



## HR 158—RESOLUTION TO RESTORE TRUST IN STATE GOVERNMENT

If you paid your mechanic to replace the battery in your car, and they instead replaced your radiator, you would rightfully cry foul and demand the correct service. Now, what happens when your legislators collect money from you for one purpose and use that money for something completely different? In the private sector, that's considered fraud, but in the Georgia General Assembly, it's business as usual. The result: illegal tire dumps littering our communities, unfunded driver education for teens and lagging support for local law enforcement training.

### THE PROBLEM

While legislators can adopt laws creating fees to fund state programs, they can't ensure that those collections will be used for their intended purposes. Instead, the collections go into the state's general fund and it's left to budget writers to appropriate the money. Legislators can't "dedicate" the fees.

#### Solid Waste and Hazardous Waste Trust Funds

These environmental funds were created in the early 1990s to eliminate illegal tire dumps and cleanup hazardous waste sites. Fees are now assessed when we buy new tires or dump trash at a local landfill. Since the programs began, \$469 million has been collected, but about 40 percent (\$193 million) has been diverted.

#### Joshua's Law (Driver's Education for Teens)

Since 2005, this law has added extra fines to traffic violations to fund teen driver education in schools. It has generated \$3 to \$10 million annually, but only \$8 million has been used to fund teen driver programs.

#### Peace Officer & Prosecutor's Training Fund

This fund generated through criminal and traffic violation fines brings in an estimated \$27 million annually. It's supposed to be used to train more than 24,000 local law enforcement officers. Between 1987 and 2009, an estimated \$71 million was taken from these collections to pay for other portions of the state budget.

### THE SOLUTION

If the state collects fees for a specific purpose, those funds should be used for that purpose. HR 158, a resolution to create a constitutional amendment allowing legislators to "dedicate" fees is now being considered. If adopted and approved by voters in 2018, it will help restore our trust in our government and ensure that these important state programs are properly funded.

**This is provided for your information on proposed Trust Fund Legislation (HR 158). Please contact your legislator with your thoughts on this legislation.**