
Bills Prohibit Foreign Law in Georgia Courts

S.R. 808 introduced by Senator Tommie Williams, January 28th proposes an amendment to the Georgia Constitution that would prohibit the application of foreign law in Georgia courts, if the foreign law violates rights guaranteed to citizens by the U.S. Constitution and the Georgia Constitution or the public policy of the State of Georgia. If S.R. 808 passes the House and Senate by a 2/3 vote, it would be a two-part question for voters on the November Ballot. To emphasize the question's two parts, this writer has designated them (a) and (b) as follows:

"Shall the Constitution of Georgia be amended so as (a) to *prohibit* the application of foreign law in violation of rights guaranteed natural citizens by the U.S. and Georgia Constitutions and (b) to *prohibit* the application of laws enacted by other states in the U.S. that violate the public policy of the State of Georgia?"

Concerning (a) above: Since foreign law has already been applied in other states, to the detriment of their citizens, it's expedient that legislators pass preventive measures before Georgia courts allow foreign law to influence judicial decisions. Certainly, Georgia should follow the lead of eight other states – Tennessee, Louisiana, Arizona, Kansas, Oklahoma, Alabama, Missouri and North Carolina – that prohibit the use of foreign law. In addition to those eight states, such action is pending in 20 other states, including Florida, where it was recently approved by the Florida House of Representatives.

Concerning (b) above: On Wednesday, February 12, 2014 the U.S. Western District Court of Kentucky at Louisville ruled that Kentucky must recognize same-sex marriages performed outside that state, despite Kentucky's law and constitutional amendment that do not recognize same-sex unions as marriage.

Therefore, Georgia SHOULD pass S.R. 808 as additional protection against any future judicial effort to strike Georgia's constitutional amendment that defines marriage, prohibits same-sex marriage and prohibits the recognition of same-sex marriage conducted elsewhere.

ACTION – Support. Ask Senate Judiciary Committee members to vote YES on S.R. 808. Call Senators McKoon, Ch., 404 463-3931; Crosby, V.Ch., 463-5258; Bethel, 651-7738; Carter, 463-1376; Cowser, 463-1383; Fort, 656-5091; Ligon, 656-0045; Stone, 463-1314; and Tippins, 657-0406.

H.B. 895 introduced by Representative Hightower on February 4, 2014 provides that no court, arbitration panel administrative agency, or other tribunal shall enforce a foreign law, if doing so would violate a right guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution or the Georgia Constitution. It defines the meaning of foreign law, supports and regulates S.R. 808, a proposed constitutional amendment to prevent the application of foreign law in Georgia courts.

ACTION – Support. Contact House Judiciary Committee Representatives Willard, Ch., 404 656-5124; Fleming, V-Ch., 656-0152; Allison, Sec., 656-0188; Bruce, 656-0314; Caldwell, 656-0325; Evans, 656-6372; Golick, 656-5943; Jacobs, 656-5116; Jones, 656-7859; Kelley, 656-0287; Lindsey, 656-5024; Mabra, 656-7859; Oliver, 656-0265; O'Neal, 656-5052; Powell, 656-7855; Rutledge, 656-0109; Stephenson, 656-0126; Welch, 656-0109; Weldon, 656-0213; and Wilkinson, 463-8143.

More Legislative Action

H.B. 772 introduced by Representative Greg Morris requires **illegal drug tests for food stamp** applicants. Those failing shall be *ineligible* for food stamps. The “established drug test” is the collecting and testing of bodily fluids required by mandatory Guidelines for Federal Workplace Drug Testing Programs established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services or other procedures approved by the department. A swab test may be used in lieu of a urinalysis.

Applicants with Medicaid benefits would pay a drug screening fee up to \$17; without Medicaid benefits the full cost of the drug test must be paid. A first positive test means ineligibility for food stamps for a month and until a retest is negative; for a second positive result, the recipient would be ineligible for food stamps for three months or until a retest is negative. The penalty for a third positive test is ineligibility for food stamps for one year or until a retest is negative.

In two-parent families, one parent must comply with the drug testing requirement. Children under age 18 would be exempt and their eligibility for food stamps would not be affected if the parent fails the drug test, but the parent would be required to designate an individual, who must also pass a drug test, to receive the food stamps on behalf of the affected children.

ACTION – Support. Contact House Judiciary Committee Representatives Willard, Ch., 404 656-5124; Fleming, V-Ch., 656-0152; Allison, Sec., 656-0188; Bruce, 656-0314; Caldwell, 656-0325; Evans, 656-6372; Golick, 656-5943; Jacobs, 656-5116; Jones, 656-7859; Kelley, 656-0287; Lindsey, 656-5024; Mabra, 656-7859; Oliver, 656-0265; O’Neal, 656-5052; Powell, 656-7855; Rutledge, 656-0109; Stephenson, 656-0126; Welch, 656-0109; Weldon, 656-0213; and Wilkinson, 463-8143.

