

Senate Resolution 974

By: Senator Unterman of the 45th

A RESOLUTION

1 Creating the Senate Surprise Billing Practices Study Committee; and for other purposes.

2 WHEREAS, consumers continue to struggle with health care costs which are greatly
3 exacerbated by surprise bills from out-of-network providers; and

4 WHEREAS, because these out-of-network providers often charge much higher rates and do
5 not disclose this information to their patients, Georgians often find themselves recovering
6 from a serious disease or illness and dealing with higher than anticipated out-of-pocket
7 medical costs as a result; and

8 WHEREAS, several states have passed laws to protect health care consumers from surprise
9 medical bills; and

10 WHEREAS, these state laws require certain disclosures so that health care consumers can
11 determine which health care professionals are out of network, how much they charge, and
12 how much their insurer will cover the services. These laws require network adequacy
13 standards and have established an independent dispute resolution for surprise bills to remove
14 the consumer from the dispute and require the health care professionals, hospitals, and
15 insurers to come to an agreement as to the amount to be paid by the insurer on behalf on the
16 consumer; and

17 WHEREAS, there is little or no protection from surprise billing relative to other states, and
18 it would be beneficial to conduct a study into how these laws are working in other states and
19 how these laws may be beneficial to Georgia citizens.

20 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE:

21 (1) **Creation of Senate study committee.** There is created the Senate Surprise Billing
22 Practices Study Committee.

23 (2) **Members and officers.** The committee shall be composed of four members of the
24 Senate to be appointed by the President of the Senate. The President shall designate a
25 member of the committee as chairperson of the committee.

26 (3) **Powers and duties.** The committee shall undertake a study of the conditions, needs,
27 issues, and problems mentioned above or related thereto and recommend any action or
28 legislation which the committee deems necessary or appropriate.

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

33 (5) **Allowances and funding.** The legislative members of the committee shall receive
34 the allowances provided for in Code Section 28-1-8 of the Official Code of Georgia
35 Annotated. The allowances authorized by this resolution shall not be received by any
36 member of the committee for more than five days unless additional days are authorized.
37 Funds necessary to carry out the provisions of this resolution shall come from funds
38 appropriated to the Senate.

39 (6) **Report.**

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

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

47 (C) No report shall be filed unless the same has been approved prior to the date of
48 abolishment specified in this resolution by majority vote of a quorum of the committee.
49 A report so approved shall be signed by the chairperson of the committee and filed with
50 the Secretary of the Senate.

51 (D) In the absence of an approved report, the chairperson may file with the Secretary
52 of the Senate a copy of the minutes of the meetings of the committee in lieu thereof.

53 (7) **Abolishment.** The committee shall stand abolished on December 1, 2016.