

Senate Bill 324

By: Senators Jackson of the 41st, Dugan of the 30th, Brass of the 28th and Jones II of the 22nd

**AS PASSED SENATE**

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 18 of Title 50 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to state  
2 printing and documents, so as to provide for a victim centered address confidentiality  
3 program; to provide for application to such program; to provide for designation of  
4 confidential addresses; to provide for certification of program participants; to provide for  
5 renewal and cancellation of certifications; to provide for training; to provide for related  
6 matters; to provide for an effective date; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

8 **SECTION 1.**

9 Chapter 18 of Title 50 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to state printing  
10 and documents, is amended by adding a new article to read as follows:

11 "ARTICLE 8

12 50-18-150.

13 As used in this article, the term:

- 14 (1) 'Confidential address' means a participant's residential address or other address or  
15 addresses that could be used to physically locate the participant, including a school  
16 attended by the participant or the participant's place of employment.
- 17 (2) 'Designated address' means the publicly available address provided by a participant  
18 to the office.
- 19 (3) 'Governmental entity' means:
- 20 (A) Every state department, agency, board, bureau, office, commission, public  
21 corporation, and authority;
- 22 (B) Every county, municipal corporation, school district, or other political subdivision  
23 of this state;
- 24 (C) Every department, agency, board, bureau, office, commission, authority, or similar  
25 body of each such county, municipal corporation, or other political subdivision of the  
26 state; and
- 27 (D) Every city, county, regional, or other authority established pursuant to the laws of  
28 this state.
- 29 (4) 'Office' means the office of the Secretary of State.
- 30 (5) 'Participant' means an individual who is currently certified to participate in the  
31 program pursuant to this article.
- 32 (6) 'Program' means the victim centered address confidentiality program established by  
33 this article.
- 34 (7) 'Victim advocate' means an employee or volunteer of the office who serves victims  
35 of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking and  
36 who has completed training pursuant to Code Section 50-18-152 to assist individuals in  
37 completing applications for the program.

38 50-18-151.

39 (a) There is created within the office of the Secretary of State a victim centered address  
40 confidentiality program.

41 (b) An individual who is changing his or her residence and who is at least 18 years of age  
42 or an emancipated minor may apply to the program, with or without the assistance of a  
43 victim advocate, for certification as a participant by the office upon providing an affidavit  
44 affirming that the disclosure of his or her actual address or addresses will increase the risk  
45 that he or she will be threatened or physically harmed by another person or that he or she  
46 has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human  
47 trafficking.

48 (c) In order to be certified as a participant in the program, an individual shall submit to the  
49 office an application containing:

50 (1) The full legal name and date of birth of the individual;

51 (2) A knowing and voluntary designation of the office as the individual's agent for the  
52 purposes of receiving mail and service of process;

53 (3) The mailing address, telephone number, and email address, if applicable, at which  
54 the office may contact the individual;

55 (4) An acknowledgment that the individual is requesting that his or her confidential  
56 address not be disclosed;

57 (5) The signature of the individual, the name of the victim advocate who assisted the  
58 individual, if applicable, and the date the application was signed;

59 (6) At the discretion of the office and for evaluation purposes, an option for the  
60 individual to select the type of offense the individual believes warrants the need for  
61 participation in the program. The office may not consider information provided or  
62 withheld pursuant to this paragraph as certifying the participant; and

63 (7) A letter from a victim advocate or a provider, as that term is defined in Code  
64 Section 37-11-3, indicating that they have received services related to their victimization.

65 (d) Upon receipt of an application in compliance with subsection (c) of this Code section,  
66 the office shall:

67 (1) Certify the individual as a participant;

68 (2) Issue the participant an address confidentiality card containing the name of and a  
69 unique identification number for the participant and the designated address of the  
70 participant;

71 (3) Classify each eligible address listed in the application as a confidential address;

72 (4) Provide the participant with information concerning the manner in which the  
73 participant may use the office as the agent of the participant for the purposes of receiving  
74 mail and service of process; and

75 (5) Provide the participant with information regarding methods to protect a confidential  
76 address, including, but not limited to, information regarding the risks of disclosing the  
77 confidential address to other persons and the risks of using social media and other similar  
78 technologies, including geotagging photographs, and other information that the office  
79 determines would help the participant protect his or her confidential address. A  
80 participant shall update information provided in an application within 30 days after a  
81 change to that information has occurred by submitting a notice of change to the office on  
82 a form prescribed by the office.

83 (e) A participant's certification shall be valid for four years. A participant who continues  
84 to be eligible for the program pursuant to this article may renew the certification of the  
85 participant. The renewal application shall be received by the office within 60 days prior  
86 to the end of the four-year certification period. The renewal application shall be on a form  
87 prescribed by the office and shall meet the requirements of this article. A renewal of  
88 certification of a participant shall not alter the unique identification number issued pursuant  
89 to subsection (d) of this Code section.

90 (f) The certification continuance application shall be on a form prescribed by the office,  
91 shall meet the requirements of this article, and shall inform the participant of his or her  
92 right to choose to continue or discontinue in the program.

93 (g) An application submitted pursuant to this article and the information of a participant  
94 shall be confidential, shall not be a public record, shall be exempt from disclosure pursuant  
95 to Article 4 of Chapter 18 of Title 50 or any similar law, and may only be disclosed as  
96 authorized pursuant to this article.

97 (h) An offender who is required to register pursuant to Code Section 42-1-12 shall not be  
98 eligible to submit an application and shall not be certified as a participant.

99 (i) A confidential address shall not be a public record and shall be exempt from disclosure  
100 pursuant to Article 4 of Chapter 18 of Title 50 or any similar law, except as otherwise  
101 provided in this article.

