MOUNTAIN LEGISLATIVE WATCH GROUP

WATCH REPORT

Report for summer 8/30/2026

BLUE RIBBON STUDY COMMITTEE ON THE IMPACT OF ONLINE PLATFORMS ON GEORGIA YOUTH – Report #1

This is one of the most difficult committees to report on in a small summary. This is a very serious matter and anyone who has children, students, grandchildren, nieces and nephews, etc. I would urge you to watch the videos. Blue-Ribbon Study Committee on the Impact of Online Platforms on Georgia Youth

It is impossible for me to encapsulate the entire knowledge and concern I have been enlightened with while only watching 2 of 4 meetings on the subject. It is alarming what parents, grandparents, guardians are unaware of the extent that the Big Tech platforms reach toward our youth.

While this may sound cliché, the facts are more chilling. The facts and information brought to light explain how pedophiles are able to recruit unknowing underage victims to enter the web through platforms that profess fun games with "friends" referred to as "Gaming" **WITHIN MINUTES**. We have been somewhat aware but not yet convinced of the threat from Big Tech exploiting the children including their daily habits, cyber bullying, extortion etc.

ROBLOX: **has a Predator issue** and has been investigated for violating consumer safety laws; gross negligence.

I was extremely impressed with a young man, SCHLEPP, who is now a YouTuber who raises awareness, who identified 6 pedophiles who were arrested within 6 months of him following their activities on ROBLOX, 3 were convicted, 2 on sex registry, another in pending litigation.

These platforms throw out and delete any accounts from cyber police bringing these pedo issues to light.

High safety concerns on all platforms enticing youth to partake in different aspects on **ROBLOX, TIKTOK, SNAPCHAT**, etc. may be traumatizing for a child and include but are not limited to:

- Contact from child predators within minutes
- Predators content are sometimes subliminally shared

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- Mass shooting games with victims' names, guns, etc., shows all people you killed
- Shock videos of suicides are shared
- Graphic materials
- Cyber bullying leading to key words immediately suggest "how to" suicide cites
- Play virtual funerals; kids commit suicide on live feeds
- Predators join innocent games & entice with $ to go on another game
- Pet simulator – sex extortion

ROBLOX **entry is as young as 5 years old.** Predators enter whatever age group. Avatar and accessories can be gory. Has millions of games on website; many with explicit content. **5+ can access graphic sex games with explicit content**, nudes, etc. which is a egregious violation of posted rules but Roblox doesn't do anything about it.

764 **is a nihilist site. Group violence**

Dollhouse Roleplay could find people openly in games. Hunting for children in real time.

Discord/764 type of platforms: **Self-Harm animal sacrifices, cutting, blood paintings instructed by predator, violence, horror, satanism, nazi, cult-like, VIOLENCE and they are rewarded by predator.**

SEGA during a game, advertising appears in background with new Sonic movie.

DISCORD one of most dangerous & most unsafe. Kids have been kidnapped by innocently giving too much personal information.

Students are issued Chrome Books to take home for their lessons and homework. In order for them to access the internet, the school issues them a login name and password. Once the student has this account, they are free to look at anything on the web without their parents' or teachers' knowledge. Many students have been found looking at some of the above platforms unbeknownst to anyone. They could be viewing them during class time, at home under the guise of "homework", etc. This is how ROBLOX AND OTHERS have radicalized and indoctrinated many of our youth. Schools allow full YouTube access, not YouTube Kids.

This also includes Junior High and High School students. Parents have no visibility of what child views.

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Too much online time can lead to depression, eating disorders, low self esteem and many other more serious health and mental issues.

At the 2nd meeting on August 5, 2026, the Chairman showed a short video at CrimeCon in LV, where Schlepp, who is unable to get **on ROBLOX**, asked a colleague to get on Roblox and in real time showed how easy it is to access and how while they were live, ROBLOX BACKTRACKED THE USER and blocked and banned the account LIVE.

