Georgia's Path to Change

Every realistic route to rebuilding oversight of guardians ad litem in Georgia custody cases — what each route takes, who holds its keys, and the order in which to push them.

"Can a senator even do this? Is that the only way?" Those are the right questions, and they have a fuller answer than most reform efforts ever get. Georgia's guardian ad litem (GAL) system for custody cases was not created by one act, and it will not be changed by one. It sits at the crossing of four different kinds of authority: the General Assembly, which writes statutes and appropriates money; the Supreme Court of Georgia, which writes the court rules under which custody GALs actually serve; the study-committee process, which is how the General Assembly studies a problem in the open before it legislates; and the administrative machinery of the judicial branch, which can count, publish, and standardize without any vote at all. Each of those authorities holds a door. Each door opens onto a different part of the same building, and each has a different keyholder, a different clock, and a different way of failing. This paper maps all four routes — the statute, the court rule, the study committee, and the administrative route — step by step, from Georgia's own published sources, and then sets them in the order this project intends to push them, from November 2026 through the 2027 session and beyond. It expands the twelve-step Georgia playbook in this project's Paper No. 14, *The Indiana Model*, into the full board; readers who want the working model should read that paper beside this one.

What this paper is — and is not

This is a civics and process paper from a grassroots project, written anonymously by design. It names no family, describes no individual case, and accuses no individual GAL of misconduct. It uses no county records material; every process fact in it rests on Georgia's published law and the official pages of the General Assembly, the Supreme Court, the Council of Superior Court Judges, and the Judicial Council and Administrative Office of the Courts, listed in the Sources. Where a Georgia process fact could not be verified from an official source — and there are several, flagged in the method note — this paper says so rather than smoothing over it. The standing frame of this project applies in full: the problem this series documents is rogue practice and missing oversight, not the GAL role itself, and not the many GALs who do careful work inside structures that give them too little support. This paper is general information about how Georgia government works. It is not legal advice about any case, and it is not a prediction: it maps who would have to do what, and leaves what they will do to them.

1 · The board in brief

The starting point is the one this series has documented throughout. For custody cases, the whole of Georgia's GAL structure is one court rule — Uniform Superior Court Rule 24.9 — administered by the judge who makes each appointment. There is no published statewide list of custody GALs, no stated number of training hours, and no complaint door other than a motion to the appointing judge. Counted against the four structures in this project's fifty-state survey (Paper No. 13, *Fifty States, Counted*), Georgia custody has none of the four: no oversight home (16 states have one), no public roster (9), no training floor (44), and no GAL-specific complaint route outside the appointing judge (13). The project's three asks answer that zero directly: **a public registry** of who is approved to serve; **a training floor with continuing education**; and **an oversight home that is not the appointing**

judge, holding a real complaint process.

Four routes lead toward those asks, and they are not rivals:

- **Route 1 — the statute.** A bill through the General Assembly, signed by the Governor. The broadest and slowest route, and the only one that can appropriate money or create an oversight office in law.
- **Route 2 — the court rule.** An amendment to Rule 24.9, recommended through the Council of Superior Court Judges and adopted by order of the Supreme Court. This is the route Indiana used to build its entire system, and the route that does not need 236 legislators.
- **Route 3 — the study committee.** A resolution creating a committee that studies, hears testimony in public, and reports with draft legislation attached. The on-ramp: it enacts nothing itself, and it is how Routes 1 and 2 acquire an official record, named sponsors, and momentum.
- **Route 4 — the administrative route.** The Judicial Council and the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) counting what is now uncounted, publishing model standards, and building the data every other route will be argued over. The quiet route: nothing it produces binds anyone, and everything else runs better on top of it.

One lesson from the model states organizes the whole map. Indiana built its standards, registry, training floor, and complaint process by court rule — Route 2 — and used its legislature for exactly one step: a funding provision for families who cannot pay (Paper No. 14). Utah's 2026 build used a statute and a court rule together. Georgia's task is not to pick the one true door; it is to push each door for the part of the building only it can open, in an order where each push makes the next one easier.

