



February 17, 2026

The Honorable Matt Hatchett
Committee Chairman
Appropriations Committee
Georgia House of Representatives
243 State Capitol
Atlanta, GA, 30334

The Honorable Steven Meeks
Subcommittee Chairman
Economic Development Subcommittee
Georgia House of Representatives
245-F State Capitol
Atlanta, GA, 30334

The Honorable Darlene Taylor
Subcommittee Chairwoman
Health Subcommittee
Georgia House of Representatives
245-B CLOB
Atlanta, GA, 30334

The Honorable Bill Hitchens
Subcommittee Chairman
Public Safety Subcommittee
Georgia House of Representatives
217 State Capitol
Atlanta, GA, 30334

Dear Chairman Hatchett, Chairman Meeks, Chairwoman Taylor, and Chairman Hitchens:

On behalf of Health Students Taking Action Together (H-STAT), we write to strongly support HB 689 due to its strategic and cost-effective measures to address the rising eviction and homelessness crisis in Georgia. H-STAT represents the collective voices and interests of healthcare students and trainees across Georgia, with many of us hoping to practice across the state in our professional careers. We urge the Georgia House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations to support this bill.

As of February 2026, over [144,000 eviction notices](#) were filed in the past 12 months in metro Atlanta, making it one of the highest areas of evictions filed in the U.S. and increasing the risk of rising homelessness in the state. In most cases, the inability to pay rent is the [primary reason](#) for evictions in our state. Several studies have found an increase in evictions and the rise in homelessness across U.S. cities. As students who provide medical care for people experiencing homelessness and other vulnerable demographics, we have seen first-hand how rising housing costs in the state make it difficult for families to afford their homes. Homelessness is a [costly burden on taxpayers](#) as first responder services such as police or emergency departments are utilized more for people experiencing homelessness. Additionally, people experiencing homelessness are more likely to be at risk of infection, substance use, physical abuse or trauma, and mental illness, straining the public health infrastructure of the state. Research shows that [programs providing small amounts](#) of temporary financial assistance to households behind on rent and at

imminent risk of losing their housing is a cost-effective strategy to prevent homelessness (81% reduction in homelessness within six months and 73% in 12 months) and creates \$2.47 of benefits per net dollar spent.

From a health standpoint, evictions have devastating effects, particularly harming children. Housing instability is consistently associated with [adverse pregnancy outcomes](#), including pre-term birth, low-birthweight, and maternal morbidity. Mothers who experience eviction report poorer mental and physical health for themselves and their children, as well as more parenting stress. Additionally, housing instability, including evictions, makes it hard for children to learn. Eviction filings [decrease school attendance](#), and this decline continues even up to two years after the initial filing. The chronic absenteeism rate for [homeless children in Georgia](#) was 48% in FY23 compared to 27% nationally, with graduation rates among homeless youth lagging at 69% in Georgia compared to 87% nationally. Chronic absenteeism increases the risk of poor achievement, adverse physical and mental health outcomes, behavior problems, grade retention, and high school drop-out rates.

Once a family receives an eviction filing on their record, property managers frequently deny their application for a place to live. Eviction disrupts work for adults, results in loss of possessions, and undermines the strength and prosperity of communities. Once evicted, families often move into situations that are more crowded and less safe, where healthy food is less accessible. They can end up homeless, sleeping in a car, an extended stay hotel or another place not meant for a family. Short term assistance when a family has an emergency expense, such as a large medical bill, the death of a loved one or a car accident, can stabilize a family and prevent a traumatic financial spiral into eviction and homelessness.

In conclusion, HB 689 provides necessary funding to combat the eviction and homelessness crisis in the state. We urge the committee to support this legislation.

Thank you for your consideration on the issue. We look forward to working with you to promote the health of Georgians. If you have any questions, please contact Nicholas Wilson at nicholas@healthstatgeorgia.org.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Wilson
H-STAT President
Health Students Taking Action Together