Speakers from 2 different Advocacy Groups shared first had knowledge of children affected by these online games and online predators where the contact moves too quickly asking for photos of body parts, etc. and if victim tries to stop contact, predator threatens they will send pics to parents, share with school, and sometimes it leads to victim suicide.

Predators or followers start own server and invite other to get on via video calls and show self-harm live, i.e. carvings, cuttings, etc.

When stream is located on ROBLOX and other various platforms, the Admins "NUKE" THE STREAM which totally obliterates any trace.

Legislative Committee members offered suggestions:

1. **Public Safety Officers need training to be able to not muffle cases:**

   i.e. 14 yr old fished by 27 y.o. officers say victim active participant, do not believe victim, no charges.

2. GA RANKS AT 39% in child wellbeing which includes healthcare wellbeing, child welfare, abuse statistics, DFACS reports.
3. Schools need to lay groundwork of age appropriate discussions at very young age of more than "..you should not talk to anyone online that you do not know..."

   ==== Next meeting of Committee is scheduled for September 3, 2026, in Augusta./ 8/20/2026

Blue Ribbon Study Committee on Community Health and Healthcare Oversight

Background: April 2022 The Mental Health Parity Act

April 2022 HB 1013 mandated DBHDD expand mental health and substance abuse services, fund crisis intervention and ensure insurance coverage

May 2022 SB 403 established the Co-Responder Program to improve crisis response through partnerships between law enforcement and behavioral health professionals.

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Additionally Senate Bill 610 required a provider rate study. DBHDD was looking to strengthen the behavior health workforce and expand access to care

April 2025 HB 268 strengthens school safety by expanding mental health support among schools, law enforcement and state agencies.

May 2025 HB 584 Gives DBHDD the responsibility of regiulating behavior health treatment programs, conducting inspections, enforcing compliance and protecting individuals receiving services

MAY 2026 SB 535 Granted DBHDD oversight of Community Service Boards by centralizing executive leadership and standardized governance across Georgia's public behavior system.

Plans are currently underway for construction of a 300 bed mental health hospital. The US Department of Justice deemed Georgia met conditions of the Olmstead Settlement the monitoring over behavioral health services be ended . One additional requirement agreed to was as to offer supportive housing for 541 individuals. The FY 2027 budget includes $9.3 million for 404 Georgia Housing Vouchers, which will include wraparound services such as supported employment and care coordination for individuals with mental health issues.

Takeaways from Blue Ribbon Committee Meetings:
Be on the lookout for bills to change/implement existing legislation, especially regarding the state regional boards, and implementation of the USDOJ settlement..

Additionally, the $93 million just granted to rural hospitals in the "big, beautiful bill" recently passed in Congress and signed into law by President Trump.
The federal government announced the delivery Thursday of the rest of a $218 million award to Georgia to support rural hospitals. Look for spending bills generated by this settlement.

The $93.3 million completes the first fiscal year of a five-year, $50 billion national funding program approved by Republicans in Congress last year in President Donald Trump’s One Big Beautiful Bill Act.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services said the money will pay for technical innovations at rural hospitals, such as surgical robotics and telehealth, plus medical training and recruitment, maternal and behavioral services, and newborn screening.

It will also help 87 rural Georgia hospitals prepare to provide what the federal agency is calling “value-based” care.

Some key take aways from July 2,2026 and Aug 12,2026.

Committee Chairman, Representative Mark Newton, MD, Augusta, Ga.(R)
Lee Hawkins (R) Gainesville, 5 other Republicans and 3 Democrats. Chairman is informed and very impressive, as well as the other members.

Georgia ranks 40th in the nation in Physicians per capita. Sixty(60) % of Ga insured healthcare is provided through employers. 24% of the State budget, 9 billion in taxpayer dollars goes to healthcare, which translates into 41% of State spending, counting federal dollars, 30 billion dollars.