2 · Route 1 — The statute

Who can start it, and the steps in order

Only a member of the General Assembly can introduce a bill. A citizen, a project, or a governor can propose the idea; a Senator or Representative must carry it. From there, the path is fixed by the Georgia Constitution, the Code, and each chamber's rules, and the state's own explainer, Georgia.gov's *The Life of a Law*, walks it in plain language:

- **Drafting.** The sponsor takes the proposal to the **Office of Legislative Counsel**, whose attorneys draft the bill in correct statutory form — the language that would amend the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (for custody GALs, most naturally Title 19, domestic relations, or Title 15, courts, or both).
- **Prefiling (optional, and now).** Under O.C.G.A. § 28-1-17, a bill may be **prefiled** with the Secretary of the Senate or the Clerk of the House during the window that opens **November 15** and closes the **Friday before the second Monday in January** — for the 2027 session, November 15, 2026 through Friday, January 8, 2027. Prefiling is not introduction: official steps can be taken only once the session convenes.
- **Convening and introduction.** The General Assembly convenes on the **second Monday in January** — for 2027, **Monday, January 11, 2027** — and sits for at most **40 legislative days**. On introduction, the bill receives its **First Reading** (its title read in the chamber), and the presiding officer **assigns it to a standing committee**.

• **Committee.** The committee chair sets the meetings. The committee can hear testimony — from the author, other legislators, state officials, and members of the public — and can amend the bill. It then reports: **Do Pass**, **Do Pass by Amendment**, or **Do Pass by Substitute**; or it reports **Do Not Pass**; or, most commonly, it simply holds the bill and issues no report. Georgia.gov's summary is blunt: the majority of bills die in committee.

• **Rules — the second gate.** A favorably reported bill goes to the General Calendar, but it reaches the floor only if the chamber's **Rules Committee** places it on the Rules Calendar for a legislative day. Committee passage without Rules scheduling is a quiet death, and any honest account of this route names both gates.

• **Floor passage in the first chamber.** On its **Third Reading** the bill is debated, may be amended, and passes by majority vote — in time to meet **Crossover Day**, the deadline, set by each session's adjournment resolution, by which a bill must pass its originating chamber to stay alive that year. Crossover is not a fixed date in law: it fell on Day 28 of the 2026 session (March 6, 2026), and the 2027 date will be set when the 2027 session adopts its calendar.

• **The second chamber.** The whole sequence repeats — reading, committee, Rules, floor. If the second chamber changes the text, the first must agree to the changes; if neither will yield, a **conference committee of three members from each house** negotiates a single text, which both houses must then adopt.

• **The Governor.** A bill passed by both houses in identical form goes to the Governor, who has **six days** to sign or veto while the Assembly is in session and **forty days** after adjournment sine die (Day 40, in late March or early April). Signature makes it law; **doing nothing also makes it law**; a veto returns the bill to the next session, where **two-thirds of each house** can override it.

• **Effect and the second year.** Unless the act states otherwise, a new law takes effect **July 1**. And because 2027 opens a new two-year term of the General Assembly (the 2027–28 biennium), a bill introduced in 2027 that does not pass is not finished: it retains a second chance in 2028, though a bill that fails by the end of 2028 must start over.

The committee question, stated honestly

Which committee would receive a custody-GAL bill? No source can answer that in advance: the presiding officer of the originating chamber assigns each bill, and assignment is discretion. The plausible doors, from the committees' published scopes, are these. In the Senate, **Judiciary** oversees "legislation related to judicial proceedings in both civil and criminal practice" and constitutional questions; **Children and Families**, created in 2023, was charged with "taking the lead on mental health, child protection, foster care, and adoption initiatives." In the House, child and court measures move through **Judiciary** and through **Judiciary Juvenile**. A GAL statute amends court practice *and* governs a child-serving profession, so either assignment is defensible — which is precisely why a sponsor's relationships in *both* committees matter, and why the study-committee route (Section 4), whose current Georgia example is co-chaired by the chairs of Senate Children and Families and House Judiciary Juvenile, is such a useful on-ramp.

That framing also locates the senator whose office has agreed to meet this project. **Senator Kenya Wicks (District 34)** sits on the Senate **Government Oversight** Committee — and on Public Safety, Science and Technology, Urban Affairs, and Veterans, Military, and Homeland Security — and is a Deputy Whip of her caucus. She does **not** sit on Judiciary or Children and Families. What a senator in her position can do is nonetheless substantial, and Section 7 returns to it: sponsor and prefile the bill,

testify and advocate for it in the committee she does not sit on, carry it on the floor, serve on a study committee — she already sits on one, the SR 622 committee described in Section 4 — and be a credible public voice for the judicial-branch route, which no legislator can deliver but any legislator can endorse. What she cannot do is chair its hearing or control its calendar. This paper states her position as it is documented; she has taken no public position on this project's proposals, and her office's willingness to schedule a meeting is recorded as exactly that, and nothing more.

