
The logo for decatrish.com features a black circle containing a white silhouette of a city skyline. The text "decatrish.com" is written in white lowercase letters across the middle of the circle.

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№26 - OCT 2022

Locally sourced news.

Candidate Q&As for
November elections

A photograph of a smiling woman with red dreadlocks, wearing a black cardigan over a blue top. She is holding a white sticker that says "I'm a Georgia Voter" and "I SECURED MY VOTE!". The background shows a brick building with a wooden lattice structure.

TO THE POLLS

Our Nov 8 Elections Guide



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Chloe Armstead Evans voted in the Georgia primary election at Avondale Estates City Hall on Tuesday, May 24, 2022. Photo by Dean Hesse.

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Elections and fall fundraising



Dan Whisenhunt
Editor & Publisher

Dear readers, We proudly present to you our voters guide for the Nov. 8 midterm elections. We sent questionnaires to all candidates in our coverage area. The answers you find herein are the ones provided by the candidates who responded. **Please note, the candidates for State House Districts 88 and 95 did not provide a response, but they will be on the ballot.** The answers were not edited by us. We hope this will help you make your decision when you cast your ballot this year. As with the previous voters guide, we are providing this one to all readers, not just paying subscribers.

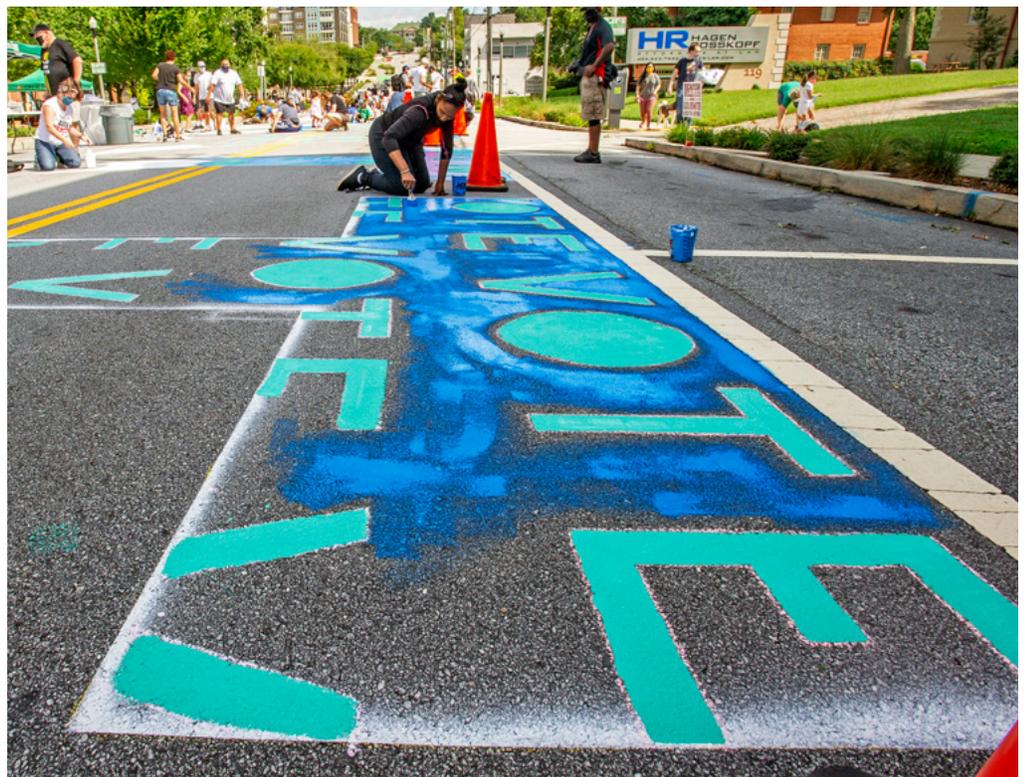
I'd also like to draw your attention to

our fall fundraiser. We're trying to raise \$20,000 to pay for our end-of-year expenses. The money we raise will be used to pay writers who tell the stories you enjoy reading and will address some of our unseen costs, such as hosting fees, website maintenance and other business costs. **To contribute to [this fundraiser click here](#) or visit [supportyourlocalnews.com](#)**

We hope you will find this voters guide useful and informative. As always, I am grateful to be your local community news editor and publisher.

—Dano

(Dan Whisenhunt, Editor and Publisher)



Volunteer Mary Knight, a Decatur resident and educator in Cobb County works on the Black Lives Matter mural on N. McDonough Street on August 22, 2020. Knight said of the mural "It's words make a statement that needs to be said. It's a platform for marginal and unheard voices that need to be heard." Photo by Dean Hesse.

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Early voting for Nov. 8 general election begins Oct. 17

BY ZOE SEILER, REPORTER

DeKalb County, Ga. — Advanced voting in DeKalb County for the Nov. 8 election runs Oct. 17 to Nov. 4. The hours for advanced voting will be Monday to Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sundays from noon to 5 p.m.

Oct. 11 is the last to register and be eligible to vote in the general election.

Absentee ballots are available for the Nov. 8 general election. The last day to submit an application for an absentee ballot is Oct. 28. Absentee ballots must be returned to a ballot box by 7 p.m. on Nov. 8. To request an absentee ballot, [click here](#).

Voters are now required to provide either a Georgia driver's license or Georgia ID card number or a copy of another form of ID when applying for an absentee ballot. For more information about ID requirements, [click here](#).

Absentee ballots can be mailed to the Board of Registrars, 4380 Memorial Drive, suite 300, Decatur, GA 30032. They can also be dropped off at the following drop box locations during early voting:

- Briarwood Recreation Center, 2235 Briarwood Way NE, Atlanta, GA 30329
- Dunwoody Library, 5339 Chamblee Dunwoody Road, Dunwoody, GA 30338
- DeKalb Voter Registration & Elections Office, 4380 Memorial Drive Ste. 300, Decatur, GA 30032
- Gallery at South DeKalb Mall, 2801 Candler Rd, Decatur, GA 30034
- Tucker-Reid H. Cofer Library, 5234 Lavista Road, Tucker, GA 30084

After early voting ends, absentee ballots can still be delivered by hand to the front desk of the Voter Registration and Elections Office weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. or until 7 p.m. on Election Day.

Voters can check their ballots and precinct location on the Georgia Secretary of State's website, www.mvp.sos.ga.gov.

Voters age 75 and older, or those with a physical disability, should go to the front of the line and ask a poll worker for assistance.

Individuals voting in person should bring a valid ID, such as a driver's license, passport or voter identification card.

Here's the complete list of early voting locations and times approved by the board and a map showing their distribution:

The following locations will be open from Oct. 17 to Nov. 4:

- Berean Christian Church, 2201 Young Road, Stone Mountain, GA, 30088
- Bessie Branham Recreation Center, 2051 Delano Dr. NE, Atlanta GA.
- Briarwood Recreation Center, 2235 Briarwood Way NE, Atlanta, GA, 30329
- DeKalb Voter Registration and Elections



Joe and Mary Ann Anziano voted at Avondale Estates City Hall for the Jan. 5 Georgia Senate runoff election. Photo by Dean Hesse.

office, 4380 Memorial Drive, Decatur, GA, 30032

- Dunwoody Library, 5339 Chamblee Dunwoody Road, Dunwoody, GA, 30338
- Ellenwood Library, 4331 River Rd, Ellenwood, GA
- Emory University, 1599 Clifton Road, Atlanta, GA, 30322
- North DeKalb Senior Center, 3393 Malone Drive, Chamblee, GA, 30341
- Gallery at South DeKalb Mall, 2801 Candler Road, Decatur, GA, 30034
- Stonecrest, former Sam's Building, 2994 Turner Hill Rd, Stonecrest, GA
- Tucker-Reid H. Cofer Library, 5234 LaVista Road, Tucker, GA 30084
- Wade Walker YMCA, 5605 Rockbridge Road SW, Stone Mountain, GA
- Wesley Chapel Library, 2861 Wesley Chapel Rd, Decatur, GA

The following locations will be open Oct. 29 through Nov. 4:

- Beulah Missionary Baptist Church, 2340 Clifton Springs Rd, Decatur, GA
- Clarkston Library, 951 N. Indian Creek Dr., Clarkston, GA

Local DeKalb County races on the ballot are the DeKalb Board of Commissioners Districts 2, 3 and 7, as well as the DeKalb County Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor.

Statewide races on the ballot are governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, attorney general, commissioner of agriculture, commissioner of insurance, state school superintendent and commissioner of labor.

Several state legislators representing DeKalb County are also up for election, including House Districts 52 and 80-95. Senate Districts 10, 40-44 and 55 will be on the ballot as well.

Georgia United States House Districts 4 and 5 and one U.S. Senate will be on the ballot.

To see the composite sample ballot, [click here](#).

To see the full list of candidates, [click here](#).

TO THE POLLS



"Miss Ladybug" Andrea Zoppo seen here in front of Israel Missionary Baptist Church in Kirkwood on Tuesday November 3, 2020, said had been trying to make people feel proud of our country in front of the various polling locations for the last month. Photo by Dean Hesse.



Joel Nealy voted with his wife Betty at Tucker-Reid H. Cofer Library on Tuesday, Nov. 2, Election Day. Photo by Dean Hesse.



Tucker voters Peggy & Elliott, Nov. 2, 2021 Election Day. Photo by Dean Hesse.

HERE'S A LOOK AT UNCONTESTED RACES ON THE BALLOT

By **Zoe Seiler**, reporter

DeKalb County, Ga. – DeKalb County Board of Commissioners seats and state legislators representing DeKalb County will be on the ballot during the Nov. 8 election. Here's a look at the uncontested races in the county.

DeKalb County Board of Commissioners

[Michelle Long Spears](#) (D) is running for District 2.

[Lorraine Cochran-Johnson](#) (D) is the incumbent candidate for District 7.

State House of Representatives

[Omari Crawford](#) (D) is running for District 84.

[Karla Drenner](#) (D) is the incumbent representative for District 85.

[Viola Davis](#) (D) is the incumbent candidate for District 87.

[Angela Moore](#) (D) is the incumbent representative for District 91.

[Rhonda Taylor](#) (D) is the incumbent representative for District 92.

[Doreen Carter](#) (D) is the incumbent candidate for District 93.

[Karen Bennett](#) (D) is the incumbent representative for District 94.

State Senate

[Emanuel Jones](#) (D) is the incumbent candidate for District 10.

[Elena Parent](#) (D) is the incumbent senator for District 42.

[Gail Davenport](#) (D) is the incumbent candidate for District 44.

[Gloria Butler](#) (D) is the incumbent senator for District 55.



DeKalb County Commissioner Mereda Davis Johnson with participants in her April 1, 2022 vaccination and voter registration rally. Photo by Dean Hesse.

Governor, lieutenant governor will be on the Nov. 8 ballot

By **Zoe Seiler**, reporter

Atlanta, Ga. – The governor and lieutenant governor seats, along with other statewide races, will be on the ballot on Nov. 8.

[Gov. Brian Kemp](#) will face off with [Stacey Abrams](#) (D) and [Shane Hazel](#) (L).

Here's a look at other state and federal officials that will be on the ballot:

Attorney General

[Chris Carr](#) is the incumbent and Republican candidate for attorney general.

[Jen Jordan](#) is the Democratic candidate for attorney general.

[Martin Cowen](#) is the libertarian candidate for attorney general.

Lieutenant Governor

[Burt Jones](#) is the Republican candidate for lieutenant governor.

[Charlie Bailey](#) is the Democratic candidate for lieutenant governor.

[Ryan Graham](#) is the Libertarian candidate for lieutenant governor.