102 (j) A participant may withdraw from the program at any time by providing written notice  
103 of such withdrawal to the office.

104 (k) No individual shall apply for certification as a participant with the intent of avoiding  
105 prosecution or a lawful court order.

106 (l) The office shall promulgate rules and regulations as necessary to implement the  
107 provisions of this article.

108 50-18-152.

109 (a) The office shall develop and offer a training program for victim advocates to obtain  
110 certification pursuant to this article. The training program shall, at a minimum, include:

111 (1) Exhaustive information regarding the program;

112 (2) Methods for assisting applicants with completing application forms;

113 (3) Criteria for determining program eligibility;

114 (4) Information to be provided to participants pursuant to subsection (d) of Code  
115 Section 50-18-151; and

116 (5) Instruction on how to submit completed applications and supporting documents to  
117 the office.

118 (b) The office shall certify a person applying for certification as a victim advocate pursuant  
119 to this article if that person has completed the training program pursuant to this Code  
120 section. The office shall make available on its website contact information for the  
121 organizations that have certified victim advocates.

122 (c) There shall be no fee or charge to any participant for any services provided by a victim  
123 advocate pursuant to this article.

124 50-18-153.

125 (a) Upon a participant providing a copy of his or her address confidentiality card to a  
126 governmental entity and requesting that such governmental entity only use his or her  
127 designated address, the governmental entity shall only use the participant's designated  
128 address.

129 (b) If a participant's employer, or a school or institution of higher education attended by  
130 the participant, is not a governmental entity, the participant may request that the employer,  
131 school, or institution of higher education use the designated address as the participant's  
132 address.

133 (c) A utility owned by a governmental entity shall not release any confidential address.

134 (d) A participant may also use the designated address as the participant's work address.

135 (e) The office on each day that it is open for business shall place all first-class, registered,  
136 or certified mail or statutory overnight delivery received on behalf of a participant into an  
137 envelope or package and mail such envelope or package to the participant at his or her  
138 confidential address. The office may contract with the United States Postal Service for  
139 special rates for any mail forwarded pursuant to this subsection. Service by mail pursuant  
140 to this subsection of court papers, other than service of process, shall be deemed complete  
141 three business days after the office forwards the mail to the participant.

142 (f) If a person intends to serve process on a participant and makes an inquiry with the  
143 office to determine if the individual is a participant, the office shall only confirm that the  
144 individual is a participant and, except as otherwise allowed pursuant to this article, shall  
145 not disclose further information regarding the participant. If process has been forwarded  
146 to a participant pursuant to subsection (e) of this Code section, the office shall disclose the  
147 date of mailing to the person attempting to serve the participant.

148 50-18-154.

149 (a) The office may, after providing at least 30 days prior written notice to a participant,  
150 cancel the certification of a participant in any of the following circumstances:

151 (1) The participant's legal name or contact information changes, unless the participant  
152 provides the office with prior written notice of such change;

153 (2) Mail forwarded by the office to the participant's confidential address is returned as  
154 undeliverable by the United States Postal Service for 60 or more days;

155 (3) The participant is no longer eligible for the program;

156 (4) The participant requests to withdraw from the program pursuant to Code  
157 Section 50-18-151;

158 (5) The participant files a notarized request for cancellation on a form prescribed by the  
159 office; or

160 (6) The participant fails to file a renewal application pursuant to Code  
161 Section 50-18-151.

162 (b) The office shall cancel a participant's certification if the participant's renewal  
163 application or application for continuance contains false information.

164 50-18-155.

165 (a) If a participant notifies a governmental entity in writing, on a form prescribed by the  
166 office, that he or she is a participant, such entity shall not knowingly disclose the  
167 participant's confidential address, unless:

168 (1) The confidential address is subject to sharing or dissemination pursuant to court  
169 order;

170 (2) The confidential address is subject to sharing or dissemination in connection with an  
171 active investigation or inspection of a potential health code, building code, fire code, or  
172 local ordinance violation allegedly committed by the participant;

173 (3) The confidential address is needed to provide public assistance or other government  
174 services to a participant, or to allocate financial responsibility for such assistance or  
175 services;

176 (4) The confidential address is necessary to perform a governmental entity's health,  
177 safety, or welfare functions, including the provision of emergency 9-1-1 services, the  
178 assessment and investigation of child or vulnerable adult abuse or neglect, or the  
179 assessment or inspection of services or locations for compliance with health and safety  
180 standards;

181 (5) The confidential address is necessary to aid an active law enforcement investigation  
182 of the participant upon verification that the disclosure will aid the law enforcement  
183 agency in responding to an emergency situation or a criminal complaint or conducting  
184 an investigation; or

185 (6) The person to whom the confidential address is disclosed also resides, is employed  
186 at, or goes to school at the confidential address.

187 (b) Except as may be otherwise provided by law, a confidential address disclosed pursuant  
188 to subsection (a) of this Code section may be used only for the purposes authorized in this  
189 Code section and may not be further disclosed to any other person or governmental entity.  
190 Governmental entities receiving or sharing a confidential address pursuant to this Code



191 section shall establish procedures to protect the confidential address from further  
192 disclosure.

193 (c) When a participant presents his or her designated address to any person, such  
194 designated address shall be accepted as the address of the participant. The person shall not  
195 require the participant to submit any other address either as a substitute address or in  
196 addition to the designated address, or as a condition of receiving a service or benefit, unless  
197 the service or benefit would be impossible to provide without knowledge of the  
198 participant's confidential address."

199 **SECTION 2.**

200 This Act shall become effective on July 1, 2026.

201 **SECTION 3.**

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