



Monday, March 1, 2021

206 Washington Street  
Suite 203, State Capitol  
Atlanta, GA 30334

Dear Governor Kemp,

The proposed budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 includes \$1.2 billion in continued cuts from FY 2020 state spending to programs and services across Georgia. At a time when millions of families are experiencing greater needs due to the pandemic, this budget would underfund Georgia's schools, services for Georgians with disabilities, anti-poverty programs, public safety and more.

Georgians need more support from the state, especially after budget cuts of approximately \$1.7 billion are expected to be implemented during the 2021 fiscal year. An equitable economic recovery is important for every Georgian and critical for the state's future. These budget cuts and policy choices put Georgia's future at risk.

This budget represents a choice to underfund state government at a critical time when Georgians are relying on our state for support. This is not the best path forward, and we know there are options to help Georgia restore funding to vital services and programs, address COVID-19 and foster prosperity in every community.

While we continue to advocate for increased federal relief, there are clear options you and other state leaders can pursue to help eliminate these budget cuts.

We must deploy funds from the state's Revenue Shortfall Reserve (RSR). This rainy-day fund, which was created to allow our state to avoid steep budget cuts in the event of an economic downturn, currently holds \$2.7 billion, with \$1.685 billion available to be released for appropriation at any time. Although the COVID-19 recession has been among the most devastating economic and social events in history, Georgia has deviated from prior responses to economic recessions by choosing to make billions in cuts alone without drawing from the state's near-record-level rainy-day fund to supplement revenue shortfalls. If now is not the time to tap into these reserves, then when is?

State services like K-12 education, public health and behavioral health services have been underfunded since the Great Recession, and in this latest budget proposal, Georgia would spend \$100 less per person than it did in 2008. While the option to use funding from our state's robust RSR will not address the long-term effects of COVID-19 or the chronic underfunding of education, health and other critical services, it can provide immediate



funding to reduce or eliminate budget cuts. You can also urge lawmakers to raise new revenues in order to ensure long-term recovery.

We also know these budget cuts continue to have a disproportionate effect on rural communities and on Georgians of color. When we look at underlying numbers among unemployment rates, we see that Black Georgians are facing greater hardship. These communities cannot recover during continued budget cuts.

The best way to fully recovery from this pandemic is to invest in the programs and services Georgians rely on and put people first. We cannot cut our way to prosperity.

We urge you to put the needs of Georgians first with the consideration of these policy options that would help eliminate harmful budget cuts and mitigate the harm of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic on every Georgia community.

Sincerely,

**9to5**

**Achieve Atlanta**

**ACLU of Georgia**

**Agnes Scott College**

**Alcohol & Drug Abuse Certification Board of Georgia (ADACBGA)**

**Alliance Recovery Center, Inc.**

**American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Georgia Chapter**

**Ann Duffy**

**Atlanta Center for Self Sufficiency**

**Atlanta Wealth Building Initiative**

**Beyond The Bell (Savannah)**

**Brooks County NAACP Branch #5173**

**Center for Pan Asian Community Services**



**Center for Racial Healing**  
**CivicGeorgia**  
**Coalición de Líderes Latinos-CLILA**  
**Coalition of Refugee Service Agencies**  
**Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta**  
**Community Farmers Markets**  
**Corners Outreach**  
**Deep Center**  
**Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.**  
**Eddie Bogan**  
**Elysian Community Development Corporation**  
**Emmaus House**  
**Faith in Public Life**  
**Gateway Center**  
**Gateway Treatment Centers**  
**Georgia Black Constructors Association**  
**Georgia Budget and Policy Institute**  
**Georgia Coalition for the People's Agenda**  
**Georgia Conservation Voters**  
**Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities**  
**Georgia Equality**  
**Georgia Hispanic Construction Association**  
**Georgia Interfaith Public Policy Center**  
**Georgia NAACP**





**Georgia Organics**  
**Georgia Shift Action**  
**Georgia State AFL-CIO**  
**Georgia Supportive Housing Association, Inc.**  
**Georgia WAND**  
**Georgia Women (and Those Who Stand With Us)**  
**Georgia Working Families Party**  
**Georgians for a Healthy Future**  
**Glenda Minkin**  
**Harambee House, Inc.**  
**Hosea Helps, Inc.**  
**Indivisible Georgia Coalition**  
**Jewish Community Relations Council**  
**Jewish Democratic Women's Salon**  
**Lois Frank**  
**Mercy Care**  
**New Georgia Project Action Fund**  
**New Sanctuary Movement of Atlanta**  
**New Vision MSK**  
**Norelie Garcia Valentin**  
**Park Place Outreach**  
**Partnership for Southern Equity**  
**Poder Latinx**  
**Presbyterians for a Better Georgia**



**R. Howard Dobbs, Jr. Foundation**

**Rep GA Institute, Inc.**

**Step Up Savannah**

**STRIVE Atlanta**

**The Latin American Association**

**The National Domestic Workers Alliance - We Dream In Black**

**The New Georgia Project**

**The People's Agenda - Savannah**

**The Scholarship Academy**

**Tom Boller**

**United Campus Workers of Georgia, Communications Workers of America**

**Women Watch Afrika, Inc.**

