

# GEORGIA LEGISLATURE PASSES "REASONABLE CHILDHOOD INDEPENDENCE" LAW

*Last year Brittany Patterson was arrested there when her son walked to the store.*

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, March 26, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Just a few months after Georgia mom Brittany Patterson was arrested for not knowing that her son, then 10, had walked to the store on his own, her state has passed a [Reasonable Childhood Independence](#) law. It now goes to the governor for signing.

The bill clarifies that "neglect" is only when you put your child in serious, obvious danger – not anytime you take your eyes off them. This protects against the modern-day helicopter parenting norms that have made passersby – and, sometimes, state officials -- insist that children of almost any age need constant adult supervision.

When Patterson was arrested, bodycam footage shows, she asked the law enforcement agents, "What am I under arrest for?"

A "Reckless" Mom.

"For reckless endangerment," one deputy said.

“

They're taking me to jail because you decided to walk down the street."

*Brittany Patterson*

"And how was I recklessly endangering my child?"

Replied the second deputy, "Turn around. We're not not talking about it."

At which point Patterson told her son – who'd witnessed the arrest, as had two of his three siblings – to go tell grandma, "They're taking me to jail because



Georgia mom Brittany Patterson was arrested after son Soren, 10, took a walk by himself.

you decided to walk down the street.”

When Georgia lobbyist Jesse Weathington heard this story – which ricocheted around an outraged world – he contacted [Let Grow](#) to volunteer his services. Let Grow is the nonprofit making childhood independence easy, normal and legal. This is its signature law. “The state should let parents be parents and kids be kids,” Weathington says. “This bill will let kids today have the freedom and independence we enjoyed growing up.”

Take no action unless a kid is in  
ACTUAL DANGER.

“Let’s hope that from now on law enforcement and DCFS take no action unless a child appears to be hurt or in distress or in imminent danger from an identifiable source,” says David DeLugas, Executive Director of the National Association of Parents and Patterson’s lawyer.

Patterson added, “Some people think that this is not one of those things that’s super important -- until you’re affected by it.” Her kids, “have been pretty traumatized by the whole ordeal.” But now, the family sees this as progress toward “more freedom, and less fear.”

Senators Jason Anavirtarte, Randy Robertson, Kay Kirkpatrick, Jason Esteves and Eddie Lumsen sponsored the bill, which garnered bi-partisan support, as it has in every state. That’s because no matter what a person’s politics, nobody wants their everyday parenting decisions – some perfect, some seat-of-the-pants -- second-guessed by the state.

Other parents investigated in Georgia.

Previously, two Georgia cases besides Patterson’s had made headlines:

In one, mom of five Melissa Henderson was arrested after she had her daughter, 14, babysit the four younger siblings. This was early in the pandemic when Henderson needed to work, but Covid had suddenly shuttered the day care center and schools. Her 4-year-old wandered outside to play with a neighbor and the neighbor’s mom called the cops. Henderson was handcuffed and thrown in jail. The cops said that the child, outside for a couple of minutes, could have been



Let Grow's mission is to make it "easy, normal and legal" to give kids back some independence.

bitten by a “venomous snake.”

Henderson, too, was represented by DeLugas. Three years later, the court ruled in her favor.

The case of the kid and the cookie.

Meanwhile, in 2018, mom of four Beth Widner was visited by the cops and child protective services after her 7-year-old, riding his bike home from swimming practice, stopped at the local grocery for a free cookie. Someone saw him unsupervised and called 911.

He actually stopped for cookies another time, the little recidivist. The first caseworker sent to investigate the Widners ended up saying she wished her own kids were that independent. But a second caseworker told the Widners that they had "a problem with child supervision." When the parents asked what specific law they had broken, the caseworker said she didn't have it written down.

Well now the law IS written down: Georgia Bill SB110 says it is NOT neglect to trust your child with some reasonable childhood independence.

Good news for families.

Once signed by the governor, the new law will “put Georgia in the excellent company of the eight other states that have recognized that we need some guardrails to protect families from misunderstanding what is and isn’t neglect,” says Let Grow’s legal consultant, Diane Redleaf. “It also helps the state focus on the kids who really need its protection.”

Lenore Skenazy, Let Grow’s president, summed it up this way: “Kids, celebrate by going outside and playing RIGHT NOW! Stay out till the streetlights come on!”

Interested in getting this law passed in YOUR state? Visit our website for Let Grow's legislative toolkit!

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