What a statute can deliver — and what can kill it

A statute is the only route that can deliver the three asks **in full and in law**: create an oversight office or board (Florida's Statewide Guardian ad Litem Office and Minnesota's State Guardian ad Litem Board are both creatures of statute); mandate a public registry with legal effect beyond court procedure; set the training floor in the Code itself, as Georgia already does for the dependency track at O.C.G.A. § 15-11-104(f); require annual reporting; direct the courts to adopt implementing rules; and — the thing no other route can do at all — **appropriate the money**: staff for an oversight home, the cost of background checks, and a funding mechanism for GAL services to families who cannot pay, which was the one step Indiana's legislature had to take even inside a court-built system. The kill points are equally clear: a chair who never schedules a hearing; a Rules Committee that never schedules the floor vote; a missed Crossover Day; a second chamber that amends the bill to death in conference; a veto; and, hanging over all of them, the honest cost question — a statute that creates machinery without funding it builds a paper office, and this project will not pretend a figure exists where no Georgia source has published one (Paper No. 14 records the same absence for Indiana).

3 · Route 2 — The court rule (the Indiana route)

The authority, and the named channel

Custody GALs serve under a court rule, so the fastest complete build runs through the institution that writes court rules. The authority is constitutional. Article VI, Section IX, Paragraph I of the Georgia Constitution provides that the Supreme Court shall, **"with the advice and consent of the council of the affected class or classes of trial courts, by order adopt and publish uniform court rules."** The Uniform Superior Court Rules say the same in their preamble, and add the boundary that matters for drafting: the rules are not intended to conflict with the Constitution or substantive law, and where they conflict, they yield to substantive law.

The Rules also name their own amendment channel, and precision here improves on this project's earlier playbook. **Rule 1.6** provides that the **Council of Superior Court Judges** — the council of the affected class, composed of the state's superior court judges — "shall have a permanent committee to recommend to the Supreme Court such changes and additions to these rules as may from time to time appear necessary or desirable," and that the State Bar of Georgia and the other classes' uniform-rules chairs receive notice of proposed changes and an opportunity to comment. Rule 1.7 provides for publication of amendments in the advance sheets of the Georgia Reports, effective on publication unless the order states otherwise. The **Judicial Council of Georgia** — the judiciary's policymaking body, chaired by the Chief Justice and staffed by the AOC — is a proper and important addressee for the study and policy proposal that precedes a rule change (Paper No. 14's playbook addressed its first steps there, and the Council has itself adopted model rules that later entered the Uniform Rules), but the Uniform Rules' standing recommendation channel runs through the Council of Superior Court Judges to the Supreme Court. A serious Georgia campaign addresses both, knowing which one formally moves the text.

The cycle as it actually runs

This is not a theoretical process; the Council of Superior Court Judges runs it in public, on a rhythm visible in its own notices:

- **Proposal and drafting.** A change is drafted — by the Council's permanent Uniform Rules committee, a judge, a Judicial Council committee, the State Bar, or, in Indiana's sequence, a taskforce whose report recommends it. Any person may put a proposal and its reasons in front of these bodies in writing; the formal recommendation, however, is the committee's.
- **Council approval of proposed amendments.** At a business meeting — the Council's meetings recur in January and July — the Council approves proposed amendments for publication. Documented recent cycles include amendments to Rules 7, 17, 25, and 43 (approved January 22, 2025), Rules 4, 10, and 21 (July 2025), and Rules 8 and 36 (January 22, 2026).
- **Public comment, on a long window.** The proposed text is posted on the Council's website and written comments are invited — by email to the Council — by a stated deadline roughly **six months** later (January approvals have drawn July deadlines; July approvals, January deadlines). Nothing in the Council's notices limits commenters to lawyers or judges. A live example sits on the calendar as this paper is written: proposed amendments to Rule 8, approved July 29, 2026, are open for comment until **Monday, January 11, 2027** — the day the legislative session opens.
- **Adoption by Supreme Court order.** Following the comment period, amendments are adopted by order of the Supreme Court with a stated, usually future, effective date — as in the Court's October 5, 2026 order amending Rules 4.3, 10.2, and 21 effective November 5, 2026, and its February 26, 2026 order effective April 9, 2026. Rule 24.9 itself entered the Uniform Rules this way, by Supreme Court order in 2005.