Secretary of State

[Bee Nguyen](#) is the Democratic candidate for secretary of state.

[Brad Raffensperger](#) is the incumbent Republican candidate for secretary of state.

[Ted Metz](#) is the Libertarian candidate for secretary of state.

State School Superintendent

[Alisha Thomas Searcy](#) is the Democratic candidate for state school superintendent.

[Richard Woods](#) is the incumbent Republican candidate for state school superintendent.

A few other statewide races will be on the ballot as well, including the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission, commissioner of agriculture, commissioner of insurance, commissioner of labor and the public service commission. To see the full list of candidates, [click here](#).

United States House of Representatives

The candidates for Georgia District 4 in the U.S. House of Representatives are incumbent [Rep. Hank Johnson](#) (D) and Republican candidate [Jonathan Chavez](#).

Incumbent [Rep. Nikema Williams](#) (D) is running for reelection in Georgia District 5 against Republican candidate [Christian Zimm](#).

United States Senate

Incumbent [Sen. Raphael Warnock](#) (D) is running against Republican candidate [Herschel Walker](#) and Libertarian candidate [Chase Oliver](#).

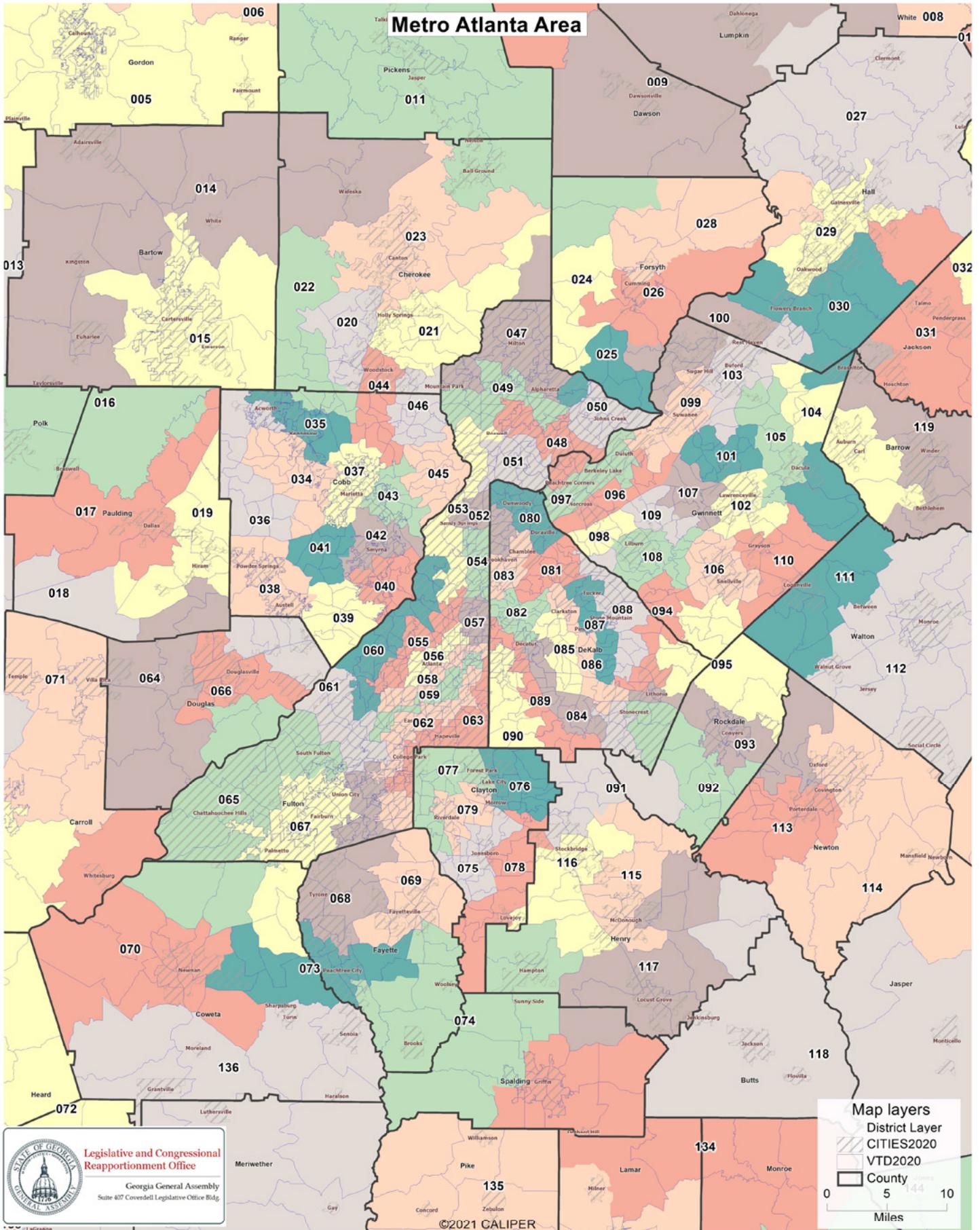
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Client: State
Plan: House-prop1-2021
Type: House



Legislative and Congressional Reapportionment Office

Georgia General Assembly
Suite 407 Coverdell Legislative Office Bldg

Candidate Q&As

STATE HOUSE, DISTRICT 80



Long Tran (D)

Candidate website: longtran.com

What is your occupation? Owner of two cafes

What neighborhood do you call home? Dunwoody North

Why are you running for this position? As a small business owner, father. I see the issues facing our state through my experiences. This compelled me to run for State Representative of House District 80. As a good citizen, I want to focus on 3 issues.

1. You can't look at the chaos in DeKalb School District over the past decade and think to themselves that we are doing a good job educating our children. Reforms are desperately needed to the Quality Basic Education (QBE) 20-2-161 O.C.G.A funding formula written 40 years ago. I will work to with a bipartisan group that includes lawmakers and educators to modernize our funding system and eliminate self-dealing and fraud.

2. Georgia has a public safety crisis. 6 hospitals closed in the last four years. When the pandemic hit, we had needless delays in care causing deaths. We are unprepared for the next crisis. I will offer legislation that to increase our first responders, and incentivize recruiting in these fields along with increasing the number of nurses and doctors.

3. I've created jobs and improved our community by starting a small business. I will work to remove regulations that slow economic growth. We can work directly with companies to help mentor and foster the growth of small businesses.

What are your top three priorities if you are elected? 1. Addressing our education system and the inequities that permeate through the state, and making schools safe for our students. This also includes making sure college is affordable and accessible.

2. We have a public health crisis with six6 hospitals closing in four4 years and the reduction of five5 level one1 trauma centers to four4. We've lost a total of 14 hospitals in the past 10-15 years. We have over 7000 families seeking help through disability waivers. Mental health challenges continue to grow and our law enforcement need's experts to work with them to respond to mental health situations appropriately.

3. Labor and immigration go hand in hand. We have a labor shortage in Georgia. This is a result of the cuts in funding education funding that has (taken place)happened over the last four 4 years. We must make technical colleges and trade school apprenticeships accessible. We must become an immigrant- friendly state so that we (strengthen our labor force and local economy) can get a labor force

to move to Georgia.

If elected, how will you work with members of the opposite party to accomplish your goals? First, let me address the elephant in the room. (Bad pun, sorry.) But, although I'm a proud Democrat, I am also a moderate, who sees the main work of lawmakers as finding common ground, without thinking of ourselves in terms of "opposite parties." Are the offense and defense on a football team "opposite" players? We must all work together to facilitate improvements in our common issues, like creating a great educational system for our children, welcoming legal immigration, expanding the labor force, and creating opportunities for small businesses. I have been finding and growing consensus in these areas for many years now, far longer than I have been a candidate. That work will only continue when I'm elected.

How will you work with the leadership of DeKalb County to accomplish their legislative goals? I have already reached out and continue to develop friendships with elected leaders at all levels of the state. I believe by having an existing friendship we will be able to address issues together as Democratic Party leaders.

What is your reaction to the closure of Atlanta Medical Center and how would you work to improve healthcare access for all Georgians? The closing of Wellstar AMC is a definite blow to Metro Atlanta and even to us here in North Dekalb. I have been talking to non profits and chambers to see if there is a private-public partnership that could save AMC like Grady was saved years ago. It doesn't look good for saving AMC. The circumstances are vastly different from Grady. I will be discussing with local leaders how this will add to an already stressed and at max capacity hospital system in my district. We can expect less hospital beds and longer ambulance response times as a result of this. As a state legislature we have the ability to pass policy that could have prevented this. We've seen short sighted leadership from the legislature for the past 4 years and this is the consequence.

If you are elected, would you support creating new cities in DeKalb County and Georgia? Living in Dunwoody and having a business in Peachtree Corners, I supported and continue to support the creation of those and other new cities in DeKalb County, so long as the community is informed and fully understands the issues. There are deeper challenges, including the hidden costs of police services and the question of independent school districts outside of the DCSD. We must also, when examining new boundaries, remain inclusive of everyone in the community, rather than use cityhood as a means to exclude poorer neighborhoods from realizing the collective benefits.

Should the General Assembly pass a law that guarantees a right to have an abortion in the state? Yes. Without question or hesitation. I fully support a woman's right to make choices about her reproductive health and would support rescinding Georgia's backward-looking Heartbeat Law, which is costing the lives of Georgia's women. Further, with the prospects of seeing this law passed by the current General Assembly, I support, and will lead an effort to get an unambiguous ballot initiative before the people of the state that does what the conservative movement demands: to let the people of state, not the federal government, decide the issue once and for all.

What should the state do with any revenue surplus it receives? I would take a portion and continue to invest in areas that will continue to generate revenue and give us a surplus next year. I would boost programs addressing mental health. I would fund scholarships to train more nurses and paramedics and apprenticeships for trade.

If you are elected, do you promise to conduct yourself in an ethical and transparent manner? How would you work to promote ethics and transparency in government? Yes, I do promise to conduct myself in an ethical and transparent manner. I would promote ethics and transparency by through informing the public through newsletters, monthly town halls and open communication with voters in my district.

Long Tran's opponent, Brian Anderson (R), did not respond to our Q&A.



Mary Williams Benefield (R)

Candidate website: benefieldforga.com

What is your occupation? Accounting Services

What neighborhood do you call home? Tucker

Why are you running for this position? Georgia House District # 81

What are your top three priorities if you are elected? Election Integrity - Remove Voting Machines replace with Paper Ballots

Georgia Fair Tax

Public Safety Support - Increase funding for all Services

If elected, how will you work with members of the opposite party to accomplish your goals? Find Common Ground and Work Together on Topics relevant to Georgia.

How will you work with the leadership of DeKalb County to accomplish their legislative goals? Develop a working relationship to address County Issues that are problem areas. (i.e. Cleaning Voter Rolls and Assisting DeKalb County Board of Elections with clear and concrete Voter requirements.

What is your reaction to the closure of Atlanta Medical Center and how would you work to improve healthcare access for all Georgians?

Healthcare Access and all that surrounds that issue require a four-fold solution. Legislative, Private Healthcare Providers, Insurance Companies and Consumers. All four of these entities must be directly involved in finding solutions. Creating a round table discussion that identifies the problems and then finds the solutions.

If you are elected, would you support creating new cities in DeKalb County and Georgia? I believe the Cityhood requests should be decided by the Voters in that area.

Should the General Assembly pass a law that guarantees a right to have an abortion in the state? Georgia currently has legislation that addresses abortion, The Heart Beat Bill.

What should the state do with any revenue surplus it receives? Revenue surpluses should go back to the taxpayers of Georgia. Property Owners, Businesses and Tax Payers. Surpluses should be returned to those that paid it in at every opportunity.

