

1       **RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH A FULTON COUNTY POLICY PROHIBITING**  
2                                   **BULLYING IN THE WORKPLACE**  
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5               **WHEREAS**, it is the policy of Fulton County to foster a work environment that  
6 enhances productivity and promotes the mutual respect and personal dignity of all  
7 Fulton County employees; and

8               **WHEREAS**, it also is the policy of Fulton County to maintain a safe and secure  
9 workplace for employees that is free from threats of violence and/or acts of violence;  
10 and

11              **WHEREAS**, Fulton County Policy and Procedure 100-30 prohibits all harassment  
12 by supervisory officials, co-employees, non-employees, same sex employees, as well  
13 as clients and customers; and

14              **WHEREAS**, “Workplace Bullying” is defined as repeated, health-harming  
15 mistreatment of one or more persons that takes one or more of the following forms: (1)  
16 Verbal abuse; (2) Conduct which is threatening, humiliating or intimidating; (3) Work  
17 interference or sabotage which prevents work from being completed or performed; or  
18 (4) Exploitation of a known psychological or physical vulnerability; and

19              **WHEREAS**, in 2007 and 2010, the Workplace Bullying Institute commissioned  
20 the only scientific large-sample representative studies of American adults on the topic of  
21 “Workplace Bullying”; and

22              **WHEREAS**, the 2010 study commissioned by the Workplace Bullying Institute  
23 revealed that thirty-five percent (35%) of American adult employees report having been  
24 bullied at work, that another fifteen percent (15%) of American Adult employees report  
25 having witnessed acts of bullying, and that bullying in the workplace is four times more  
26 prevalent in the workplace than sexual harassment; and

1           **WHEREAS**, the Fulton County Board of Commissioners finds that workplace  
2 bullying and harassment produce a climate of fear and intimidation and can inflict  
3 serious harm upon targeted employees, including feelings of shame and humiliation,  
4 severe anxiety, depression, and even suicidal thoughts or tendencies; and

5           **WHEREAS**, the Fulton County Board of Commissioners finds that abusive work  
6 environments can have other serious consequences for the workplace, including  
7 reduced employee productivity and morale, higher turnover and absenteeism rates, and  
8 increases in legal, medical and workers' compensation claims; and

9           **WHEREAS**, the Fulton County Board of Commissioners finds that the social and  
10 economic well-being of Fulton County is dependent upon a healthy and productive  
11 workforce; and

12           **WHEREAS**, the Fulton County Board of Commissioners finds that the existing  
13 Fulton County Anti-harassment and Workplace Violence Policy and Procedures are  
14 inadequate to fully address bullying in the workplace; and

15           **WHEREAS**, the Fulton County Board of Commissioners finds that the adoption  
16 and implementation of a policy prohibiting bullying in the workplace would promote a  
17 healthy and congenial workplace environment and result in a variety of benefits,  
18 including improved efficiency and productivity levels, increased employee job  
19 satisfaction and morale, and decreased turnover rates;

20           **NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fulton County Board of  
21 Commissioners hereby enacts the following Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedure  
22 (Number 100-46):

23           **Statement of Policy**: It shall be the policy of Fulton County to provide a workplace that  
24 is free from violence, harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior.

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2 **Scope of Policy:** This policy shall apply to all Fulton County employees, department  
3 heads and elected or appointed officials paid by the Fulton County Finance Department  
4 (Payroll Division), including part-time and non-permanent employees.

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6 **Definitions:**

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8 “Abusive conduct” - Employee acts and/or omissions that a reasonable person would  
9 find hostile, based on the severity, nature, and frequency of the employee’s conduct,  
10 including, but not limited to: repeated infliction of verbal abuse such as the use of  
11 derogatory remarks, insults and epithets; verbal or physical conduct of a threatening,  
12 intimidating or humiliating nature; the sabotage or undermining of an employee’s work  
13 performance; or attempts to exploit an employee’s known psychological or physical  
14 vulnerability. A single act normally shall not constitute abusive conduct, but an  
15 especially severe and egregious act may meet this standard.