What a rule can carry — and what it likely cannot

Measured against the three asks, an amended Rule 24.9 could plausibly carry most of the structure. Appointment, qualification, and role are already the rule's subject: it could state qualifications and background checks as **conditions of appointment**, replace the present circuit-by-circuit training expectation — Rule 24.9(2) requires only "such training as provided by or approved by the Circuit," with no hours stated — with a **defined training floor and continuing education**, make appointment conditional on the GAL's inclusion in a **registry the rule requires to be maintained and published**, prescribe the practice duties Indiana put in its Rule 3 (written appointment orders stating duties and fee apportionment, report timing, file access — redrafted onto Georgia's definition of the GAL as the court's witness rather than a party), and set **complaint-intake standards** so that a concern about a GAL is received and recorded somewhere other than the appointing judge's chambers. This route needs no legislator at all: its decision-makers are the Council of Superior Court Judges and the nine justices of the Supreme Court.

Its limits are real, and this paper states rather than discovers them later. A rule **cannot appropriate money** — it cannot fund an oversight office's staff, pay for background checks, or fund GAL services for poor families; those need Route 1. A rule must stay within practice and procedure and **yields to substantive law** under its own preamble, so the further a proposal reaches toward substantive rights or a free-standing disciplinary tribunal, the more it invites the objection that it belongs in a statute. And whether the Supreme Court would carry registry-keeping and complaint adjudication inside a Uniform Rule — Indiana's court did the equivalent by order under its own constitution — is a judgment for that Court: this paper maps the authority; it does not predict the answer, and no published source states

one.

4 · Route 3 — The study committee (the on-ramp)

How the mechanism works

A study committee is created by **resolution**, adopted during a session. A Senate study committee takes a Senate resolution adopted by the Senate; a **joint** study committee — members from both houses — requires adoption by both. Georgia.gov's explainer describes study committees as bodies authorized by one or both houses, typically with a specific issue in mind, and "most active in the interim between sessions." Members are appointed by the presiding officers (for joint committees, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House each appoint their house's members and designate a cochair). The committee then does what a floor session cannot: it meets through the interim, hears testimony in public from agencies, judges, professionals, and citizens, and builds a record. Its product is a **report** — adopted findings and recommendations, which may include suggested legislation — and its force is exactly that record plus the sponsorship of the members who signed it. A study committee enacts nothing. What it produces is the official version of the problem, with named legislators already attached to the solution.

SR 622 — the live example, described exactly

Georgia is running this mechanism right now, on this project's calendar, and the example is instructive precisely because of what it is *not*. **Senate Resolution 622 (2026)** created the **Joint Study Committee on Evaluating Escalating Costs in Georgia's Foster Care System**. Its adopted text charges the committee with the costs of DFCS out-of-home care — $141,309,251 in fiscal 2025, projected above $164,728,091 in fiscal 2026, up 159 percent since 2022 — and with examining "the existing framework of the delivery of out of home care services, wrap-around services, and all related costs." **Custody guardians ad litem appear nowhere in its charge, and this project will not inflate a foster-care costs committee into a GAL committee.** What the resolution does provide, in its own terms:

- **Twenty members**: six Senators and six Representatives appointed by the presiding officers, each side's cochair designated by the appointing officer; a gubernatorial appointee with recent dependency-proceedings experience; the Commissioners of Human Services, Community Health, Juvenile Justice, and Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (or designees); the **President of the Council of Juvenile Court Judges** and the **President of the Council of Superior Court Judges** (or designees); and the Executive Director of Together Georgia (or designee).
- **Power to recommend "any action or legislation"** the committee deems necessary or appropriate on the subjects in its charge.
- **A report rule with a hard edge**: adopted findings or recommendations must be approved by majority vote of a quorum and filed by the cochairpersons, signed, with the Secretary of the Senate and the Clerk of the House, **before the committee's abolishment on December 1, 2026**; if no report is approved, the cochairpersons may file the meeting minutes in lieu of a report.
- **A working calendar already run**: the committee was appointed over the summer of 2026 and met on August 13, September 17, and October 22, 2026, and its members have said publicly that it will draft recommendations for new legislation by December 1.