H.B. 942 introduced by Representative Craig Gordon provides for **online voter registration** and updating of voter registration data. The Secretary of State would be sure the official website is *always available* for online voter registration applications; assistance to applicants registering online; and submission of and receipt of completed applications. Applicants may provide an electronic signature by executing a computerized mark in the signature field as instructed; or on and after July 1, 2015, by submitting an electronic copy of the applicant’s handwritten signature through electronic means which the Secretary of State shall accept. An immediate electronic confirmation on the website will acknowledge receipt of such with instructions as to how the applicant may check the status of the application thereafter. State and local voter registration officials must accept an online voter registration applications submitted under this Code section and ensure that the person is registered to vote in this state.

ACTION – Oppose. Call House Governmental Affairs Representatives Hamilton, Ch., 404 656-5132; Purcell, V-Ch., 656-5139; Hatfield, 656-0109; Brockway, 656-0188; Brooks, 656-6372; Floyd, 656-0250; Kidd, 656-0202; Meadows, 656-5141; Morgan, 656-0109; Mosby, 656-0287; Oliver, 656-0265; O’Neal, 656-5052; Jay Powell, 656-7856, Alan Powell, 656-0202; and Williamson, 656-7859.

H.R. 1265 introduced by Representative Trey Kelley would create the House Study Committee on **Autonomous Vehicle Technology**, meaning a vehicle with the capability to drive without the direct active control or monitoring by a human operator. The seven-member committee to be appointed by the Speaker would meet whenever and wherever it’s necessary to accomplish the purpose of this resolution. Members would receive no compensation and would not be reimbursed for expenses incurred by being on the committee. The report would be due on or before December 1, 2014 and the committee would stand abolished on December 1, 2014.

ACTION – Support. Call Science and Technology Committee Representatives Setzler, Ch., 404 657-8443; Braddock, V.Ch., 656-0177; Watson, Sec., 656-0109; Battles, 656-7857; Dudgeon, 656-0298; Duncan, 656-7859; Frye, 656-0265; Kidd, 656-0202; Martin, 656-5064; Oliver, 656-0265; Scott, 656-0314; Sims, 656-7855; Smith, 656-0265; Stover, 656-0126; and Turner, 656-0314.

Keep Asking Committee to Vote NO on Compact Commission

H.B. 794 was introduced January 23, 2014 by Representative Paulette Braddock. On February 4th, she and supporters (some from outside the state) asked the House Judiciary Committee to pass it, and they did. Now, it's poised for a full House vote. H.B. 794 creates a Compact Commission to (a) implement a Republican strategy for a constitutional convention, and (b) give Republicans legal control of the convention, although such control is wishful thinking.

ACTION – Oppose H.B. 794. Ask committee to vote NO. House Rules Committee Representatives Meadows, Ch., 404 656-5141; Golick, V.Ch., 656-5943; Smith, Richard, 656-6831; Abrams, Ex-Officio, 656-5058; Benton, 463-3793; Casas, 656-0254; Channell, 656-5103; Cooper, 656-5069; Dempsey, 463-2248; Drenner, 656-0202; Ehrhart, 463-2246; Evans, 656-6372; Greene, 656-0202; Hamilton, 656-5132; Hugley, 656-5058; Jackson, 656-0314; Jones, 656-5072; Lindsey, 656-0177; Morris, 656-5115; O'Neal, 656-5052; Parrish, 463-2246; Peake, 656-5025; Powell, A., 463-3793; Powell, J., 656-7855; Ramsey, 656-5024; Rice, 656-5912; Roberts, J., 656-7153; Setzler, 657-8443; Sims, B., 656-7855; Smith, L., 656-7149; Smyre, 656-0116; Stephens, R., 656-5115; Weldon, 656-0213; Willard, 656-5125; and Williams, Al, 656-6372.

Constitutional Law Professor Comments¹ about H.B. 794

- “Because this compact may encroach upon the authority of Congress to make rules for a convention, the constitutionality of this compact is open to serious question.”
- “Article V is utterly devoid of any language that suggests the states may place any conditions on their calls for a convention.”
- “I seriously doubt that Congress would ever call a convention in which each state had only one vote.”
- “If some compact states withdrew and others did not, that would leave the convention in the hands of the non-compact states and the compact states that did not withdraw.”
- “If any delegate violates any provision of the compact, then every delegate from that state forfeits his appointment and must return to the state capitol. Apparently the state is then unrepresented.”

More Con Con Bills

H.B. 929 introduced February 6, 2014, establishes a selection plan for delegates and alternate delegates, their recall, oaths, and expenses for participation in an Article V convention.

H.B. 930 introduced February 6, 2014, authorizes the General Assembly to adopt instructions and standards for Article V convention delegates, provides for revocation of certain resolutions for an Article V convention, restricts votes by delegates and alternate delegates and creates penalties. It also creates an advisory group with designated powers, duties and procedures.