If you are elected, do you promise to conduct yourself in an ethical and transparent manner?

How would you work to promote ethics and transparency in government? As a public servant, I am a steward of the public trust and monies. I believe in term limits for every elected position, this prevents political dynasties and long term "deals".



Scott Holcomb (D)

Candidate website: votescottholcomb.com

What is your occupation? Attorney

What neighborhood do you call home? Northlake

Why are you running for this position? Our state has a number of issues and challenges that need to be addressed. I believe I can be helpful in moving our state forward.

What are your top three priorities if you are elected? We have so much to fix that it's difficult to focus on only three. Moreover, the ability of any legislator to implement policy preferences will be contingent, in part, on the outcome of the governor's race. That said, I would like to see Georgia:

1) fully fund public education and update the funding formula; 2) fully expand Medicaid (this would insure hundreds of thousands of Georgians at less cost than our current policy); 3) pass additional measures to reform the state's policies on sexual assault (among other things, Georgia needs to update the definition of rape). For number 3, I have worked on this effort for the last six years and have passed legislation to address the backlog of untested sexual assault kits, to preserve DNA evidence from sexual assault kits, and to establish a statewide sexual assault kit tracking system.

If elected, how will you work with members of the opposite party to accomplish your goals? I have strong relationships with members of both parties and I have passed a number of bills on a bipartisan basis. While we live in a very partisan moment of history, there are still many issues where members of both parties can work together.

How will you work with the leadership of DeKalb County to accomplish their legislative goals? I will continue to be accessible and responsive concerning local matters and priorities.

What is your reaction to the closure of Atlanta Medical Center and how would you work to

improve healthcare access for all Georgians? The closure of Atlanta Medical Center is devastating. Certainly Medicaid expansion would have helped the hospital and reduced the amount of uncompensated care (which was a key factor that led to the hospital's closure). This issue of uncompensated care remains a problem throughout Georgia because we have one of the nation's highest rates of uninsured. Medicaid expansion would provide health insurance to hundreds of thousands of Georgians for less cost than our current policy. This would help all of the hospitals that currently provide services without being compensated.

In addition to Medicaid expansion, the state needs to focus on the social factors that influence health outcomes, such as economic opportunity, affordable housing, and educational access and quality. These all play a significant role in health outcomes. In addition, our state needs to do a better job addressing poverty. Georgia has very high rates of poverty, and poverty is associated with adverse health outcomes.

If you are elected, would you support creating new cities in DeKalb County and Georgia? I'm open to it, but it has to make sense (economically and otherwise) and there needs to be broad support for the incorporation.

Should the General Assembly pass a law that guarantees a right to have an abortion in the state? Yes. Georgia should codify the Constitutional rights that the conservative and unelected members of the Supreme Court stripped away when they overturned Roe v. Wade.

What should the state do with any revenue surplus it receives? The two most important expenditures at the state level are education and health. Georgia needs to fully fund public education (K-12) and we must also make higher education accessible and affordable. In addition, Georgia needs to invest in the health of its people. The best policy choice to achieve that is full Medicaid expansion. This would insure hundreds of thousands at less cost than our current policy. In addition, the state should budget carefully and ensure it has a sufficient reserve for any economic downturn. During economic downturns, revenues decline but demands for service increase. Smart and careful planning can help ensure that we have appropriate resources to keep our state moving forward.

If you are elected, do you promise to conduct yourself in an ethical and transparent manner? **How would you work to promote ethics and transparency in government?** Yes. I believe strongly in transparency and ethical service. Among other things, I regularly share my disclosure filings with my constituents. I support additional efforts toward transparency.

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Jenine Milum (R)

Candidate website: votejenine.com

What is your occupation? Software Engineer - Consumer Fraud Specialist

What neighborhood do you call home? Springbrook Park

Why are you running for this position? I am a mother, grandmother and software engineer specializing in consumer fraud. I have spent a career solving critical problems for some of the largest financial institutions in the world. In the business world, you don't solve issues based on a political party but on the most successful outcome. These are the skills I will bring to the House Legislature.

District 82 is diverse but only has representation towards the extremes of my opponent's party. This is the main reason I have decided to bring my skills as a problem solver to this race. Our community needs a voice to represent the varied opinions that exist here, not her agenda. As examples, my opponent didn't lift a finger for her high school when it made national news for its deplorable conditions affecting the students. When her buddy lost his commissioner race, she used her position to demand the GBI investigate. Not surprising since she hasn't had an opponent in the General Election in decades and nearly all her campaign contributions come from political PACs and Corporations. She is not motivated to listen to her constituents as evident in her voting record. I will be that voice to represent all our community's interests and not just a wasted obstructionist vote.

What are your top three priorities if you are elected? DeKalb's education system was once held in high regards. That is not the case today. DeKalb ranks in the bottom 25%. The literacy competency rate is 27%. Numbers you would expect from a 3rd world country. The fact that our schools perform so poorly is a concern for all residents in that it also lowers our home's value.

I've spoken with the Sheriff, Decatur Police Chief, Sergeants and beat cops. I hear the same story "my opponent needs to go". Her vote on House Bill 286 was a vote to defund the police and reduce the safety of our communities. DeKalb once had 1,000 officers and are down to 400. They do not have the resources to deal with their top 3 issues 1-Officer hiring/retention 2-the Homeless 3-Mental illness. As your representative, I will 100% support efforts to Back the Blue.

Staving off inflation and the current budget surplus are critical to all Georgians. I attended sessions to hear these issues discussed in committee. Several options are being considered that I would support. Lowering the state sales tax and replacing the state Income tax with a consumption tax like Tennessee and Florida. The concerns from opposing views were sufficiently addressed. The point is, you keep more of your own money in the 1st place!

If elected, how will you work with members of the opposite party to accomplish your goals? I was raised by parents with wildly opposite political views. I did not grow up in a bubble and I do not live in a bubble. My friends represent as much diversity, if not more, than what is represented in this District.

When you work for large international financial institutions, as I have, you interact with a very large group of people with a wide variety of experience, ideas, motivations, and goals. The ability to navigate those waters is a skill I will bring to DeKalb and District 82. I've learned that everyone's opinions and experience is valuable and worth giving attention to because at the end of the day, making DeKalb better, safer and smarter is everyone's common ground.

The diversity of views in DeKalb are more vast than most of Georgia. Unlike my opponent, who consistently only supports the extreme views of her party, I will listen to and make sure to give respect and support for varying positions. While I certainly have my own opinions, I am glaringly aware that when elected, I will represent ALL of District 82 and not a specific political ideology.

Solutions are not Left or Right. Solutions either solve the problem or they don't.

How will you work with the leadership of DeKalb County to accomplish their legislative goals? I have a lifetime of experience collaborating with others to work through critical issues whose failure would be catastrophic if not resolved effectively. Working with other leaders in DeKalb is an obvious path. I have a great deal of esteem for those who have leadership responsibilities and knowledge. There is much to be gained in productive collaboration with other leaders in the community.

I have had the opportunity to attend DeKalb School Board meetings, Legislative sessions, Rotary clubs, church gatherings, the NAACP and the Clean Energy open house. It is clear, DeKalb residents represent the best of Georgia, and we want to keep it that way.

What is your reaction to the closure of Atlanta Medical Center and how would you work to improve healthcare access for all Georgians? The shocking and disturbing, no advanced warning of the closing of the Wellstar Atlanta Medical Center by November 1st is going to cripple the communities it has served for nearly a century. Wellstar is citing a \$107 million dollars in losses during 2022 alone as the driving force behind this decision. According to Wellstar executives, expanding Medicaid as being proposed by many is not the answer. It would help but not solve the financial deficit.

To save this valuable asset, one should entertain alternative measures. More industry experts need to be brought together to explore all options. I would call for the Governor to establish a coalition of individuals to include: CEO's from Wellstar and other major hospitals in the area, GHA (Georgia Hospital Association), VHA (Voluntary Hospitals of America/GA), County Commissioners (Fulton and DeKalb), the GA Medical Association, local government officers (mayors, senators, representatives), other leaders (lay persons), and Medicare/Medicaid executives. Their goal would be to come up with solutions to save the Atlanta Medical Center in a time sensitive manner for the pressing issues involving indigent and charity medical care for one of the state's largest communities.

If you are elected, would you support creating new cities in DeKalb County and Georgia? Creating new Cities within DeKalb County is one of those issues where one size doesn't fit all. It is critical in my profession, when solving one problem, you don't create unintended consequences. When approaching such a topic, it is necessary to first understand the underlying problem. A community rarely considers such a drastic move unless they feel their current needs are not being met.

I thoroughly believe it is the right of the people in those communities to determine their own direction. But I would not support such an action until the underlying issues are well understood, given time to properly be addressed and the consequences of such an action clearly defined. If the problems cannot be satisfactorily resolved, then the collective of that community should have the right to choose their own direction.

Should the General Assembly pass a law that guarantees a right to have an abortion in the state? I have yet to meet a single person whose red line, regarding abortion, is the same. While I have my personal views, especially having raised 2 daughters, I would be representing the views of State House District 82. I would need to thoroughly review any future proposed legislation and have the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

opportunity to hear from this District. I would hold a town hall to share the facts of such legislation and listen to the voice of our community. Unlike my opponent, I believe being a representative means you represent the people, not your own political views.

What should the state do with any revenue surplus it receives? When receiving a bonus, the initial reaction is to spend it quick and on something I've always wanted. Responsibility sets in and it's put to proper use. The differences between a personal bonus and a Georgia surplus is that I earned the bonus.

I support reducing the State sales tax and eliminating the State income tax. These will help the lower and middle class the most. The 1,000s of pages of tax code mostly benefit those that can take advantage of the exemptions, mostly benefiting the wealthy. My opponent is heavily supported by PACs and Corporations which expect her to support tax laws that benefit them, not you.

Georgia still has plenty of room for improvement. The State's infrastructure needs considerable attention and would benefit all Georgians. The Healthcare system is clearly an issue affecting rural Georgia as well as the inner cities. As your representative, I would want to know what options are being proposed and bring those proposed solutions to our community to see what serves our needs. It would be irresponsible to rush out and fund pet projects without thoughtful, well researched consideration.

I believe in letting you keep more of your own hard-earned money. Let me know your ideas at VoteJenine.com.

If you are elected, do you promise to conduct yourself in an ethical and transparent manner? How would you work to promote ethics and transparency in government? I have a lifetime of successful business relationships, have been the leader of many organizations and active in community outreach. I am held in high regard and am considered an extremely reputable and dependable member of any group I participate in. That would not change in the House of Representatives. Communication, transparency, and availability are the staples of all my efforts.

I am a salaried employee. If my financial situation were to improve significantly while being in office, it will be obvious. I don't have clients or contracts that could influence my voting or financially benefit me or my family.

This is the 1st time in decades House District 82 has a choice in who represents them. The differences are obvious.

My opponent: Lawyer, Career politician, Donors: Political PACS & Corporations

Jenine Milum: Software engineer specializing in Consumer Fraud, Mother/grandmother, Donors: Neighbors and friends

I have knocked on 1,000's of doors. People are eager to share their views & I am hearing from many it's time for change. If I am willing to work this hard for your vote, I will work this hard as your representative. It's your choice who you feel you can trust and represents your values. I would love to hear from you.



Mary Margaret Oliver (D)

Candidate website: marymargaretoliver.org

What is your occupation? Attorney

What neighborhood do you call home? Druid Hills

Why are you running for this position? Continue to serve the needs of my constituents in HD 82 and be a strong and influential voice for them and all Georgians in the Georgia Legislature. Specifically, I want to continue my work on mental health reform, fully implement HB 1013, and prepare a new bill for the January, 2023 session to continue mental health reform. I have leadership positions and opportunities to implement the budget for this.