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Behavioral Health and Developmentally Disabled Dept.: In Feb of 2026, Ga was released from court ordered behavioral provisions from Supreme Court 1999 Olmstead Settlement. Case decision was that unjustified institutional isolation of persons with disabilities is illegal discrimination under the American Disabilities Act. They have a civil right to receive state funded support in community based settings. This was originally a Ga case brought by two women kept in an institutional setting after being eligible for community placement. Georgia's work continues under a transition plan to help 541 persons through housing initiatives, with 404 housing vouchers and 137 other housing placements. Georgia's FY 2027 budget proposal has 9.3 million to fund 404 new housing vouchers.

Focus is on **Forensic patients** and services for. Forensic patients are the Individuals with intellectual developmental disabilities(IDD) that are caught up in the criminal justice system. There have been significant jail waitlist backlogs, prompting expansion of relief programs and a legal agreement to improve timely care. The state manages ongoing supportive housing commitments with millions in budget allocations for housing vouchers. Goals are more transition continued support, and improvements in fulfilling community based service requirements; reduction in wait time between jail and placement for IDD. Need legislative support and funding allocations. Additional transitional In-hospital beds available through Operation New Hope are allocated in Milledgeville, Savannah and Columbus....therapeutic beds unique to the individual patient, serving 63 now.

A new 300 bed mental health hospital will break ground in November in Dekalb County, strictly for Forensic patients. This will help relieve the jail backlog. The first hospital for mental disabilities in decades. https://www.wabe.org/.georgia-is-building-first-state-psychiatric-hospital-since-landmark-disability-case/.

Jail Restoration Program, Eastman, Ga.(S. Central): 32 beds opened Jan. 2025. Since opening, program has discharged 89 back to their home counties. Average restoration time is 71 days

Crisis Services and Diagnostic Center, Macon, Ga...provides diagnostic evaluations and coordinated care for IDD. Since 2024 launch, IDD persons in the ER waiting for placement is down 40%. Year end goal is expansion to at least 20 more beds.

Co-respondent program. Law enforcement go on call response with a healthcare expert. Crisis intervention training is available for law enforcement. Goal to continue expansion of this policy.

988 call center. Mental Health crisis line. New crisis center in Augusta and one is coming in N. Fulton County.

Six community services boards covering the state are committed to expanding IDD crisis services and to develop residential services for individuals with the most complex needs.

GA Mental Health Parity Act HB 1013 (2022) requires insurance companies to cover mental health and substance use care at the same level as physical health care, matching co-pays, deductibles, and visit limits.

Largest legislative need for Georgia in healthcare is keeping updated, competitive reimbursement rates and work force wages. We must keep up to keep and expand our work force in healthcare.

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Accommodate and appropriation of funding for expansion and for innovation and modernization in the medical and behavioral health fields.

Georgia Board of Healthcare Workers Dept.: addressing work force needs, especially in underserved, rural communities.
Advancements the last 5 years:
Increases in professionals covered by loan repayment programs, expanded to cover nurse faculty, optometrists(graduate medical education), behavioral health professionals,dentists.
300 new GME(graduate medical education) slots funded in the state.
Nursing school grants
GME exploratory grants 75K each.
Healthcare workforce online dashboard (HB1013 and SB500)

Georgia Dept. of Community Health: 25.7 billion dollar budget. Manages CON, certificate of need program for new facilities and expansion, facility regulation. Manages Medicaid for the aged and Blind, low income Medicaid.....determines enrollment eligibility for the same. Determines waiver eligibility for home and community based services. Oversees the State Office of Rural Health SORH. SORH has made improvements in access and flexibility of waiver function of Medicaid to help pay to support IDD individuals in community and home settings, rather than a nursing home or other institution. SB428, 2026.

Georgia Dept of Public Health: DPH is the integration of the state health agency on the local level. Legislative highlights. HB 89 establishes a process to evaluate and strengthen Ga's regional perinatal centers.
HB 1138 authorizes DPH to jointly develop statewide protocols for pharmacist provided contraceptive service and expands access to contraceptives.
Home visiting. A very successful program to make home visits to pregnant moms and after birth, as well. Meets mothers in their familiar home environment. Provides opportunity to keep minor issues from escalating, gives a picture of home environment with opportunity to help that may not otherwise be noticed. Establishes a better relationship and potentially more relaxed.