Two membership facts matter to this project's sequencing, and both are matters of public record. The cochairpersons are **Senator Kay Kirkpatrick**, who chairs the Senate Children and Families Committee, and **Representative Beth Camp**, who chairs House Judiciary Juvenile — the chairs of two of the committees identified in Section 2 as the plausible doors for a child-and-courts bill. And **Senator Wicks is one of the six Senate appointees** to this committee: the senator whose office is meeting this project already sits inside the study-committee mechanism, in the room where the judicial councils' presidents also sit. None of that makes SR 622 a GAL vehicle. It makes the committee's December report the nearest official document in the territory — to be read, on publication, for what it does and does not say about court-ordered services and their costs — and it makes its membership the working demonstration of where a GAL proposal's sponsors and gatekeepers already gather.

The GAL study committee: a resolution of its own

The direct Route 3 ask follows the same pattern one session later: a resolution introduced in the **2027 session** creating a study committee on guardians ad litem in custody cases — or a broader committee on children's representation in Georgia courts — adopted before sine die, meeting through the **2027 interim**, and reporting, on the standard pattern these resolutions use, before a December 2027 abolishment date. Its report would land in the **November 15, 2027 – January 7, 2028 prefiling window** for the 2028 session, the biennium's second year, with draft legislation attached and its members as that legislation's natural sponsors. That is the honest Route 3 timeline: it does not shorten the road to a statute; it paves it, and it gives Route 2 a legislative record to be cited in the Council's and the Court's own deliberations while the rule route proceeds in parallel.

5 · Route 4 — The administrative and data route (the quiet route)

Some of the missing structure is missing because nobody has been assigned to build it, and some of it can be built by assignment alone. The **Judicial Council of Georgia** is, in its own description, "the policymaking body for Georgia's judiciary," and its staff arm, the **Administrative Office of the Courts**, provides expertise on policy, court innovation, legislation, and court administration to every Georgia court. The AOC's statutory charge (O.C.G.A. § 15-5-24) includes compiling data, examining dockets and recommending ways to expedite litigation, acting as the Judicial Council's fiscal officer, and making recommendations for improving court administration and the judicial system. Under that charge, and without any vote anywhere, the judicial branch could:

- **Count what is now uncounted.** The AOC's *Georgia Court Guide to Statistical Reporting* is the standard framework through which trial-court statistics are compiled, analyzed, and published by its Office of Research and Data Analysis, and the AOC is the state archive of court statistical information. That framework counts superior court cases by type — domestic relations filings are reported by circuit every year — but, consistent with this project's own statistics research, **it defines no aggregate count of GAL appointments, in custody or dependency cases**. There is today no published number, from any Georgia source, for how many custody GALs Georgia's courts appoint in a year. Adding that data element, and publishing the first statewide count, is an administrative act — and it converts every later argument on Routes 1 and 2 from anecdote against anecdote into arithmetic.
- **Publish model standards and forms.** Model appointment orders, model GAL report formats, and non-binding best-practice standards can be developed through Judicial Council committees and circulated to the circuits — soft law that raises the floor in practice while the binding

instruments are pending, and that becomes the drafting base for the rule amendment itself.

- **Convene the table.** A Judicial Council committee or working group on custody GALs — judges, sitting GALs, family-law practitioners, AOC and Office of the Child Advocate staff — is Indiana's Step 1 (Paper No. 14), and it requires no one's permission but the Council's.
- **Use the capacity Georgia already runs.** Training delivery exists (the Institute of Continuing Judicial Education; the State Bar's continuing-education system; and, on the dependency side, the Office of the Child Advocate's training-approval function under § 15-11-104(f)). A custody curriculum can be built administratively before any rule requires anyone to take it.

The limits are the mirror of the route's ease. Nothing produced administratively **binds** a judge, conditions an appointment, removes a name from anything, or answers a complaint with authority. A voluntary list is not a registry with legal effect; a model standard is not a floor. Route 4 is the foundation and the evidence base — the route that makes the other three arguable — not the destination.