What are your top three priorities if you are elected? 1) Work for the expansion of Medicaid, specifically the use of Medicaid funds for the 600,000 Georgians who were added during the pandemic and have now been dropped.

2) After the passage of the Mental Health Parity Act (HB 1013) in the 2022 legislative session, continue work on Commission on Behavioral Health Innovation and Reform.

3) Continue to work for reform of Development authorities after passage of HB 923. I am currently serving on a Senate study committee dealing with these issues.

If elected, how will you work with members of the opposite party to accomplish your goals? Through Committee and Commission assignments, I work with key members of both parties to craft legislation that benefits both HD 82 constituents and the State of Georgia. Being in the Minority Party often makes this difficult, but perseverance and building long term relationships can get much accomplished. I am the only Democrat to chair a committee in the House, which shows my ability to work across party lines.

How will you work with the leadership of

DeKalb County to accomplish their legislative goals? I have had a long and fruitful working relationship with DeKalb CEO Thurmond as a fellow Legislator, Head of the Department of Labor, DeKalb School Superintendent and now as DeKalb CEO. I have worked closely with the DeKalb Board of Education with many difficult issues, including the annexation of the Emory area into the City of Atlanta. I continue to help with local legislation for the cities of Decatur, Brookhaven and Atlanta.

What is your reaction to the closure of Atlanta Medical Center and how would you work to improve healthcare access for all Georgians? As mentioned above, I continue to work to build on the accomplishments of HB 1013 and champion the expansion of Medicaid. The closing of AMC with no consultation with local governments or leaders is shameful. While I am certain that this closure will impact HD 82 folks, it also presents real problems for all of metro Atlanta. Two of my most important constituents, Emory and DeKalb county will feel the effects of this closure through Emory and Grady Hospitals. I will work with them, other hospital industry groups and the State to make the best of a difficult situation. The loss of 55,000 ER visits, 460 beds, and the closing of one of the only five Level 1 Trauma Centers is a disaster.

If you are elected, would you support creating new cities in DeKalb County and Georgia? My concern with the establishment of new cities in unincorporated DeKalb has been that the information required not only include a feasibility study as to the new city's viability, but information should also address the impact on DeKalb County, particularly as it relates to pension obligations. I have previously introduced legislation to attempt to bring more clarity to the process. Specifics matter, and each new city has unique issues.

Should the General Assembly pass a law that guarantees a right to have an abortion in the state? The General Assembly should not pass any more restrictive abortion laws that would make the situation any worse. The possibility of passing any legislation improving access to abortion seems remote. DO NO WORSE HARM.

What should the state do with any revenue surplus it receives? There are two requirements for "rainy day" reserves and we are in compliance now. This is the largest reserve that I have seen in my long political career. The Governor is not putting forth coordinated policies and is having no bipartisan discussions that evidence using these reserves to create better health care and education services for all Georgians.

If you are elected, do you promise to conduct yourself in an ethical and transparent manner? How would you work to promote ethics and transparency in government? I have always conducted myself in an ethical and transparent manner, both in my legislative and legal work. I expect others to do the same, but know that is not always the case. We should strengthen existing ethics and transparency requirements and enforce them when appropriate.

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Catherine Bernard (R)

Candidate website: catherine4ga.com

What is your occupation? Public Defender/Private Citizen Defense Attorney

What neighborhood do you call home? Ashford Park, near the Brookhaven MARTA Station

Why are you running for this position? The newly re-districted HD83 is a dynamic and vibrant community of interest, comprising the most developed and business-dense areas of Brookhaven and Chamblee. I love this community and think I can do a good job representing us at the Capitol, using my experience working with neighbors and friends across the state on projects like the Redevelopment Powers Law (which would have allowed city government to take on debt without a referendum), no-knock search warrants (a truly bipartisan effort), fair elections and voter access, and more.

What are your top three priorities if you are elected? Reading all the bills. This is a basic duty of representation that has been abandoned by far too many – if there are too many bills to read, then there are too many bills to vote on.

Promoting opportunity and prosperity for ALL Georgians. Civilization is communities of people living, working, playing, creating, innovating, and building together. Government can have a role in helping set rules for those interactions and coordinate large collective projects like infrastructure, but it can also get in the way and even be actively harmful in small and large ways. The key is focusing on human liberty and flourishing, not trying to run our neighbors' lives for them while growing a cumbersome and ultimately dangerous bureaucracy.

Justice/Public Safety reform. Georgia has a larger proportion of its citizens under criminal supervision than any other state, yet we are seeing concerning crime increases that make people feel unsafe in their homes and daily activities. The solution is re-examining law enforcement priorities & assignments, allocating resources to actually deter, investigate, & punish violent/property crime instead of using government against people who aren't bothering anyone else, which allows state power to become corrupt.

If elected, how will you work with members of the opposite party to accomplish your goals? As

Frederick Douglass said, I will unite with anybody to do right and with nobody to do wrong. The people and issues are what matters, not the labels – anyone committed to honestly representing the interests of their district is an ally.

How will you work with the leadership of DeKalb County to accomplish their legislative goals? I take the same approach with DeKalb leadership as in the previous question: I'm always happy to work for good, principled policy with representatives and leaders from all around. We live in a county that has a population larger than some U.S. states, with unique opportunities and challenges, and we all need to work together to protect everyone's rights, strengthen our infrastructure, and promote opportunity and prosperity. I've served on the County's elections working group since 2018, joining with Board members and Commissioners to ensure that our elections are administered fairly and efficiently. I've also worked with neighbors and elected officials to resolve disputes over property taxes and education funding. We all share the goal of a healthy, functioning county that remains a great place to live, and I'm looking forward to helping further DeKalb's goals and priorities at the state legislative level.

What is your reaction to the closure of Atlanta Medical Center and how would you work to improve healthcare access for all Georgians? Disappointed - it is a real loss for the entire state. I am committed to removing barriers for access to care and building new facilities, like the Certificate of Need laws.

If you are elected, would you support creating new cities in DeKalb County and Georgia? Not unless the cityhood movement reflects an authentic and sustained community of interest, with broad based support from the actual citizens affected.

Should the General Assembly pass a law that guarantees a right to have an abortion in the state? No, but I am also wary of government efforts to prohibit abortions – it is very easy for that kind of state power to be abused in ways that empower big government control over health care. Everyone deserves the right to life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness, and I will support policies that promote maternal health, financial stability, and safe adoption/fostering services.

What should the state do with any revenue surplus it receives? The revenue should be returned to taxpayers.

If you are elected, do you promise to conduct yourself in an ethical and transparent manner? How would you work to promote ethics and transparency in government? Yes! I make that promise with enthusiasm, and a track record of transparency and accountable, ethical conduct. I've run for office before, suffering the slings and arrows of outrageous political behavior from all sides, and can promise to continue the approach of complete honesty and consideration of all perspectives, instead of allegiance to partisanship or special interests.

Also, the Georgia General Assembly is currently not subject to the Open Records Act, which allows records and communications to be hidden from public view. As your HD83 state rep, I will work to ensure that exceptions like this are examined and removed, so that all citizens have the information to hold all representatives accountable for their actions in office.



Karen Lupton (D)

Candidate website: karenlupton.com

What is your occupation? I have had a career as a professional singer and choral conductor for more than 20 years. I have also run a therapeutic music program for elders with dementia in non-profit nursing homes for the past seven years. I also consider raising my children - Hailey who is 18, and Evan who is 15 - as an occupation. Only a few more years until I can "retire" from child-rearing.

What neighborhood do you call home? I live in the part of the Ashford Park neighborhood that's actually in Chamblee, near the Peachtree-DeKalb Airport.

Why are you running for this position? I'm running for State House District 83 for the same reason I became a Chamblee City Councilmember: to build thriving communities for all residents. While I was making a difference serving on Chamblee's City Council, I found that the roots of the challenging issues our neighborhoods are facing - sustaining safe and secure communities, improving our schools, creating affordable housing - need to be addressed at the state level. I believe that affordable healthcare, equal access to the ballot box, excellent schools and the safeguarding of our rights and freedoms are within our grasp when we work together.

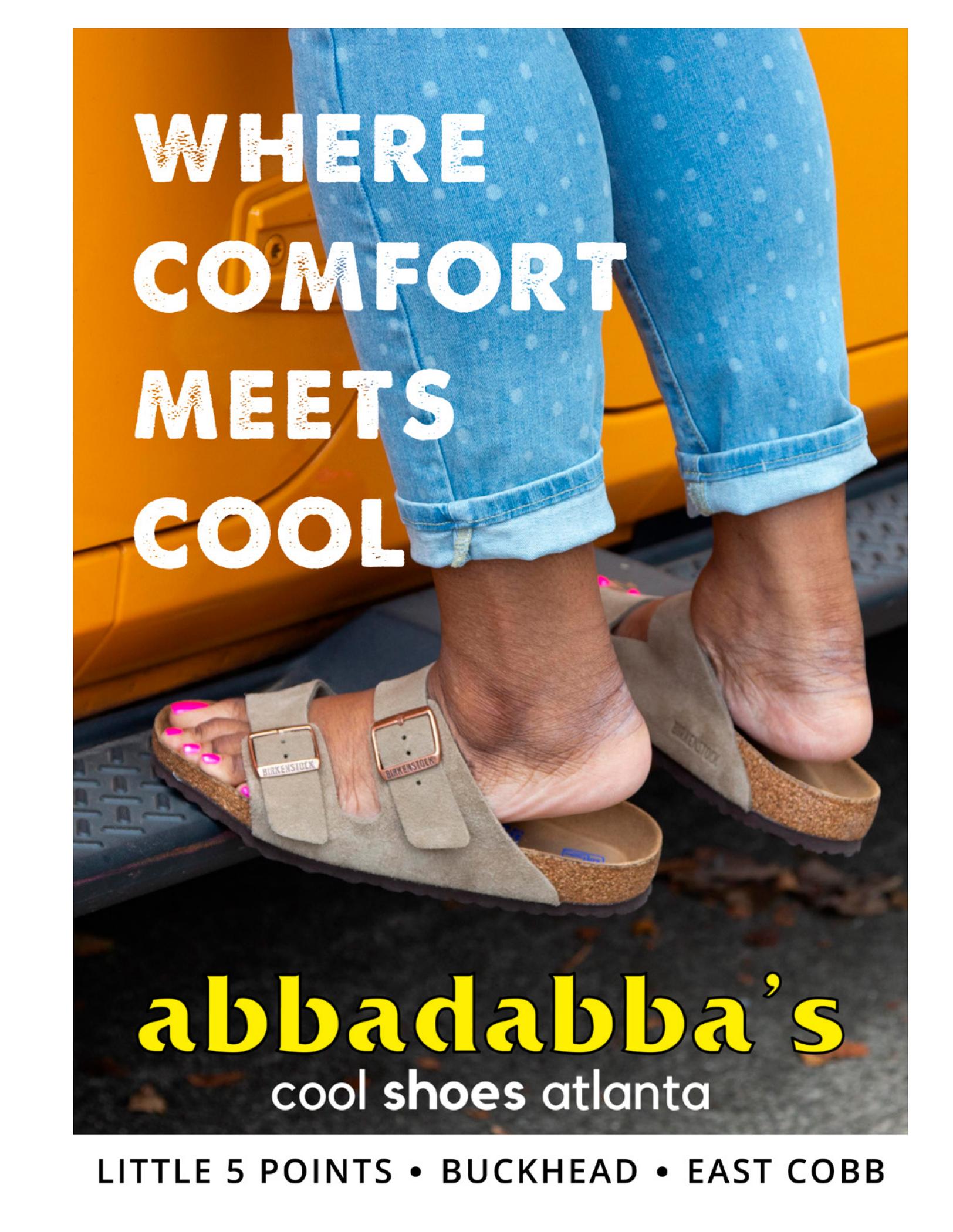
What are your top three priorities if you are elected? 1) Mitigating the rising costs of energy, housing, and health care.

