and increasing the use of current  
39 treatment best practices, like Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) and Expedited Partner  
40 Therapy (EPT), are cost-effective ways of reducing HIV and STD transmission rates; and

41 WHEREAS, in order to live healthy, productive lives, contribute to their communities and  
42 the economy, and raise their families, all Georgia women need affordable access to the full  
43 range of reproductive health care services, including screenings for cancer and sexually  
44 transmitted infections, contraceptive services, abortion care, prenatal care, and labor and  
45 delivery services from licensed, high-quality health care providers; and

46 WHEREAS, the State of Georgia is composed of families of diverse genders, sexual  
47 orientations, marital statuses, races, citizenship statuses, and national origins, and these  
48 families are valued and legitimate regardless of the form they take and have the right to  
49 decide when and whether to have children, to have a healthy pregnancy, to terminate a  
50 pregnancy, and to parent the children they have with dignity and in safety, free from  
51 violence, mass incarceration, discrimination, and coercion; and

52 WHEREAS, there are significant benefits for strong families from enacting strong policies  
53 to address the challenges that families face at home and in the workplace, such as  
54 discrimination against pregnant women in the workplace, employment policies that make it

55 difficult for women to continue breastfeeding for at least six months as recommended by the  
56 American Academy of Pediatrics, limited or nonexistent parental leave for both mothers and  
57 fathers, and a lack of flexible sick leave policies; and

58 WHEREAS, access to affordable, high-quality childcare has been proven to increase  
59 women's participation in the workforce and to improve children's ability to learn in school;  
60 and

61 WHEREAS, Georgia law and policy do not reflect all of these adequate solutions to these  
62 problems, and they must be updated to ensure that Georgia families can thrive.

63 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF  
64 GEORGIA that Georgia's government has a role to play, working with communities,  
65 families, and individuals, to foster and support strong families, and Georgia's legislature  
66 should enact legislation designed to improve maternal and infant health by increasing access  
67 to the full range of affordable, comprehensive health care, including preventative,  
68 reproductive, and other essential health care services through access to sufficient, qualified  
69 providers; identify and minimize racial disparities in health and economic outcomes by  
70 developing targeted intervention strategies to improve the health, wellness, and safety of all  
71 Georgia families; and encourage employment policies that reflect Georgia's commitment to  
72 strengthening families by increasing workforce participation and ensuring all Georgians can  
73 support themselves and their families.

74 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized  
75 and directed to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the  
76 public and the press.