6 · The routes compared

Route	Who holds the keys	Fastest realistic effect	What it can deliver of the three asks	What can kill it
1 · Statute	Sponsor; committee chairs; Rules Committees; both chambers; Governor	Law effective July 1, 2027, if passed in the 2027 session; realistically 2028	All three, in law — plus a funded oversight office, appropriations, reporting duties	Committee hold; Rules never scheduling; Crossover missed; conference; veto; an unfunded mandate
2 · Court rule	Council of Superior Court Judges (permanent committee; Council vote); Supreme Court, by order	One Council cycle: proposal to comment to adoption, roughly a year	Training floor; registry as a condition of appointment; complaint-intake standards — most of the structure	Council never taking it up; comment-cycle opposition; the substantive-law boundary; no money attaches
3 · Study committee	Presiding officers (appointments); cochairpersons; the committee's majority	GAL committee adopted 2027, reporting December 2027; legislation 2028	None directly — it delivers the record, the draft bill, and the sponsors for Routes 1 and 2	Never introduced or adopted; a report filed as minutes-only; recommendations ignored
4 · Admin. / data	Judicial Council; AOC Director and research office	Months — a data element and a first count inside a reporting year	None binding — it delivers the count, the models, and the convened table the other routes need	Leadership priorities; courts' reporting burden; quiet shelving

The bottom line the table makes visible: **no route delivers everything, and every ask is delivered by at least one route.** The statute is the only complete instrument and the easiest to kill. The rule is the fastest complete instrument and cannot carry money. The study committee delivers nothing enforceable and makes both of the others more likely. The administrative route delivers nothing binding and is the only one that can start this month without asking anyone outside the judicial branch's own offices. A campaign that picks one route chooses its failure mode; a campaign that runs them in sequence and in parallel does not have to.

7 · The order of battle — November 2026 through the 2027 session and beyond

• **November 2026 — position.** The Wicks meeting (Section 2) is this phase's centerpiece, and its purpose can be stated exactly: to ask a senator who sits on the SR 622 study committee, and whose Government Oversight seat is concerned with how government programs answer for themselves, to become a **sponsor or champion for Routes 1 and 3** — a bill and a study-committee resolution for the 2027 session — and a **credible voice for Route 2**, which legislators cannot deliver but can publicly endorse to the judicial branch audiences who can. The meeting presumes nothing about her position; it is the ask, not the answer. In the same weeks: drafting instructions prepared so a sponsor can take the proposal to Legislative Counsel without a second meeting; the Rule 24.9 proposal put in writing to the judicial-branch bodies named in Section 3; and the project's fifty-state and Indiana materials (Papers No. 13 and No. 14) in the hands of every office that will be asked to act.

• **December 1, 2026 — read the SR 622 report when it is filed.** Whatever the foster-care costs committee recommends, its treatment of court-ordered services, judicial-branch costs, and children's services is the session's opening context — and its cochairpersons chair the committees a GAL bill would face. Nothing about GALs should be attributed to it that it does not say.

• **December 2026 – January 8, 2027 — the prefiling window.** A sponsor may prefile the GAL bill (and the study-committee resolution) under § 28-1-17, giving the proposal a number and a public text before the session opens on **January 11, 2027**. Simultaneously, on Route 2's independent clock, the Council of Superior Court Judges' January business meeting is the first 2027 occasion on which proposed Rule 24.9 amendments could be taken up; January 11, 2027 is also the closing date of the Council's open comment window on Rule 8 — the comment door is real, dated, and usable by the public.

• **January – March 2027 — the session.** Introduce early; the work is the committee hearing and the Crossover deadline (Day 28 in 2026; the 2027 date will be set by the session's own calendar). The two realistic session outcomes, either of which advances the board: the **bill passes** (Governor's forty days follow sine die; effect July 1, 2027), or the **study-committee resolution is adopted** and the bill's record is built in the interim instead. Route 2 advocacy continues through the session without pause, because its calendar is not the session's.

• **Interim 2027 — build the record in public.** The GAL study committee, if adopted, hears testimony through the interim; the Council of Superior Court Judges runs its July and January comment cycles; the AOC data question (Route 4) is pressed so that the first statewide count of custody GAL appointments exists before anyone is asked to vote again.

• **December 2027 – the 2028 session — the second push.** A study report filed before a December 2027 abolishment feeds the **November 15, 2027 – January 7, 2028 prefiling window**; the implementing bill enters the 2028 session — the biennium's second year, in which 2027's unfinished bills also remain alive — with named sponsors, an official record, and, if Route 2 has moved, a rule already in force for a statute to fund and entrench.