ACTION – Oppose. Ask committee members to vote NO on H.B. 929, and H.B. 930. Call House Judiciary Representatives Willard, Ch., 404 656-5125; Fleming, V-Ch., 656-0152; Allison, Sec., 404 656-0188; Bruce, 656-0314; Caldwell, 656-0325; Evans, 656-6372; Golick, 656-5943; Jacobs, 656-5116; Jones, 656-7859; Kelley, 656-0287; Lindsey, 656-5024; Mabra, 656-7859; Oliver, 656-0265; O'Neal, 656-5052; Powell, 656-7855; Rutledge, 656-0109; Stephenson, 656-0126; Welch, 656-0109; Weldon, 656-0213; and Wilkinson, 463-8143.

S.B. 206 passed the Georgia Senate on March 7, 2013, authorizes *seven Georgia* Article V convention *delegates* to cast *one group* vote per issue. While the convention is said to be “for a balanced budget amendment,” the S.B. 206 call is “*for the purpose of proposing one or more amendments....*” Whether a call is for one or multiple amendments, a convention is dangerous!

ACTION – Oppose S.B. 206. Ask the following committee members to vote NO on S.B. 206. Interstate Cooperation Committee Representatives Dollar, Ch., 404 656-7857; Holt, V.Ch., 656-0152; Fleming, Sec., 656-0152; Chapman, 656-0126; Cooke, 656-0188; Duncan, 656-7859; Evans, 656-6372; Gregory, 656-0220; Kendrick, 656-0109; McClain, 656-0220; Stovall, 656-0314; and Waites, 656-0220.

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Georgia Insight

Medical Marijuana (Cannabis)

S.R. 756 Study Committee for Medicinal Marijuana for Serious Medical Conditions

S.R. 756 would create the Senate Prescription of Medicinal Marijuana for Serious Medical Conditions Study Committee composed of the Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee and four members of the Senate to be appointed by the President of the Senate. The committee would report its findings by December 1, 2014, at which time it would stand abolished.

ACTION – Support. Call Health & Human Services Committee Senators Unterman, Ch., 404 463-1368; Balfour, V.Ch., 656-0095; Millar, 463-2260; Burke, 656-0040; Butler, 656-0075; Carter, 656-5109; Henson, 656-0085; Hill, Judson, 656-0150; Hufstetler, 656-0034; Jackson, Lester, 463-5261; Ligon, 656-0045; Orrock, 463-8054; and Shafer, 656-0048.

H.B. 885, introduced by Representative Allen Peake January 28th, allows the use of medical marijuana to treat seizure disorders. It explains “medical cannabis” as nonpsychoactive extracts and compounds in non-smoking forms of liquid, pill, vaporization, or injection.

H.B. 885 establishes academic medical centers, *i.e.* research hospitals that operate medical residency programs for physicians and do research involving certified glaucoma patients, cancer patients, or seizure disorder patients. The review board of a certified physician in pediatric neurology, a board certified physician in pain management, and a board certified pediatric epileptologist will review, evaluate, and rate applications for medical cannabis research.

An academic medical center will apply for cannabis *via* contract with the National Institute on Drug Abuse. The product will be tested, the Georgia Drugs and Narcotics Agency will be notified, take possession, and retain it for distribution to the academic medical center.

Personnel involved in the process will be immune from liability and eligible for reimbursement of incurred counsel fees in the event of a federal criminal investigation or prosecution.

“The Marijuana, Psychosis Connection” was written by Dr. Christian Thurstone, who is one of fewer than three dozen U.S. physicians who are board certified in general, adolescent, child, and addictions psychiatry. He is medical director of one of Colorado’s largest youth substance-abuse-treatment clinics and associate professor of psychiatry at the University of Colorado Denver, as well as current president of the Colorado Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Society. When Dr. Thurstone wrote the above report, he explained that people who are psychotic are delusional. They see or hear things that are not real. Their minds play terrible tricks on them, causing paranoia and anxiety or schizophrenia.

Since the first study of its kinds was released in Sweden in 1988, another six large studies (controlled for over 60 variables) have been conducted, showing a two-to-four-fold increase in psychosis in young adults who used marijuana during adolescence.

The December 2013 publication of Schizophrenia Bulletin included a report by ten authors. It was entitled, “Cannabis-Related Working Memory Deficits and Associated Subcortical Morphological Differences in Healthy Individuals and Schizophrenia Subjects.” It revealed that (a) adolescent marijuana use is associated with changes in brain structure that’s consistent with schizophrenia, a psychosis. (b) The younger the individuals were when they began chronic use of marijuana the more abnormally their brain regions were shaped.

ACTION – Pass the S.R. 756 study committee that would research the issue and recommend legislation for 2015.

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