

March 1, 2023

Re: Opposition to SB 113 and SB 114 (Buckhead Secession)

Dear Senator:

**We write in strong opposition to SB 113 and SB 114 (Buckhead Secession). Midtown Alliance is a non-profit alliance of businesses, property owners, residents, institutions of higher education and attractions in a 1.2 sq mile district in the City of Atlanta. Our organization has been in existence for 45 years working to promote economic development and create an exceptional urban experience. The proposed 'City of Buckhead City' boundary sits right against our northern boundary at the Peachtree St bridge.** Currently, Midtown is home to 90,000 jobs and economic anchors including Georgia Tech, Tech Square, Emory University Hospital Midtown, and the Savannah College of Art and Design-Atlanta. In this past year alone, Midtown has seen a combined \$4.6B of new development between new buildings delivered and now under construction. This success is the product of decades of hard work in partnership with the State of Georgia, City of Atlanta, universities, chambers of commerce, the private sector, non-profits and our CID. **Midtown is one example of an economic success story for our capital city and our state that will be crippled if this de-annexation of Buckhead were to happen.**

**In addition to the serious constitutional, legal and practical flaws posed by these bills, their damaging precedent is a threat not only to the City of Atlanta but to every municipality in the State of Georgia.** Most every city in Georgia has more and less affluent areas. That's how cities work. When the affluent areas start to draw circles around themselves and say, "we want a divorce" from our city, everything is plunged into chaos, from statewide municipal finance and bonds to infrastructure to schools.

**If you represented a company looking to plant its flag and invest, how would you score any capital city facing years of litigation within itself; guaranteed higher taxes; downgraded bond market ratings; increased cost of future debt and the national narrative of a State-sanctioned secession within its capital city?** Companies and talent want to locate in areas that are stable and predictable. From any reasonable view, this flawed legislation is the opposite of stability and predictability.

**We submit that merely advancing these deeply-flawed bills to a floor vote damages the business-friendly reputation our state has worked so hard to establish.** Those celebrating the loudest will be Charlotte, Houston, Dallas, Chattanooga, Denver and many other competitor cities and states – as this legislation goes to the top of their talking points.

**Important voices who will be adversely impacted get no vote under the bills being advanced.** Under these bills impacted businesses get no say, nor do local-elected officials, nor do citizens in the rest of the City who will see their taxes rise and their economic development prospects irreparably damaged. This would be a permanent, self-inflicted wound – but entirely avoidable. If passed, we will ALL need to turn from proactive economic development activities to damage control.

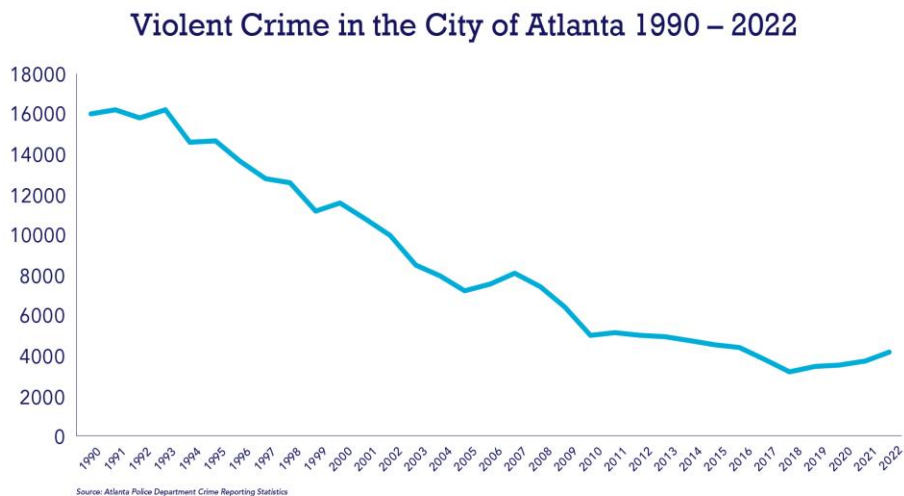
**Given the tremendous implications of this legislation, we all need to engage in a rational and fact-based dialogue.** This is not a time to rely on exaggeration or emotion.

**For example, we continue to hear the prevailing narrative from those who want to split-apart our city that *Buckhead is disproportionately impacted by violent crime, and that ‘crime in Buckhead is out of control.’*** Any crime is too much crime. No one wants to be impacted by criminal activity and we all want to feel safe in our community.

**Consider the following: APD’s Zone 2 is essentially the boundaries of the proposed City of Buckhead City.**

- **Buckhead’s Zone 2 has the least violent crime of all 6 police zones in the City.**
- **In 2022: Zone 2’s violent crime was 49% lower than the average of the other APD zones, and in 2021 it was 56% lower.**
- **APD’s Zone 2 comprises a little more than 24% of the City of Atlanta’s current population, but 6.5% of the City of Atlanta homicides in 2022.**

We are making progress. Most cities across the country have gotten safer over the last three decades, but the City of Atlanta has gotten a lot safer. **Violent crime in the City of Atlanta dropped 74% from 1990 through year-end 2022, and with a lot more residents, workers and visitors added over those 3+ decades.**



**In conclusion, the solution to frustration with government is not creating more government.** This legislation and damaging precedent is bad for all citizens in the State of Georgia. Our City of Atlanta Mayor and City Council have made strong progress in restoring trust and accountability and this important work needs to continue without distraction.

We ask that you vote “no” on SB 113 and SB 114.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Green', with a stylized, flowing script.

Kevin Green  
President & CEO