

HB 520 Claims and Responses

Claim	Response
<p>This bill makes it easier for someone to be declared mentally incompetent to stand trial. It further gives the state the right to place a child in a secure facility until mental competency is determined, which is immensely concerning as the bill does not have stipulations for that child's right to due process. The detainment for mental competency testing can be up to 90 days for both adults and children. This detainment could last up to 9 months though, per this bill. All of this is without ever being found guilty of a crime. For people accused of a nonviolent offense, they can be held for inpatient treatment up to 5 years and for people accused of violent offenses they can be held for the period equal to the maximum sentence for that crime.</p>	<p>Incorrect.</p> <p>The claim refers to a prior draft of the bill. The bill passed by the House contains no such provision.</p> <p>Even if the provision remained, the claim remains incorrect. The section removed from the prior draft is a <u>restatement of Georgia's existing law, one that has existed for decades</u>. Further, the claim misstates several elements of that existing law.</p> <p>According to Legislative Counsel, the entire chapter of the OCGA had to be restated in the bill to be able to reflect two small changes reflecting decisions by the Georgia Supreme Court in 2018.</p>
<p>This bill is a massive expansion of Medicaid by essentially expanding it to all things related to mental health. Conservatives ran against expanding Medicaid and putting the cost of someone's healthcare onto the backs of their fellow citizens. This is hypocritical and bad policy.</p>	<p>Incorrect.</p> <p>Nothing in HB 520 results in an increase in the number of Medicaid and PeachCare enrollees, nor does it require any additional funding by Georgia for its Medicaid and PeachCare programs. The bill expands the type and kinds of available Medicaid services.</p> <p>It's like when you and your family go into Applebee's and find a new and expanded menu. That expanded menu doesn't give you any more money, nor does it increase the size of your family. It just provides more food and/or drink options.</p>
<p>The bill further grants the state licensing board the ability to pay back all the student loans of mental health professional. Whenever Bernie Sanders proposes these things, we call him a 'socialist' and even a 'communist'; we should do the same with the authors of this bill. This puts the cost of one person's education on the backs of their fellow citizens and that is patently wrong.</p>	<p>Incorrect.</p> <p>The loan forgiveness program is strictly limited to medical professionals who are in short supply, especially in Georgia's rural communities. It is a market-based response to workforce shortages – it provides an incentive for professionals to locate/relocate to less attractive and underserved geographies.</p> <p>As stated by Rep. Todd Jones (R) during voting by the House on the bill, "Where you live and where you were born should not define whether or not you get proper health care."</p>
<p>The bill further establishes that various departments of the government will work together to establish a uniform definition for 'Serious Mental Issues' and orders the department to establish various new community service boards along with establishing a clearing house for best practices.</p>	<p>Mostly correct.</p> <p>In a variation of the 80/20 rule, a significant portion of state expenditures go to a small number of "familiar faces" caught on the carousel of homelessness, illness, incarceration, and hospitalizations. Getting state agencies out of a "silo mindset" and working towards a common goal of helping familiar faces will significantly reduce state expenditures over time .</p> <p>No new community service boards (CSBs) are established. CSHs have existed in Georgia for more than a decade. Also, the uniform definition is for "serious mental illness," not "serious mental issues."</p>
<p>The bill establishes a pilot program in jails for validated mental health screenings and create a grant program to expand capacity for jail in-reach programs. The bill further says the</p>	<p>Mostly correct.</p> <p>Jail health screenings are one of several efforts to decriminalize behavioral health challenges. Identifying and treating screened individuals is better for all</p>

<p>department shall conduct many different studies which will eat up taxpayer dollars. The bill also adds two Peer Support Specialists to the committee. The bill further requires the commission to create several different taskforces to review relevant subject matter. It also makes it easier for the department to give out awards of funding for outpatient treatment. This bill also creates a program for monitoring and rehabilitating impaired healthcare professionals.</p>	<p>concerned, both the individual and the city/county. Community-based treatment is significantly less expensive than incarceration.</p> <p>The studies are both necessary and appropriate. Georgia is at the beginning of a journey to transform mental health and substance use care in the state. The studies and task forces will create the map for that journey. Absent a map, the journey starts from an unknown location and proceeds to an unknown conclusion. If we don't know where we are and where we're going, how will we know when we get there?</p> <p>As to programs for monitoring and rehabilitating impaired health care professionals, such programs already exist for some health care professionals. The bill expands the programs to other health care professionals. Not only are such programs required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), but they also serve to address workforce shortages that might otherwise be exacerbated by flat license revocation.</p>
<p>The bill further establishes a director of the Georgia Data Analytics Center (GDAC) and makes GDAC the entity which all information flows through in our state government. This director is an agent of all state agencies. Giving this much power to one person is highly concerning. This bill further creates a massive database for the government on all healthcare officials.</p>	<p>Somewhat correct.</p> <p>The bill does establish a GDAC director and requires agencies to work together to ensure Georgians are well-served by state agencies. It also identifies that director as the responsible party; currently, each agency can point to the other if there are problems. The "massive database" purportedly created by the bill is a combination of massive databases at each of the agencies.</p>
<p>This bill is one of the most egregious attempts to strip Georgians of their civil liberties we have ever seen, competing strongly with last year's HB 1013 on that. Because this bill grossly grows the size of government in Georgia, gives the state more power over the people, and grossly violates due process in a horrific and immoral way,</p>	<p>Incorrect.</p> <p>This inaccurate claim is based on two fundamental misunderstandings. First, the bill does not contain the section with "horrific and immoral" violations of due process. Second, even if it did contain that section, we're talking about a restatement of decades' old existing Georgia law that has passed constitutional muster many times.</p>