Georgia Dept of Human Services: Encompasses Aging Services, Child Support, Family and Children Services DFCS. Agency fraught with problems. They have corrected many denials of appeals for medical treatment. Recovered 1.5 million plus in funds to provide the services previously denied. SNAP food stamp program buried in fraud, eligibility and reporting problems. Georgia Gateway, online, integrates various eligibilities in one place. Constituents often receive letters notifying of renewal date too late, after the date has long passed, and/or request for further information that has passed the date to receive at DFCS. DFCS offices have fewer hours of operation on the local level, so help is hard to get for the applicant. The agency is working diligently to eliminate these problems. Caseworker turnover is very high in children's services, including foster care and adoption. High caseloads, stress, and mountains of paperwork, makes case management and familiarity, a personal contact, nearly impossible. Continuity of records, especially for a child moving through the system, is a problem. Agencies look forward to making changes to rectify these problems, as an outcome of these committee presentations.

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There is increased focus on the need to educate, hire and keep in Georgia, healthcare professionals of all levels, especially physicians and those professionals directing and providing for the intellectually developmentally disabled. These shortages are extreme in many rural areas. The committee is pursuing ways to keep these needed professionals in Georgia . Fast tracking education, enabling program completion in less amount of time without sacrificing quality is one incentive. Providing full scholarships in exchange for practicing in rural Georgia for certain time periods is a great incentive. Participants would start medical practice completely debt-free of medical education costs. Loan repayment programs could operate in a similar way. Service cancellable for physicians, PAs, Advance practice registered nurses, dentists and other needed medical professionals. Loans could be cancelled in exchange for practice, after licensing, in rural Georgia settings with populations of 50,000 or less.
Community and home-based care rather than institutional is another major focus, as evidenced throughout the various presentations. Many processes have already been started to initiate and create the infrastructure to support these focus policies, Hopefully, the legislative body will be pro-active in doing what is in their power to facilitate accomplishing goals of these focus policies.

Blue Ribbon Study Committee on Community Health and Healthcare Oversight

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Georgia Assembly House of Representatives

Blue-Ribbon Study Committee on Post-Conviction Litigation

The Blue-Ribbon Study Committee on Criminal Post-Conviction Litigation will examine Georgia's post-conviction legal framework to protect constitutional rights, reduce delays and improve the efficiency of the state's justice system.

Members: Rep. Stan Gunter-Chairman, Rep. Clint Crowe, Rep. Chuck Efstration, Rep. Bill Fincher, Rep. Scott Holcomb, Rep. Soo Hong, Rep. Rob Leverett, Rep. Tyler Paul Smith

August 21, 2026	Gilmer County Courthouse, Gilmer County Jury Assembly Room, 1 Broad Street, Ellijay, GA 30540

Some key take aways from this meeting:

The Habeas Project is Mercer Law's nationally recognized post-conviction defense legal clinic, where students work closely with a faculty supervisor to provide direct representation for those unable to afford counsel whose constitutional rights have been violated. Since 2006, the Project has handled dozens of cases pending before the Georgia Supreme Court and various Georgia Superior Courts in post-conviction matters, in which litigants no longer have the right to appointed counsel. Many of the speakers in this Study Committee were instructors at the Habeas Project.

Speakers advised that there are **IAC claims** (Ineffective Assistance of Counsel) where the legal argument is raised by a convicted criminal defendant claiming their lawyer did such a poor job that it broke their Sixth Amendment right to a fair defense. There was no discussion about how many IAC claims there are in Georgia at any given time period.

However, the speakers stated that these IAC claims arise from public defenders that do not have enough time (because of case load) to properly represent the defendants. The time issue also relates to delays in the legal system. Some stated delays are trial transcripts, judicial orders, notices of appeal and error reviews.