2) Assuring safe, healthy communities for all Georgians: from protecting our families from gun violence, safeguarding women's reproductive healthcare, to expanding access to affordable healthcare and supporting our police and first responders.

3) Providing an excellent public education for all our children.

If elected, how will you work with members of the opposite party to accomplish your goals? I served as a non-partisan elected official as a Chamblee City Councilmember. Despite the political divides among the Council and Mayor, I was motivated to find common ground and prioritize the needs of the whole community because that is our role and responsibility- to work on behalf of the people.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17

A close-up photograph of a person's lower legs and feet. They are wearing light blue denim jeans with the hems rolled up. On their feet are grey suede Birkenstock sandals with two straps across the foot, each featuring a gold-colored buckle. The sandals have a cork footbed and a dark sole. The person is standing on a yellow surface, likely the side of a vehicle, with a metal grate visible below. The background is a solid yellow color.

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

In order to accomplish our goals, I had to establish trust through active listening and engagement with my colleagues. The same will be true of working across the aisle at the General Assembly. I might not agree with another Representative's viewpoint, but by listening to their reasoning and respecting their point of view, the chance to establish mutual respect is created. With that respect comes a willingness to work together in spite of differences. Ideas that I propose will be met with less resistance when an expectation of reasonableness has been established, and I plan to make great efforts to build that type of trust.

How will you work with the leadership of DeKalb County to accomplish their legislative goals? Communication between the General Assembly, the DeKalb House Delegation and DeKalb Commissioners can be improved to bring better results for residents. Several of the DeKalb Commissioners and I already have positive working relationships, so for starters, I will rely on those partnerships to help ensure a collaborative process.

What is your reaction to the closure of Atlanta Medical Center and how would you work to improve healthcare access for all Georgians? The closure of the Atlanta Medical Center is not only a blow to the city of Atlanta but to DeKalb County and the entire region. The first step to recover from this loss is to fully expand Medicaid. Thanks to new federal financial incentives, which would provide more than \$1.2 billion to Georgia's failing health-care system, we can use these resources to fully expand Medicaid and get access to life-saving care for hundreds of thousands of uninsured Georgians. The state's expansion costs would be more than offset during the first two years after expansion. And it will save all Georgians money - in reduced premium costs and a reinvestment in Georgia with the taxes we already pay to the federal government.

However, expanding Medicaid is just the first step. We must also expand our mental health and community health facilities. The state needs to be able to attract healthcare practitioners - Georgia already has a critical doctor shortage, including a crisis-level shortage of ob/gyn doctors in rural counties. Even so, healthcare professionals are not interested in practicing in Georgia because of our draconian abortion ban that criminalizes providers. This law is dangerous to women, families, and healthcare providers.

If you are elected, would you support creating new cities in DeKalb County and Georgia? This is a complicated question with positives and negatives on both sides. In the end, I believe that it is the citizens themselves who need to be given the chance to vote directly on how they want their governance to be constructed. That means putting proposals of cityhood on the ballot and allowing the democratic process to do its work.

Should the General Assembly pass a law that guarantees a right to have an abortion in the state? Absolutely, yes. Abortion is healthcare. Current abortion restrictions reveal a complete misunderstanding of pregnancy and the needs of women and families by the current state leadership - and every elected official who voted in support of HB202.

What should the state do with any revenue surplus it receives? Public taxes can and should be spent on the public good. We live in a connected

society, not in isolation. When our communities get stronger and healthier, everyone benefits. Therefore, surpluses should go towards proper investment in the lives of the citizens of Georgia. Our healthcare system is crumbling, and we cannot in good conscience expect people to continue to live here without proper care. Economic prosperity cannot exist in places without a healthy populace.

If you are elected, do you promise to conduct yourself in an ethical and transparent manner? How would you work to promote ethics and transparency in government? If people elect me and put their trust in me, I intend to keep that trust. I am strongly committed to communicating clearly with my constituents, and to uphold the ethical standards proper to a public servant. In my previous elected office, I maintained a monthly newsletter and made myself available in many ways to citizens in order to hear their concerns. I will continue to make every effort to connect people to their government in the State House and represent them fairly and ethically.

STATE HOUSE, DISTRICT 86



Imani Barnes (D)

Candidate website: imani4ga.com

What is your occupation? Biomedical Research Scientist

What neighborhood do you call home? Tucker

Why are you running for this position? I want to serve as our District 86 Representative because I recognize the need for inclusion at the capitol that reflects the interests of the diverse families, businesses, and underserved populations in the district. I want to fight to mitigate educational, health, gender, and racial disparities using proven public health frameworks that explain the need for funding in these areas. We deserve leadership that can relate to the needs of our growing community and will articulate those concerns to obtain quantifiable results.

What are your top three priorities if you are elected? As the next Georgia State Representative for House District 86, I would focus on influencing the public health system in funding mandates for our Department of Public Health to be more visible in places where people can better access resourc-

es. For example, bringing health services into the community where citizens frequent like parks, fairs, or malls. I will focus on educational funding in efforts for all children regardless of their income or zip code to receive a quality education and free lunch for all. When all children are well educated, the whole community benefits, being the single best proven path to pulling thousands of children above the poverty line. Then, housing affordability. As a single parent who makes a fair income, after paying my rent, there is barely enough left for food and basic needs in the present time where the cost of everything is inflated. I will as your next state representative fight to assure affordable housing policy is enforced that helps citizens pay for housing and new infrastructure includes affordable housing units.

If elected, how will you work with members of the opposite party to accomplish your goals? I plan to stay connected with community leaders and citizens within the community regardless of party affiliation to listen to and understand their issues. As I will be serving all person's in my district, I will stay accessible and accountable to my constituents by responding to their calls and emails in a timely manner, hosting town halls (virtual and in person), and staying active on social media.

How will you work with the leadership of DeKalb County to accomplish their legislative goals? I will continue to network with all levels and branches of DeKalb County leadership to ensure our issues are heard and our legislative goals are being brought to the table and being accomplished. We must all work as a team to best improve the quality of life for our citizens in DeKalb County.

What is your reaction to the closure of Atlanta Medical Center and how would you work to improve healthcare access for all Georgians? This is devastating! We should be working together to keep the hospital open and in addition, build new ones. I will fight for funding for more local neighborhood clinics as well as funding for a new level 1 trauma hospital to relieve the pressure we are putting on Grady from the AMC closures.

If you are elected, would you support creating new cities in DeKalb County and Georgia? I feel cityhood may lead to segregating our communities more in a time where we should be uniting towards growth and improvement. DeKalb County has seen several attempts to form cities in various places across the county. Voters and residents have organized repeatedly to repel these attempts to create these new entities. The concern about cities being formed in our county is about redirected tax revenue that could starve vulnerable communities of resources that are needed, turn over functions of government to private concerns, and create extra layers of government that will come out of the pockets of our citizens. Taxes are higher in these smaller cities in ways that do not return benefit to those residents with fewer financial resources. We do not need to create more impediments to access to government.

Should the General Assembly pass a law that guarantees a right to have an abortion in the state? "Reproductive Justice is the human right to maintain personal bodily autonomy, have children, not have children, and parent the children we have in safe and sustainable communities." (Midwives

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

Alliance of North America.) I strongly defend a woman's right to choose. I also support the expansion of services to help parents raise strong healthy well educated children.

What should the state do with any revenue surplus it receives? Use some of it for housing assistance for all citizens in need, not just low-income citizens. Use a portion for, youth educational funding and teacher raises.

If you are elected, do you promise to conduct yourself in an ethical and transparent manner? How would you work to promote ethics and transparency in government? Yes! By using my doctoral courses in public health, I have learned some ethical issues to consider listed below: producing benefits, avoiding, preventing, and removing harms producing the maximal balance of benefits over harms and other costs, distributing benefits and burdens fairly (distributive justice) and ensuring public participation, respecting autonomous choices and actions, protecting privacy and confidentiality, keeping promises and commitments disclosing information as well as speaking honestly and truthfully, building and maintaining trust (Bhattacharya, 2013).

Working in my field of research requires special attention to ethical issues. When formulating policy, it imperative to understand how to protect the ethical rights of those involved by applying ethical considerations.

Imani Barnes' opponent, Lisa Kinnemore (R), did not respond to our Q&A.

STATE HOUSE, DISTRICT 89



Becky Evans (D)

Candidate website: beckyevans.com

What is your occupation? Community Volunteer

What neighborhood do you call home? Druid Hills

Why are you running for this position? Public service is in my blood. My father was a well known pastor and civil rights proponent, and in my last year at Emory I was lucky enough to intern at The Carter Center.

I also spent 18 years as a volunteer in our

DeKalb County public schools, raising my kids, and there's some super important principles I believe are worth fighting for:

- Protecting our democracy and voting rights
- Building healthier and safer neighborhoods
- Building the strongest and best possible schools for our kids
- Fighting for access to high quality, affordable healthcare
- Ensuring women have autonomy over their bodies and reproductive decisions
- Decreasing gun violence and easy access to guns
- Fighting for economic equality for every DeKalb resident
- Striving for more ethical and transparent government
- Expanding and updating public transit
- Treating people fairly, with dignity and respect, and meaningfully involving people in the development of laws

In the midst of challenging and changing times, I will always hold strong to these community principles. And these are the reasons I am running for State House.

What are your top three priorities if you are elected? 1. Safer Neighborhoods For Our Families
2. Better Schools For our Kids
And 3. More Affordable Housing

While we have many challenges ahead of us, Dekalb County remains the single best place to live, work and raise a family, and together we can keep building an even better Georgia!

If elected, how will you work with members of the opposite party to accomplish your goals? I have tried to get to know my R colleagues as fellow human beings, being friendly and looking for common interests. I believe in listening and learning, asking questions, being respectful and building relationships. In 2019, I worked with a non-profit to bring a bi-partisan group to meet with detainees in the ICE facility in Ocilla. In 2021, I organized a bipartisan group of legislators and state building and finance leaders to tour the Kendeda Building at Georgia Tech. Doing these things together helps build relationships which has led to some of those colleagues being helpful to me with legislation.

In order for a bill to be passed, it must have R co-sponsors, and likely have an R as a primary sponsor. I also try to set realistic goals per session - to get one bill out of committee, to get one bill out of Rules, to get one bill to pass the HHouse, and of course to get a bill to pass both chambers and signed by the governor! I also know that in order to get things done, I have to take initiative and be persistent and gently nudge R colleagues to follow through, as my goals are not necessarily their goals.

How will you work with the leadership of DeKalb County to accomplish their legislative goals? I will continue to work with the leadership of DeKalb by getting to know them as fellow human beings, being friendly, and look for common interests. Listening and learning, asking questions, being respectful and building relationships. I will continue to be helpful to them, to elevate and highlight their work and events in my communications. When they come to me with their legislative goals, I will ask questions, and if my questions are satisfied,

I will work with my DeKalb Delegation colleagues to reach a consensus to be supportive of their legislation. If a majority is not supportive, I work to resolve the contentious issues. If the county commission, and/or city leaders, and/or school board leaders are united behind legislation, and if they have offered a robust public input process, I will be highly likely to support their legislation. I highly value the work of the leadership of DeKalb County.

