



February 20, 2026

**Subject Line: Health Students Taking Action Together (H-STAT) Letter on SB 391**

The Honorable Brian Strickland  
Chairman  
Judiciary Committee  
Georgia State Senate  
324-B CLOB  
Atlanta, GA 30334

The Honorable Timothy Bearden  
Secretary  
Judiciary Committee  
Georgia State Senate  
304-B CLOB  
Atlanta, GA 30334

The Honorable Bill Cowsert  
Vice Chairman  
Judiciary Committee  
Georgia State Senate  
432 State Capitol  
Atlanta, GA 30334

The Honorable Harold Jones II  
Member  
Judiciary Committee  
Georgia State Senate  
121-B State Capitol  
Atlanta, GA 30334

Dear Chairman Strickland, Vice Chairman Cowsert, Secretary Bearden, and Senator Jones:

On behalf of Health Students Taking Action Together (H-STAT), we write to strongly support SB 391 due to protection of vulnerable populations and the repressions of active immigration enforcement in sensitive locations. [H-STAT](#) represents the collective voices of hundreds of healthcare students and trainees across Georgia who are dedicated to improving health outcomes for all citizens. We urge you to vote in support of this bill.

Our support of this bill is grounded in three key concerns:

**1. ICE activity around hospitals leads to worse health outcomes and a burdening to the healthcare system.** Research has shown that [immigration enforcement activity](#) around hospitals are associated with significant declines in healthcare utilization, including reduced access to preventative services, straining the system by deterring timely care, increasing stress-related morbidity, and [shifting care to higher-cost emergency settings](#). Notably, this decline in healthcare utilization and delay in accessing care can contribute to [increased infectious disease spread](#) in the community, as individuals with treatable illnesses remain untreated and potentially contagious. One study found that the mere signing of a [restrictive immigration law](#), even without full enforcement, led to a measurable decline in birth weight among Latina

immigrant women due to prenatal stress, suggesting the mere threat and visibility of enforcement activity alone can generate harmful stress responses during pregnancy. In Georgia, where [mixed-status families](#) comprise a growing share of the population, the presence of [ICE around hospitals](#) would discourage patients from seeking early treatment, resulting in delayed diagnoses and more advanced stages of diseases at presentation. Research has further demonstrated that such enforcement climates produce [spillover fear](#) within mixed-status communities, leading even authorized immigrants and U.S.-born family members to avoid healthcare settings. Restricting ICE presence around hospitals would therefore protect health for all, reduce preventable complications, and alleviate avoidable [financial and operational burdens](#) on Georgia's healthcare system by encouraging timely, preventive care rather than crisis-driven utilization.

**2. ICE enforcement activities around schools significantly impair children's learning and socioemotional development.** The presence of immigration enforcement fosters fear and trauma that disrupt the entire school community, leading to increased absenteeism and decreased academic performance. According to the American Immigration Council, such enforcement actions [create instability that undermines the safe and supportive environment essential for student success](#). Education Week further documents how these disruptions [fracture a student's ability to focus and engage](#), while research from Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center highlights the long-term emotional consequences, including [anxiety, depression, and difficulties forming healthy social connections](#). When children live under the constant threat of family separation, their cognitive growth and emotional well-being are compromised. Therefore, shielding schools from ICE involvement is crucial to ensuring that all children have the opportunity to learn and develop in a secure and nurturing environment.

**3. Excessive ICE activity is harmful to local economies.** The presence of ICE in communities not only harms health, but hurts local economies. Excessive immigration enforcement disrupts local labor markets by deterring workers from reporting to their jobs, reducing consumer spending, increasing labor shortages in key industries, and decreasing tax contributions that [support public services](#). One study found that an [escalation in immigration enforcement](#) activity in California led to "the state's downturn in [persons reporting for private sector work] that is comparable with the Great Recession and the COVID-19 pandemic". In Minneapolis, the initial economic impact of ICE activity following Operation Metro Surge was estimated to have cost the city \$203.1 million dollars in [lost revenue](#). Here in our home state of Georgia, which hosts the 8th largest immigrant workforce in the country, excessive ICE activity is estimated to cause losses of around [\\$929 million dollars in tax revenue](#). Should immigration enforcement be allowed to conduct operations in sensitive, important community spaces, the negative impact on our workforce and economy will be continued to be felt by all Georgians. SB 391 is necessary to regulate immigration enforcement activities and to ensure the economic vitality of our state that is reliant on immigrants.

In conclusion, we strongly support SB 391, as it aligns with the protection of the economic, health, and educational future we wish for as future Georgian healthcare providers. Thank you for your consideration of the issue. We look forward to working with you to promote the health of people in Georgia. If you have any questions, please contact Nicholas Wilson, H-STAT President, at [nicholas@healthstatgeorgia.org](mailto:nicholas@healthstatgeorgia.org).

Sincerely,

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Health Students Taking Action Together

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