Proposed solutions by the speakers are:

- Creation of a statewide appellate office
- Expand plain error review
- Establish system for appellate court to monitor new cases, orders and production of records
- Allow Defendants to ask for dismissal if orders not entered in a certain time frame
- Establish deadline limits for trial transcript to be produced and provided
    - Expand transcripts to be mandatory for jury selection and opening and closing statements
- Mandate State provided counsel for Capitol Post Conviction cases for indigent defendants
- Legislate a new office for Mitigation Specialist and to hire 22 additional public defenders

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BLUE-RIBBON STUDY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION PERFORMANCE METRICS AND WORKFORCE STABILITY

The Blue-Ribbon Study Committee on Education Performance Metrics and Workforce Stability will evaluate Georgia's education evaluation measures to strengthen accountability, improve student success and strengthen teacher recruitment and retention.

August 5, 2026	Houston County School District Annex, 1600 Macon Road, Suite A, Perry, GA 31069
August 19, 2026	403 CAP
September 9, 2026	Columbus State University Schuster Student Success Center, Room 130, 4225 University Avenue Columbus, GA 31907

AGENDA

Dr. Steven Hornyak, Chief Innovation Officer for Houston County Schools Dr. Elgin Mayfield, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, Houston County Schools Dr. Juli Alligood, Executive Director, Middle Georgia RESA

College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI)

CCRPI is a comprehensive school improvement, accountability, and communication platform for all educational stakeholders, promoting college and career readiness for all Georgia public school students.

All about how Houston County School and all the thing they do to help students score will on test. So the CCRPI requirements are met. How the public can assess the CCRPI by district and school.

A lot on school being accountable nothing on student being accountable.

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I could dust off the State Standards from 1987 and give the same speeches.

- **Joint Study Committee on Generational Sustainability of Family Farms**

HR 1416

August 20, 2026

Miller Murphy Howard Building, 401 Larry Walker Parkway, Perry, GA 31069

No News or Document posted. OFFICIALLY

Independent source reports

Meeting 2: August 19, 2026 – State Capitol, Atlanta, GA

This session shifted toward regulatory compliance and broader educational frameworks.

- **Federal vs. State Mandates:** Dr. Allison Timberlake, the GaDOE Deputy Superintendent for Assessment and Accountability, delivered a presentation titled *"CCRPI: Alignment with Federal Law, State Priorities, and Student Outcomes"*.
- **Compliance:** The discussion detailed how Georgia's accountability systems must align with federal education laws while still serving state-level workforce priorities.

- **Joint Election Equipment Specifications and Standards Committee**

Meeting scheduled Sept 3,2026

Blue Ribbon Study Committee on Transportation Infrastructure and Vehicle Regulation

All 10 members of the Committee showed up.)

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This August 20 meeting was the first for this Committee and was primarily discussing noise pollution, and in particular car mufflers. There will be at least 2 more meetings on other subjects.

There were 5 presentations by the lobbyists that included a wide variety of health hazards that went way beyond hearing problems associated with unwanted noise; dB levels of car mufflers; cameras with audio capabilities; systems in place and/or being tested; law enforcement inability to enforce “loud, excessive, and unusual” law quoted by Chris Carr as the GA law that governed loud noises; costs of dB meters; and punishment for breaking these laws that included monetary fines and points on driver’s license.

There were 3 people that came to make public comments;

One, who was highly involved in the race car industry, was highly dubious of the severity of the problem because the lobbyists wanted to

exempt a large number of vehicles; he questioned the health claims, he Goggled 2 points brought out by the lobbyists that as not a muffler

problem but engine settings, he Googled dB restrictions that were too low for a Ford Mustang straight from the factory, debunked the dB

level of a lobbyist’s neighbor, he was against the targeting of shops that installed legal mufflers but were modified by the customer.

A retired lawyer expressed his concern over the vagueness of the present GA law and said that the issue was a local problem that might

benefit from State guidelines.

A third person also wanted clarification of the laws with State standards.