What is your reaction to the closure of Atlanta Medical Center and how would you work to improve healthcare access for all Georgians? I think the closure of the Atlanta Medical Center is tragic. It leaves a huge gap in access to health care, especially in level one trauma care, in Atlanta. And it is an economic loss to this area in Atlanta, with all of the healthcare jobs being displaced. I thank God for Grady Hospital, and am fully supportive of whatever we need to do to provide the resources they need. I have also heard there are conversations about bringing another metro area hospital in as a level one Trauma center, such as Emory Decatur (the former N DeKalb hospital), a cause I fully support.

To improve healthcare access for all Georgians, I will continue to fight for - 1 - the expansion of Medicaid, as 500,000 low-income working Georgians do not have insurance and thus are not getting the healthcare they need, and our tax dollars are going to other states that have implemented Medicaid expansion. and 2 - for abortion rights and reproductive freedom for women, and to repeal the six week abortion ban we have here in Georgia.

I will continue to work for the state to incentivize people to become doctors and nurses, and to broaden the scope of practice for many medical licensed personnel, like nurse practitioners, to expand healthcare access.

If you are elected, would you support creating new cities in DeKalb County and Georgia? It depends on the legislation, and the process behind the legislation. This past session I voted against several new cities Georgia - 3 in Cobb - as the process was rushed, asking for a May primary vote and several local legislators were opposed for different reasons, such as there was no historical sense of community in the proposed city, or the form of government proposed in the legislation was not democratically representative, or the tax loss would have been punitive for the county. These 3 cities were all defeated in their referendum.

However, I voted for the city of Mableton because all the local legislators were united in support, the process was on a reasonable timeline, asking for a November referendum, not a May referendum, Mableton is a historic community with an identity, we did not hear from any opposition groups, and it was not a punitive loss of taxes for Cobb County.

I would follow the same principles with a proposed new city in DeKalb. In addition, I would want to know the strength of citizen support. City-hood movements can be divisive, time-consuming and take a lot of energy. I would want to work with my fellow legislators to come up with how we would measure a base of support before allowing a vote.

Should the General Assembly pass a law that guarantees a right to have an abortion in the state? Yes.

STATE HOUSE, DISTRICT 89

What should the state do with any revenue surplus it receives? In 2022, Georgia is flush with cash. The state closed its budget year in June with a roughly \$5 billion surplus, atop \$2.3 billion in surplus from the year before, and a legally protected \$4.3 billion rainy-day fund. I agree with Stacey Abrams that it is time to invest in Georgians. We can invest \$1Billion to expand Medicaid and give raises to teachers, state police, and prison guards. We can provide capital access programs, which encourage banks to underwrite loans by subsidizing the risk. We can fund the Affordable Housing Trust fund at 10x the current level (increase from \$3million to \$32 million). We can provide tax incentives for safety and energy efficient based rental improvements. There is more that we can invest, obviously, but we will start with these!

If we give tax refunds back, I think they should be income capped. If you make over \$400K, a \$250 refund is not going to mean much to you.

If you are elected, do you promise to conduct yourself in an ethical and transparent manner? How would you work to promote ethics and transparency in government? Yes, I promise to continue to conduct myself in an ethical and transparent manner. I worked diligently with my DeKalb delegation colleagues to re-constitute the DeKalb Ethics board to be strong and independent. I am the convener of the group, including the Tax Commissioner and Clerk of the Court, to appoint new members to the Ethics board, which we have done several times over the past year. I worked with our DeKalb Chair to offer 3 public input town halls into redistricting.

We offered all of our virtual DeKalb delegation meetings over Facebook live, to provide access to the public.

For transparency, I also strive to communicate regularly with my constituents. I send out 12 to 16 newsletters each year, more frequently during session, to keep them informed, and I am active on social media.

Becky Evans' opponent, Rick Sheppard (R), did not respond to our Q&A.

STATE HOUSE, DISTRICT 90



Jodi Diodati (R)

Candidate website: jodiforgeorgia.com

What is your occupation? General Contractor, Real Estate Agent

What neighborhood do you call home? East Atlanta

Why are you running for this position? Grow-

STATE HOUSE, DISTRICT 90

ing up in northwest Georgia, my parents voted for great democratic governors like Jimmy Carter, Joe Frank Harris, Zell Miller and Roy Barnes. Being moderate and fiscally conservative, we voted for the policies that best represented us...a hard-working, blue collar family.

Today, working men and women are getting left behind by the out-of-touch policies of the elitist, Democratic Party in Washington. These crushing policies have trickled down to us ordinary Georgians by way of higher gas prices, which were on the rise BEFORE the war in eastern Europe broke out, and paying more for staple food items at the grocery store. I am running to fight against these bad policies further damaging our state. I am running as a Republican. It has now become the party of the working class. I understand hard work, long hours on the job, living paycheck to paycheck, and hustling for that next business contract. I've been there. I get it. I want to represent my district as a strong business woman who will protect both the small business owner and the hard working folks employed by them.

The 90th District deserves to have someone who will carefully and thoughtfully serve as a steward to our great community. I am that someone.

What are your top three priorities if you are elected? 1) Education: I believe a quality education is absolutely essential to every child's success. With many large companies now based in Atlanta, our local public schools should be preparing our kids for these jobs, I will put my energies into returning our classrooms to a place of exceptional learning and academic success. Our teachers are vital to the prosperity of our communities. I will support them with every resource available to ensure their classroom's success.

2) Public Safety: As a City of Atlanta resident, I see the sharp increase in crime and violence. The mantra of "defund the police" has greatly damaged our communities...police stations are understaffed and officers are overworked.

I also hear the concerns of those who feel some police officers have prejudicial behavior towards people of color. These "bad apples" have no place in Georgia, especially in law enforcement. Training and transparency are crucial in bridging this gap and healing this age old wound of ours.

3)Medical: I support Georgia Pathway and the Patients First Act of 2019. I also strongly support of the use of medical marijuana, the patient 'Right to Try' Act, medical choice and complete transparency in medical pricing for hospital and lab testing.

If elected, how will you work with members of the opposite party to accomplish your goals?

To me, it isn't about "party". It's only about policy. Regardless of the party, if I or any state legislator has good solutions to a problem, we should all get on board with that legislation. Playing party politics down at the Gold Dome has got to end. It does not serve our community. At the end of the day, we are all Georgians who want good things to happen in our communities. Good policies lift all boats, regardless of party.

How will you work with the leadership of DeKalb County to accomplish their legislative goals? The State House and Senate Reps from DeKalb should have a direct line of communication to DeKalb County's Commissioners, City Councils, and School Boards to broaden that connection with everyone in our community. There should be a unit-

ed front of the elected officials that meet regularly together with the people in our communities. I cannot think of a better way to reach out and stay in touch with the very people who have entrusted us to represent them. Too many times, officials get elected and then disappear until election season. This isn't how it should be. I want to hear from folks in my district. I want to know what your concerns are. If elected, that's my job.

What is your reaction to the closure of Atlanta Medical Center and how would you work to improve healthcare access for all Georgians? I was stunned to hear this. I pass that hospital several times a week and it looked vibrant and full of activity...an undeniable sign of its need in our city. I have great concern when any community service provider like Atlanta Medical Center closes. This will greatly impact lower-income families and individuals. It will also greatly strain the only other nearby trauma center, Grady Hospital. This is a bi-partisan concern. Republicans and Democrats should unite and find a way to keep AMC open. Not only for the 4th Ward community, but for all communities in the metro area.

If you are elected, would you support creating new cities in DeKalb County and Georgia? I live inside the city limits of Atlanta. I enjoy having conveniences within a short drive, or walking distance. But there are some drawbacks to city living. I pay a bit more in property taxes. I pay into the Atlanta Public School system, yet have nearby county schools that could use my financial support. I get the argument for becoming a city, and yet I understand why some feel overall it's a bad idea for the county. As a legislator, I feel the final decision should be left up to the residents. I am a strong proponent of having voters go to the ballot box to express their self-determination.

Should the General Assembly pass a law that guarantees a right to have an abortion in the state? When it comes to abortion, everyone probably has decided where their line in the sand is drawn. Is yours absolutely none under any circumstances? Only in the case of rape or incest? Up until a heartbeat is detected, which could be as early as 6 weeks? Up to 10 weeks using the abortion pill? 15 weeks like Florida? Viability? If the life of the mother is in jeopardy? No limits whatsoever? Or maybe a combination of some of these choices?

For me, life starts at conception. But I recognize that some people do not share my faith. They see abortion as a medical decision. There is a lot of grey area. That is why I support extending the abortion window to 10 weeks.

While I agree with the Heartbeat Bill, I feel that some women may not know they are pregnant until after 6 weeks has past. More time is needed if a woman is unsure whether to continue or end a pregnancy.

And for the record, on Line 91 of the Heartbeat Bill abortion is allowed beyond 6 weeks in the case of rape, incest or health of the mother, which includes ectopic pregnancies. There is misinformation being peddled about HB481, ectopic pregnancy and spontaneous abortion. Read the bill here <https://www.legis.ga.gov/api/legislation/document/20192020/187013>

What should the state do with any revenue surplus it receives? With over \$5 Billion in sur-

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plus this year and a projected \$4 Billion in 2023, being fiscally responsible has replenished Georgia's rainy day coffers overflowing. I was very proud of Governor Kemp's decision to return some of our taxpayer money back to us earlier this summer. And I appreciate his willingness to consider aiding Georgians with property tax relief as part of his refund plan. This is our hard earned money. With that said, I do feel that taxpayers should have the choice of receiving this refund or directing it back into programs within the state that they feel would benefit more than they would personally. After all, it is their refund, they should be able to do with it as they wish or are led to do.

If you are elected, do you promise to conduct yourself in an ethical and transparent manner? How would you work to promote ethics and transparency in government? I do promise to conduct myself with integrity and transparency. I believe transparency is essential, not only from our local, state and federal office holders, but from every government agency that collects or uses taxpayer funds to operate or do business. If we could pass legislation that required a budgetary audit before any future SPLOST fund was allocated, our school system and transportation department could reduce wasteful, overlapping spending, and reduce potential fraud. Accountability is a good thing, not only from politicians but from government services providers that are only there to serve the people.



Saira Draper (D)

Candidate website: votesaira.com

What is your occupation? I co-founded and help run a voting rights nonprofit organization (www.powerthevote.org).

What neighborhood do you call home? Candler Park

Why are you running for this position? I have spent my career as a lawyer fighting to secure people's fundamental rights. This is the kind of work I am passionate about; ensuring all of us have a fair shake, equality before the law, and a vigorous defense of our civil and human rights. In addition, I have an expertise in voting and elections that uniquely positions me to advocate for Georgians at a time when our Democracy is in crisis.

What are your top three priorities if you are

elected? Voting Rights- As a lawmaker, I will fight to eliminate the barriers between voters and their constitutionally guaranteed rights. In addition to reversing recent laws, I will advocate for same-day voter registration, an increase in resources for county-level election administration, and improved voter education campaigns.

Housing – Like communities across the state and country, HD90 is experiencing a dramatic increase in the cost of housing of all types. Our state government should play an active role in helping communities like ours respond in a way that welcomes new people while ensuring those who have deep roots are able to stay.

Schools – Growing up, I attended Georgia public schools and now so do my children. I believe strongly in the role our public schools play as engines of opportunity for all kids. Unfortunately, Georgia is heading in the wrong direction, and I want to help reverse that trend. As a legislator, I will prioritize increasing teacher pay, fully funding public schools, allocating additional funds for students living in poverty, and increasing per-pupil transportation funding. I will also push for teaching an accurate version of history which is honest with our kids about the past.

