

House Resolution 1650

By: Representatives Park of the 101st, Scott of the 76th, McLaurin of the 51st, Boddie of the 62nd, Kennard of the 102nd, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing the need to reform use of force policies to protect lives and keep communities
2 safe; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, on May 25, 2020, George Floyd, a black man, died of asphyxiation after a white
4 Minneapolis police officer pressed his knee into Floyd's neck for 8 minutes and 46 seconds
5 despite Floyd's repeated cries of "I can't breathe"; and

6 WHEREAS, law enforcement officials across Georgia have strongly condemned the unjust
7 and inhumane murder of George Floyd, including Polk County Sheriff Johnny Moats, who
8 said that "this kind of brutality is terrible and needs to stop"; and

9 WHEREAS, George Floyd's death lays bare the violence of systemic racism as manifested
10 in over-policing, racial profiling, and excessive use of force by law enforcement across the
11 country that, according to a 2019 report from the National Academy of Sciences, results in
12 Black men being 2.5 times more likely to be killed by police than their White counterparts;
13 and

14 WHEREAS, law enforcement officers and other public safety officers take oaths to protect
15 and serve all Georgians; and

16 WHEREAS, a broad majority of the American public supports policies that reduce harm and
17 combat racial inequities in the criminal justice system; and

18 WHEREAS, stringent use of force standards can help reduce police violence, leading to
19 significant drops in civilian killings and injuries, as well as better outcomes in terms of
20 officer safety; and

21 WHEREAS, as elected officials accountable to those we serve, it is our responsibility and
22 duty to enact laws and policies that protect the lives of all our constituents to build a safer,
23 stronger Georgia; and

24 WHEREAS, one such policy includes banning chokeholds, strangleholds, and neck restraints
25 in all cases, a measure that has been adopted at the municipal level in at least 22 cities,
26 including Raleigh, North Carolina, and Dallas, Texas, as well as at the state level in Iowa and
27 Connecticut; and

28 WHEREAS, at least 49 cities, including Montgomery, Alabama, and New Orleans,
29 Louisiana, also protect lives and avoid unnecessary violence by requiring officers to
30 de-escalate situations when possible by communicating with subjects, maintaining distance,
31 and otherwise eliminating the need to use force; and

32 WHEREAS, in addition to emphasizing de-escalation, requiring officers to exhaust all other
33 alternatives prior to resorting to deadly force, including non-force and less lethal force
34 options, also helps keep civilians safe; and

35 WHEREAS, to ensure clarity for officers and civilians alike, more than 80 of the nation's 100
36 largest cities, in addition to smaller cities and towns across the country, have established Use
37 of Force Continuums that restrict the most severe types of force to the most extreme
38 situations and create clear policy restrictions on the use of each police weapon and tactic; and

39 WHEREAS, the establishment of comprehensive reporting requirements in which officers
40 report each time they use force or threaten to use force against civilians, including whenever
41 they point a firearm at someone, in addition to all other types of force, will enable continued
42 data collection for more efficient, effective, and humane policies regarding use of force by
43 law enforcement; and

44 WHEREAS, such use of force standards are important components of comprehensive
45 community safety policies and should be accompanied by additional reform to the justice
46 system as well as direct investments in social programs.

47 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
48 the members of this body recognize the need to reform use of force policies to protect lives
49 and keep Georgians safe.

50 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of this body encourage all municipal
51 governments and local police departments in Georgia to review their use of force policies and
52 implement common sense policies to reduce harm and protect civilian lives.

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