House Resolution 642
By: Representatives Dempsey of the 13th, Epps of the 144th, Harden of the 148th, Cooper of the 43rd, Oliver of the 82nd, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Creating the Joint Study Committee on Postsecondary Education and Employment Options for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities; and for other purposes.

2 WHEREAS, young Georgians with intellectual and developmental disabilities finish high school each year to become frustrated "couch kids" with nothing to do and nowhere to go; and

3 WHEREAS, postsecondary educational opportunities have the same benefits for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities as they do for traditional students: academic and personal skills building, independence, self-advocacy, friendships, and employment skills; and

4 WHEREAS, inclusive postsecondary programs provide opportunities for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities to further their education beyond high school, which prepares them to blossom in their careers and lives; and

5 WHEREAS, the Georgia Inclusive Post-Secondary Education Consortium seeks to create opportunities for students who have historically not had access to postsecondary educational opportunities; and

6 WHEREAS, there are currently three inclusive postsecondary education programs in Georgia: The Academy for Inclusive Learning and Social Growth (Kennesaw State University); GOALS Program (Columbus State University); and CHOICE Program (East Georgia State College); and two new programs at Georgia Tech and the University of Georgia will begin in the 2015-2016 school year; and

7 WHEREAS, Georgians with disabilities want jobs and careers, but the current system disincentivizes employment; and

H. R. 642 - 1 -
WHEREAS, as a result, most Georgians with disabilities who want to work are unemployed; and

WHEREAS, an "Employment First" policy provides that employment should be the first and preferred option for all people, regardless of their disability, and that employment in the general workforce at or above the minimum wage is the first and preferred option for all working age citizens with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, an Employment First policy would benefit Georgians with disabilities, Georgia families, Georgia employers, and Georgia taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, the average gain for Georgia taxpayers when a person with intellectual disabilities receives vocational rehabilitation employment services that helps him or her work is $260 per month; and

WHEREAS, an Employment First policy established by the State of Georgia would require the collaboration of all involved state agencies, including the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, Department of Education, Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, and the Department of Community Health, in aligning their programs and resources to such end.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

(1) Creation of joint study committee. There is created the Joint Study Committee on Postsecondary Education and Employment Options for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

(2) Members and officers.

(A) The committee shall be composed of nine members.

(B) The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall appoint three members of the House of Representatives as members of the committee and shall designate one of such members as cochairperson.

(C) The President of the Senate shall appoint three members of the Senate as members of the committee and shall designate one of such members as cochairperson.

(D) The Governor shall appoint three members of the committee.

(E) The committee may elect other officers as deemed necessary.
(3) **Powers and duties.** The committee shall undertake a study of the conditions, needs, issues, and problems mentioned above or related thereto and recommend any action or legislation which the committee deems necessary or appropriate.

(4) **Meetings.** The cochairpersons shall call all meetings of the committee. The committee may conduct such meetings at such places and at such times as it may deem necessary or convenient to enable it to exercise fully and effectively its powers, perform its duties, and accomplish the objectives and purposes of this resolution.

(5) **Allowances, expenses, and funding.**

   (A) The legislative members of the committee shall receive the allowances provided for in Code Section 28-1-8 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated.

   (B) Members of the committee who are state officials, other than legislative members, or state employees shall receive no compensation for their services on the committee, but they may be reimbursed for expenses incurred by them in the performance of their duties as members of the committee in the same manner as they are reimbursed for expenses in their capacities as state officials or employees.

   (C) Members of the committee who are not legislators, state officials, or state employees shall receive a daily expense allowance in an amount the same as that specified in subsection (b) of Code Section 45-7-21 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, as well as the mileage or transportation allowance authorized for state employees.

   (D) The allowances and expenses authorized by this resolution shall not be received by any member of the committee for more than five days unless additional days are authorized. Funds necessary to carry out the provisions of this resolution shall come from funds appropriated to the House of Representatives and Senate; except that funds for the reimbursement of the expenses of state officials, other than legislative members, and state employees shall come from funds appropriated to or otherwise available to their respective agencies.

(6) **Report.**

   (A) In the event the committee adopts any specific findings or recommendations that include suggestions for proposed legislation, the cochairpersons shall file a report of the same prior to the date of abolition specified in this resolution, subject to subparagraph (C) of this paragraph.

   (B) In the event the committee adopts a report that does not include suggestions for proposed legislation, the cochairpersons shall file the report, subject to subparagraph (C) of this paragraph.

   (C) No report shall be filed unless the same has been approved prior to the date of abolition specified in this resolution by majority vote of a quorum of the committee.
A report so approved shall be signed by the cochairpersons of the committee and filed with the Clerk of the House of Representatives and the Secretary of the Senate.

(D) In the absence of an approved report, the cochairpersons may file with the Clerk of the House of Representatives and the Secretary of the Senate copies of the minutes of the meetings of the committee in lieu thereof.

(7) **Abolishment.** The committee shall stand abolished on December 1, 2015.