If elected, how will you work with members of the opposite party to accomplish your goals? I have a demonstrated history of getting results by working with members of both parties.

As the Voter Protection Director at the Democratic Party of Georgia, I worked in all 159 counties to expand and protect the vote. Most of the counties across Georgia skew republican, but that didn't keep my team from making meaningful advances in those counties on voting rights.

If I am fortunate enough to be elected, I plan to introduce myself and spend time with the leaders of both parties to learn more about their priorities, help them understand mine, and make clear that my top priority is not winning personal or political victories, but making meaningful progress in the issues that matter to people in HD90 and across Georgia.

That being said, I will never compromise on fundamental values of equity, justice, and fairness. I am eager to find ways that I could work with Republicans in the legislature, but I refuse to trade on the rights or well-being of vulnerable people in order to do so.

How will you work with the leadership of DeKalb County to accomplish their legislative goals? Since winning the Democratic primary, I have actively engaged in getting to know DeKalb's elected officials with the aim of building foundations of mutual trust. No doubt, we are stronger when we work collaboratively and as a team. I look forward to doing a lot more listening to and learning from those who came before me. And I equally look forward to bringing fresh ideas and perspectives to the table, as well as renewed energy for serving our county and state.

What is your reaction to the closure of Atlanta Medical Center and how would you work to improve healthcare access for all Georgians? Medicaid expansion could have prevented the closure of the Atlanta Medical Center and other health facilities across our state. Georgia is one of only 12 states that has refused the expansion, denying affordable health coverage to a half million people.

Instead, our legislature has wasted more than a decade either doing nothing or tinkering with waivers that cover fewer people at higher cost. As a result, we have one of the highest rates of uninsured residents, one of the highest rates of uninsured children, and one of the highest rates of maternal mortality, especially among black women.

I will work with anyone, from either party, to get this done. I will build productive relationships on both sides of the aisle just as I have done to protect voting rights. I will continue to educate myself about the intricacies of the policy, and I will seek to influence others in the majority, ensuring they have the facts and data necessary to reach the obvious conclusion: expanding Medicaid makes sense for Georgia.

If you are elected, would you support creating new cities in DeKalb County and Georgia? I do not have a blanket 'yes' or 'no' position on new cities. Creating a new layer of government should be carefully studied, and we should understand the impact on municipal finances and how the day-to-day experience of the new city's residents AND those remaining under the existing authority will change. Legislators and voters deserve full information before making a choice.

To me, the most important question is understanding the rationale – what do we hope to get from a new city? Some proposed cities in other counties want to incorporate so they can control zoning and planning to keep certain types of housing (and people) out. I do not approve of that or the associated cityhood movements.

Bills for cityhood referenda should be sponsored by the legislative delegation representing that area. I am open to hearing from cityhood advocates in DeKalb County as I formulate my positions on a case-by-case basis and look forward to working with other DeKalb legislators on this topic.

Should the General Assembly pass a law that guarantees a right to have an abortion in the state? Yes. Abortion should be safe, accessible, and legal.

What should the state do with any revenue surplus it receives? My top priorities for a state surplus include:

- 1) Expanding Medicaid: most of the tab is paid by the federal government, but the state must contribute a small portion.
- 2) Fully funding public education and creating additional allocations for students in poverty.
- 3) Investment in affordable housing.
- 4) Confronting the climate crisis and advancing environmental justice.

If you are elected, do you promise to conduct yourself in an ethical and transparent manner? How would you work to promote ethics and transparency in government? If elected, I vow to not only be ethical and transparent myself, but to push to make our state government among the most ethical and transparent in the Country. As a legislator, I would support efforts to strengthen reporting requirements for state and local elected officials and candidates for public office. I would also work to repeal the law passed last year that creates dark money "Leadership Committees" that circumvent campaign contribution limits and allow donors to contribute a potentially unlimited amount of money to influence state politics, even during the legislative session.



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OF ATLANTA

EDUCATING FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE

PreK3- 8th Grade



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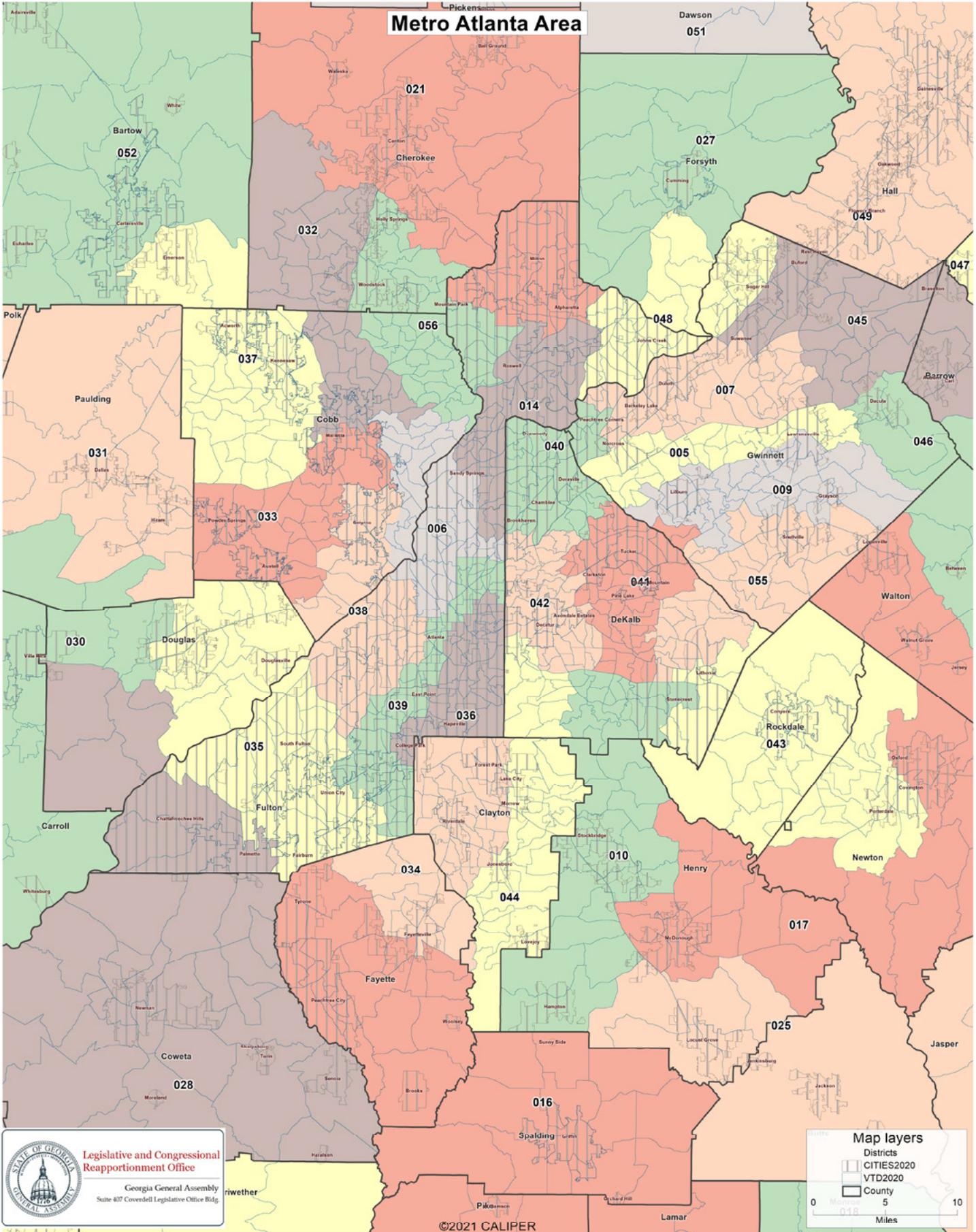
-- Friends School Parent



Founded as a model of diversity in 1991, The Friends School of Atlanta is a small school community grounded in such enduring values as community, peace and integrity. A Friends School education not only prepares students to excel at higher levels of learning, but also empowers them with the conscience, conviction and compassion to change the world.

Georgia Senate Districts- 2022

Client: State
Plan: Senate-prop1-2021
Type: Senate



Legislative and Congressional Reapportionment Office

Georgia General Assembly
 Suite 407 Coverdell Legislative Office Bldg

Candidate Q&As

STATE SENATE, DISTRICT 40



Austin McDonald (R)

Candidate website: austin4georgia.com

What is your occupation? Realtor, contract teacher, and home-maker

What neighborhood do you call home? Dunwoody

Why are you running for this position? In 2020 I left education because I felt that I could do more for education outside of the system rather than within. Over the last few years, District 40 representation in the State Senate has been lacking. I'm running to serve, listen, and represent my community and the next generation of Georgians. District 40 has strong, independent people who are busy working, living, and raising their families. It is time that we have a representative focused on District 40 and its needs.

What are your top three priorities if you are elected? Education - Ensure that the educational dollars directly support students and teachers. District-level employees should not be getting bonuses and/or raises when students are struggling academically, and teachers are using their own personal money to provide the necessary resources for student success. Safety - To keep our community safe, we must strengthen partnerships between law enforcement and citizens. Economy - Keep taxes low and bring economic development to District 40.

If elected, how will you work with members of the opposite party to accomplish your goals? I believe that elected officials should put constituents first. Our current culture has a lot of talking and not a lot of listening. It is essential to listen to those we disagree with, find common ground, and work together to accomplish what is in the best interest of all the people in District 40. Both sides can work together.

How will you work with the leadership of DeKalb County to accomplish their legislative goals? I believe that local governments know what is best for their communities. As a State Senator, I will listen to county leaders to better understand their needs. Based on those needs, together, we can set goals and work toward making DeKalb County and the rest of District 40 the best community to work, live, and raise a family in.

What is your reaction to the closure of Atlanta Medical Center and how would you work to improve healthcare access for all Georgians? The closure of Atlanta Medical Center (AMC) is unfortunate. Still, coordination between the Governor, DeKalb county, and Fulton county in support of the expansion of Grady to fill the void AMC will leave in Atlanta is an excellent example of government working together in a non-partisan way to find a solution to a challenging circumstance. However, Atlanta is not the only Georgia area with medical accessibility challenges. One solution could be coordinating with local communities and medical providers to develop a mobile clinic in areas of need like maternal health, pediatrics, and mental health.

If you are elected, would you support creating new cities in DeKalb County and Georgia? Communities desire to have cities for various reasons including safety, local control, and finances to name a few. Generally, I support cityhood and am willing to work with any community who wishes to pursue it.

Should the General Assembly pass a law that guarantees a right to have an abortion in the state? This is a broad question that does not have a simple yes or no answer. Many people in District 40 are surprised to learn of the number of exceptions within the current law. Some believe six weeks is too early, while others believe that late term abortions should be regulated.

Before having our first child, my wife had a ectopic pregnancy and a miscarriage. I feel that there is a stigma surrounding miscarriages and infertility. As a state, we need to do more to decrease the cost of adoption while removing barriers for foster care. We also need to have compassion for individuals who choose abortion by providing the option of mental health support. There is nothing more heartbreaking than losing your child.

What should the state do with any revenue surplus it receives?

As representatives of the people, it is important that we are good stewards of the people's money. We can be good stewards by providing rebates to those who have paid taxes and responsibly improving infrastructure. As State Senator, I would like to see some of the surplus go towards making our schools safer and addressing the education gaps caused by prolonged school closures during the pandemic.

