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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Rep. Charlice Byrd and Sen. Colton Moore Seek To Improve Budget**

Rep. Charlice Byrd and Sen. Colton Moore, Chair and Vice Chair of the Georgia Freedom Caucus, have released the following statement regarding the AFY 2023 and FY 2024 proposed budgets:

We strongly advocate for fiscally conservative policies. Therefore, we are seeking to work with members of the General Assembly to improve the proposed budget for both AFY 2023 and FY 2024. The time for fiscally conservative governance is now.

While we want businesses to flourish in the state of Georgia, we do not support the government picking winners and losers. Amid high inflation and a shaky economy brought on by the failed policies of President Joe Biden, we should not be taking money from our constituents to fund corporate priorities. Corporate subsidies, including tax credits, make up a large portion of the budget. The proposed budget contains \$35.7 million for a Rural Workforce Housing Fund, \$130 million subsidy to train Electric Vehicle workers, \$166.7 million in local corporate subsidies, and even \$92 million to insurance companies to subsidize health insurance premiums. These are merely a few examples of taxpayer dollars that should be cut or redirected to core functions of government.

The budget also contains a \$546 million dollar pay raise for government employees. As currently written, this budget would reward government employees doing a terrible job at the same rate as people doing a great job. We can do better than this and our constituents expect it of us.

This budget also asks all Georgians to foot a \$61.2 million bill for HOPE scholarship recipients. Georgians were promised that lottery funds would cover the cost of the HOPE scholarship and this bailout is little different from the Joe Biden student loans pay freeze. University systems in Georgia must be able to live within their means.

Over the past decade, the amount of money we spend per resident of the state of Georgia has gone up by over \$1000. Even adjusted for the Biden era rate of inflation, we have still

increased the dollars per resident number by \$500. These numbers show a startling trend of growing government in our state.

Furthermore, Georgia has the largest state surplus of funds in recent history but this budget suggest not using those funds to pay off debt, which Georgia accrues hundreds of millions per year in interest with. This is not how conservatives should be governing.

We are looking to work with Republicans in each chamber, along with the executive branch, to deliver Georgians a better budget that is judicious with their dollars and spends in a fiscally conservative manner in line with our values. In the absence of any effort to fix these problems, we will oppose this budget and urge our colleagues to do the same.