

# Letter to Elected Officials

[Date]

The Honorable [Elected Official's Full Name]

[Elected Official's Office Address]

Dear Representative/Senator [Last Name],

I am writing to you as your constituent regarding the Amended FY2026 budget currently in conference. I understand that Georgia is facing serious challenges related to mental health and jail overcrowding. I also recognize the need for effective crisis response options across the state.

However, building a new \$409 million, 300-bed psychiatric hospital should not replace investments in community-based supports that prevent crisis in the first place.

People with disabilities and mental health conditions deserve access to care that promotes dignity, independence, and safety. Large institutional settings have historically led to isolation and long-term confinement rather than recovery and stability.

Right now, Georgia has the opportunity to invest in community-based solutions that reduce incarceration, including crisis response teams, supportive housing, expanded behavioral health services, and workforce development. I agree that addressing jail overcrowding and law enforcement safety is important. However, expanding institutional capacity should not replace investments in preventive, community-based care.


I respectfully urge you to prioritize:

- Funding at least 1,217 NOW and COMP waivers for individuals with urgent needs
- Providing the staffing necessary to implement those waivers
- Supporting the EmPATH Bill (HB 913) to expand hospital-based crisis stabilization units

NOW and COMP waivers help people with disabilities remain stable in their homes and communities. EmPATH units provide short-term, hospital-based crisis stabilization and connect individuals back to community care quickly.

These approaches:

- Prevent unnecessary incarceration
- Support public safety
- Reduce long-term system costs
- Keep families intact



Families across Georgia have been waiting too long for these critical supports. As the Amended FY2026 budget is finalized, I respectfully ask that you prioritize waivers and EmPATH over institutional expansion.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Address]

