

Sample Email to Elected Officials

Subject: Prioritize Waivers and EmPATH Over Institutional Expansion in the Amended FY2026 Budget

Dear Representative/Senator [Last Name],

I am writing to you as a constituent from [City/County] regarding the Amended FY2026 budget currently in conference.

I understand that local sheriffs and law enforcement face serious challenges when individuals experience mental or behavioral health crises in jails. I also recognize that Georgia is working to expand crisis response capacity.

However, crisis response after incarceration is not the same as preventing crisis in the first place.

Georgia Senate Appropriations approved \$409 million to build a new 300-bed psychiatric hospital. While addressing jail overcrowding is important, I urge you to prioritize investments that keep people stable in their homes and communities before they encounter law enforcement.

Specifically, I am asking that you:

- Fund at least 1,217 NOW and COMP waivers and the staffing needed to implement them
- Support the EmPATH Bill (HB 913) to expand hospital-based crisis stabilization units
- Strengthen community-based services before expanding institutional capacity

Investing in Home and Community-Based Services and EmPATH crisis units:

- Prevents crisis and incarceration
- Supports public safety
- Reduces long-term system costs
- Keeps families intact

Families across Georgia have been waiting too long for these critical supports.

As the Amended FY2026 budget is finalized, I respectfully ask you to prioritize waivers and EmPATH over institutional expansion.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Address]

[City, State ZIP]