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17 “Assault” - To attack someone physically or verbally, causing bodily or emotional injury,  
18 pain, and/or distress. This might involve the use of a weapon, and includes actions  
19 such as hitting, punching, pushing, poking, or kicking.

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21 “Intimidating Behavior” - Threats or other conduct that in any way create a hostile  
22 environment, impair departmental operations, or frighten, alarm, or inhibit others.  
23 Verbal intimidation may include making false statements that are malicious,  
24 disparaging, derogatory, disrespectful, abusive, or rude.

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26 “Threat” - Any oral or written expression or gesture that would be interpreted by a  
27 reasonable person as conveying intent to cause physical harm to persons or property.

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29 “Workplace Violence” - Any action, whether verbal, written, or physical aggression, that  
30 is intended to control, cause, or is capable of causing injury to oneself or others,  
31 emotional harm, or damage to property.

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33 **Employee Responsibilities:**

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35 Employees will treat all other employees with dignity and respect. Management will  
36 provide a working environment as safe as possible by having preventative measures in  
37 place and by dealing immediately with threatening or potentially violent situations. No  
38 employee will engage in threatening, violent, intimidating or other abusive conduct or  
39 behaviors.

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41 **Reporting and Investigating:**

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43 All County employees and officials covered by this policy and procedure shall  
44 immediately remove themselves from any threat as soon as possible. Employees shall  
45 immediately report any threats, physical or verbal, and/or any abusive, disruptive or  
46 intimidating behavior of any individual to their immediate supervisor or Appointing

1 Authority. Employees shall cooperate with any subsequent investigation of their  
2 complaints. **No attempt to engage or antagonize a person threatening violence**  
3 **shall be made.**

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5 It is the supervisor's responsibility to immediately investigate all reported incidents  
6 involving workplace abuse, intimidation, or violence and report findings to their  
7 appropriate Appointing Authority or designee who shall take immediate action as  
8 appropriate. Such investigation shall commence immediately and supervisors and  
9 Appointing Authorities are required to take reasonable steps to protect the alleged  
10 victim(s), including, but not limited to, separation of the alleged perpetrator(s) and  
11 victim(s).

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13 Where it is an employee's supervisor or Appointing Authority who has engaged in  
14 threatening, violent, intimidating or other abusive behavior, the employee does not have  
15 to report the behavior to their immediate supervisor or go through their supervisory  
16 chain of command. Rather, in such a circumstance, an employee is specifically  
17 authorized to bypass his/her supervisor (and supervisory chain of command) and report  
18 such conduct or behavior directly to the Office of the County Manager (or the County  
19 Manager's designee).

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21 **Disciplinary Action:**

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23 Disciplinary action for violations of this policy and procedure shall be taken by the  
24 Appointing Authority concerned pursuant to the guidelines set forth below. Violations of  
25 this policy and procedure rising to the level of criminal acts shall be turned over to the  
26 proper law enforcement agency. In addition, violations of this policy may cause the  
27 violator to be immediately removed from the workplace.

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29 While the County encourages all employees to raise any concern(s) under this policy  
30 and procedure, the County also recognizes that intentional or malicious false allegations  
31 can have a serious effect on innocent people. Individuals falsely accusing another of  
32 violations of this policy will be disciplined in accordance with the County Personnel  
33 Regulations up to, and including, dismissal.

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35 **Acts of Workplace Bullying as defined in Policy and Procedure 100-46.**

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	<b>MINIMUM</b>	<b>MAXIMUM</b>
(1) First offense:	5 days suspension w/o pay	Dismissal
(2) Second offense:	Dismissal	N/A
(3) Third offense:	N/A	N/A

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1           **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that this Resolution shall be effective upon  
2 adoption by the Fulton County Board of Commissioners and shall be made a part of the  
3 Fulton County Policy & Procedures Manual.

4           **SO PASSED AND ADOPTED** by the Board of Commissioners of Fulton County,  
5 Georgia this \_\_\_\_\_ day of November, 2012.

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**SPONSORED BY:**

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William "Bill" Edwards, Commissioner  
District 7

ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

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Mark Massey, Clerk to the Commission    R. David Ware, County Attorney