Sequenced this way, the routes stop competing. The study committee manufactures the record; the record feeds the committee hearing and the rule comment file alike; the rule, if adopted, proves the machinery works and isolates the one remaining legislative question — money — into the smallest possible bill; and the data route supplies numbers no one currently has. Indiana took five years from taskforce to go-live. Georgia's board, mapped honestly, is a two-session project with a rule change possible inside the first of them. That is not a promise. It is a calendar.

8 · Closing — four doors, one building

The question that prompted this paper — "is that the only way?" — has a clean answer: no. Georgia offers four distinct, documented, currently operating mechanisms by which its custody-GAL system can be changed, each with named keyholders and a published process, and the three asks can be reached by more than one of them. What has been missing is not a mechanism. It is the sustained, sequenced pressure on all of them at once — a sponsor in the General Assembly, a proposal in the Council's comment file, a study committee building the record, and a count where today there is not even a number. The children whose custody is decided on a GAL's recommendation cannot file any of those papers. The adults who can are named, institution by institution, in this paper. The paths are open. This project intends to walk all four.

What you can do

Two kinds of help matter most right now:

- **Answer a survey.** The project runs separate anonymous surveys for parents who have had a GAL in a Georgia case and for professionals who work alongside GALs. Surveys carry no phone number and ask for no child's name or case details. The surveys ask for good experiences as well as bad.
- **Share an experience — through the anonymous surveys.** Experiences reach this project only through its anonymous surveys, which ask for no name, no email address, and nothing that identifies a child. The project does not accept accounts by email. Patterns are the point; no single story is published as fact on its own.
- **If you work in or near the General Assembly, the Judicial Council, or the Council of Superior Court Judges:** the routes in this paper are written to be used — every step names its actor — and the project can supply the underlying sources (the Indiana order and guidelines, the fifty-state survey, the SR 622 text) by email.

Contact: georgiagalreform@gmail.com

Project email only. This paper was published anonymously by the project; no individual is named as its author, and no family's case is described in it.

A note on method — and on limits

Every process fact in this paper was read on November 5, 2026 in the source it is attributed to: the Georgia Constitution and the Official Code of Georgia Annotated for the session frame, prefiling, and the Governor's action; Georgia.gov's *The Life of a Law* and the Clerk of the House's *How a Bill Becomes a Law* for the legislative steps; the Uniform Superior Court Rules themselves and the Supreme Court's published rule-amendment orders for the court-rule route; the Council of Superior Court Judges' own proposed-amendment notices (2020–2026) for the comment cycle as practised; the adopted text of SR 622 (26 LC 60 0254), the Senate's daily status sheets, and the Lieutenant Governor's appointment announcement for the study-committee route; and the Judicial Council/AOC's published descriptions and statistical-reporting guide for the administrative route. Five limits are stated rather than buried. **First**, the 2027 session's Crossover Day and sine die dates do not yet exist, so this paper gives the verified pattern (Crossover on Day 28 in 2026) and no 2027 dates beyond the constitutional convening day, Monday, January 11, 2027. **Second**, the committee assignment of any future bill cannot be verified in advance; the committees named are plausible doors from published scopes, and assignment remains the presiding officer's discretion. **Third**, SR

622's report had not been filed as of this writing; this paper describes the resolution's charge and mechanics only, and attributes no GAL content to it, because its charge contains none. **Fourth**, whether the Supreme Court of Georgia would adopt registry and complaint machinery by rule is unmapped by any published source and is presented as the Court's judgment to make, not a result this paper forecasts. **Fifth**, no Georgia source prices the build proposed here, and Indiana publishes no total cost for its system (Paper No. 14); accordingly this paper quotes no figure for either. One refinement of earlier project work is recorded: Paper No. 14's playbook described the Uniform Rules drafting vehicle generically as a Judicial Council process; Rule 1.6 names the Council of Superior Court Judges' permanent committee as the recommendation channel to the Supreme Court, and Section 3 states the two bodies' roles accordingly.

Sources

- Georgia Constitution, Art. III (legislative department; Governor's approval and veto) and Art. VI, Sec. IX, Para. I (uniform court rules).
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