If you are elected, do you promise to conduct yourself in an ethical and transparent manner? How would you work to promote ethics and transparency in government? Yes, of course. As a former educator and coach, and now a Realtor, ethics and transparency is vital to serving and working with others to accomplish goals like learning a new skill, winning a game, or negotiating a purchase or sale of a property. As I have talked to future constituents over the last few months they desire to see a legislator that will be present in their community despite their party affiliation. Someone that will give legislative updates in the local papers and not hide in executive session. Someone that will stay focused on the needs of District 40. I believe actions speak louder than words and I will lead by example, exemplifying ethics and transparency. I hope to earn your vote so I can work hard for you. Feel free to reach out to me, my number is 770-862-8790.



Sally Harrell (D)

Candidate website: sallyharrell.org

What is your occupation? Social worker

What neighborhood do you call home? Unincorporated DeKalb county, Lakeside High School area

Why are you running for this position? I am running for re-election.

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tion so that I can continue the work I have begun, specifically in the areas of education and workforce training, closing healthcare disparities (including access to reproductive healthcare and abortion), gun safety, and ensuring Georgia meets its obligation to families living with disabilities.

What are your top three priorities if you are elected? Expanding affordable post-secondary opportunities, ensuring safe facilities for K-12 students, and meeting the needs of people living with disabilities, which includes closing healthcare disparities for minority populations as a preventative measure.

If elected, how will you work with members of the opposite party to accomplish your goals? As a member of the minority party, working with the opposite party is a requirement if you want to get anything done. Therefore, I tend to concentrate on issues that both parties can agree on, such as adequate funding to reduce waiting lists for services such as foster care, child protective services and community services for the disabled.

How will you work with the leadership of DeKalb County to accomplish their legislative goals? I currently serve as Vice Chair of the DeKalb Senate delegation. As a leader of the delegation, we schedule regular meetings with DeKalb county leaders, such as the county commission and the school board.

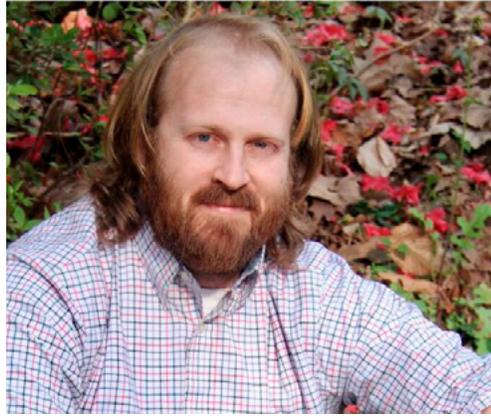
What is your reaction to the closure of Atlanta Medical Center and how would you work to improve healthcare access for all Georgians? Sadly, for-profit healthcare companies do not compete to serve the uninsured. Georgia needs to expand Medicaid, as most other states have already done, and the legislature needs to set adequate Medicaid reimbursement rates.

If you are elected, would you support creating new cities in DeKalb County and Georgia? North DeKalb currently operates under two different models of government -- county and municipal. This can negatively impact regional planning and equitable delivery of services. I believe north DeKalb needs to become fully municipalized so that everyone is operating under the same form of government.

Should the General Assembly pass a law that guarantees a right to have an abortion in the state? All Georgia women should be able to make their own reproductive decisions.

What should the state do with any revenue surplus it receives? Revenue surplus does not exist as long as basic services are not funded at adequate levels. The list of underfunded Georgia services is long.

If you are elected, do you promise to conduct yourself in an ethical and transparent manner? How would you work to promote ethics and transparency in government? I serve on the Senate Ethics Committee, which also oversees all voting laws, so I am interested in ensuring that all elected officials (including myself) and all elections are fair and transparent. All elected officials should file campaign finance disclosures (including myself) and should not be allowed to run for election if these forms are not up-to-date. Additionally, I hold regular Town Hall meetings and write a widely read newsletter while the legislature is in session.



Jayre Jones (R)

Candidate website: jayre4georgia.com

What is your occupation? Research Scientist

What neighborhood do you call home? Tucker

Why are you running for this position? State Senate District 41

What are your top three priorities if you are elected? Tax Reform, Education reform, and Crime

If elected, how will you work with members of the opposite party to accomplish your goals? My hope is to explain the details of these policies and how they will benefit from helping to pass them as it will help their constituents as well. Additionally, I am open to discussing policy changes they are interested in passing that can help my constituents also.

How will you work with the leadership of DeKalb County to accomplish their legislative goals? Having grown up in DeKalb county I would like to see significant improvements with various initiatives. I would have no issue helping with these initiatives with county officials and making sure the goals can be accomplished in a reasonable time frame with a reasonable budget.

What is your reaction to the closure of Atlanta Medical Center and how would you work to improve healthcare access for all Georgians? First, I would like a detailed report concerning why the Atlanta Medical Center shut down so that these problems can be avoided in the future. As someone who has worked with Children's Healthcare of Atlanta for years now I know the turnover rate at Grady is very high. Their personnel are worked to the bone and they have an enormous burden handling the trauma care for all of Atlanta. Second, I would like to fund a second trauma center so we can take the pressure off of Grady and improve outcomes for both patients as well as staff. The funding that was just allocated by Governor Kemp to expand Grady is fine as a short term fix but the second trauma center needs to be on the agenda as well.

If you are elected, would you support creating new cities in DeKalb County and Georgia? If voters were to support the formation of new cities then I would have no issue with it.

Should the General Assembly pass a law that guarantees a right to have an abortion in the state? I would need the details for this law concerning the circumstances in which this would be permitted. There are very few instances I would ever support abortion being an option.

What should the state do with any revenue surplus it receives? I have a long list of what I would like the surplus to be utilized for but my priorities would be to allocate this money to schools that are in a severe state of disrepair or to construct new schools in areas where schools are overwhelmed past their capacity. The problem is that there have been serious issues with DeKalb county spending money wisely. The general assembly will need to set rules concerning bids for the money to avoid being squandered.

If you are elected, do you promise to conduct yourself in an ethical and transparent manner? How would you work to promote ethics and transparency in government? Ever since I decided to run my objective has always been to be sincere and open with my neighbors and fellow DeKalb residents. We may not agree on everything but we mostly want the same things. I believe the best way to implement improvements to governance on both a local and state level is to be honest with your constituents. I would also like bills to have summaries that most people can understand concerning what they do. I would endeavor to convince my fellow members of the general assembly to just have an honest conversation with their voters concerning what is wrong and how they would like to fix it. It would be nice to host events for people to come to where they can talk to me or other members of the general assembly about what problems need fixing and even tap our constituents for ideas they may have to solve these problems.



Kim Jackson (D)

Candidate website: kimforgeorgia.com

What is your occupation? Vicar, Church of the Common Good; State Senator, Georgia District 41

What neighborhood do you call home? Stone Mountain, Georgia

Why are you running for this position? I have enjoyed beginning to meet the needs of my constituents as their state senator, but I know there is more work to be done. I remain committed to serving my constituents across DeKalb and Gwinnett counties.

What are your top three priorities if you are elected? I have three priorities that inform my work and engagement with my communities: Protecting our voting rights, defending protections for women & children, and ensuring affordable housing for all. I recently participated in a Senate Study Committee investigating the impacts and possible solutions for

unhoused individuals across Georgia. Costs of living increases combined with minimal increases in wages have proven to be detrimental to our communities. Home and food insecurity have far-reaching impacts on mental health, education, and job opportunities. Continuing to participate, propose, and support legislation while leading discussions to promote socio-economic growth and development are all ways I work to advocate for my constituents and communities.

If elected, how will you work with members of the opposite party to accomplish your goals? I believe in the power of collaboration and partnership for the greater good. My goals are for all Georgians to have access to the resources and information needed for everyday life, regardless of party affiliation. I have witnessed many of my colleagues affiliated with other parties wanting the same for their constituents. Together I believe we can sponsor and co-sponsor legislation and committee work, such as the bipartisan efforts on the senate study committee for unsheltered homelessness, to affect change across the board. I'm at urgent care. I've proven my ability and willingness to work collaboratively during my first term. In a clear non-partisan fashion, the general assembly unanimously passed my tenant release bill for victims of stalking. Additionally, during the 2022 session, every bill that I authored was co-sponsored by a bipartisan group of lawmakers.

How will you work with the leadership of DeKalb County to accomplish their legislative goals? I look forward to strengthening cultivated relationships, I aim to continue my work in partnership with local leaders to bring growth to the socioeconomic development of our communities.

What is your reaction to the closure of Atlanta Medical Center and how would you work to improve healthcare access for all Georgians? I think the closure of the Atlanta Medical Center is horrendous and a huge loss for the Old Fourth Ward and surrounding communities. Grady and AMC were already dealing with over-capacity issues and Grady has stated they are not prepared to take on the additional burdens this closure would bring to their hospital. Medicaid should be fully expanded and cover the additional Georgians who are not currently eligible and will not be eligible under the new limited expansion recently approved by a federal judge. I believe a full Medicaid expansion could go a long way in improving access to care and limiting the closure of hospitals across the state.

If you are elected, would you support creating new cities in DeKalb County and Georgia? I support doing what is best for DeKalb County and at this time I do not believe the division of communities and their resources would prove to be beneficial for all. Many communities are already strained in terms of resources and funding for what is needed. There are rising costs in many areas of every day, and I do not believe we can afford to divide our communities to create new cities and place additional financial and economic burdens on our community members.

Should the General Assembly pass a law that guarantees a right to have an abortion in the state? I believe the General Assembly should pass legislation that guarantees the right of choice for everyone who needs it. It is not my right or the right of our government to determine what is best for an individual and their body. We need to leave that decision in the hands of individuals and their medical providers.

What should the state do with any revenue surplus it receives? Minimally, surplus revenue should be put into our healthcare and housing infrastructure. The number of individuals experiencing homelessness or on the brink of homelessness is very high in our state and there are not enough resources available to these communities and individuals. I still receive dozens of emails from constituents needing rental assistance.

Additionally, there are hundreds of thousands of Georgians without access to medical care. With the closure of six hospitals in urban and rural communities in the last four years, we could use surplus funding to investigate the possibilities of opening up more public hospitals.

If you are elected, do you promise to conduct yourself in an ethical and transparent manner? How would you work to promote ethics and transparency in government? Yes, I promise to conduct myself ethically and in a transparent manner. I currently release a monthly newsletter and do my best to include information and resources for my constituents and community. This newsletter is particularly beneficial in promoting ethical and transparent work in government as it provides a constant method of communication from my office and the work of the General Assembly to those we serve.

Tucker Public Works referendum on the Nov. 8 ballot

By Dan Whisenhunt, Editor

Tucker, GA — On Nov. 8, voters in the city of Tucker will have a chance to weigh in on whether the city should take over more services from DeKalb County.

The referendum will be on the same ballot as the Nov. 8 midterm elections, where voters will vote on state and federal offices.

If approved by voters, the city would be authorized to take over road construction and maintenance and stormwater management. Here's the text of the ballot question:

Shall the City of Tucker be authorized to directly provide road construction and maintenance including curbs, sidewalks, street-lights, devices to control the flow of traffic, and stormwater management rather than rely upon DeKalb County to provide such services on its behalf and to levy and collect ad valorem property tax at a millage rate not to exceed 3 mills simultaneous with the ending of the collection of DeKalb County road and transportation special district ad valorem property tax?

To see the city's informational webpage about the referendum, click [here](#).

Tucker officials will hold informational meetings on Tuesday, Oct. 18 at 10 a.m. and Wednesday, Oct. 26 at 7 p.m.

"All Public Works Referendum community meetings will be held

in City Hall Council Chambers, 1975 Lakeside Parkway, Suite 350B and accessible online at [//tuckerga.gov/pwmeeting](https://tuckerga.gov/pwmeeting)," the announcement from the city says.

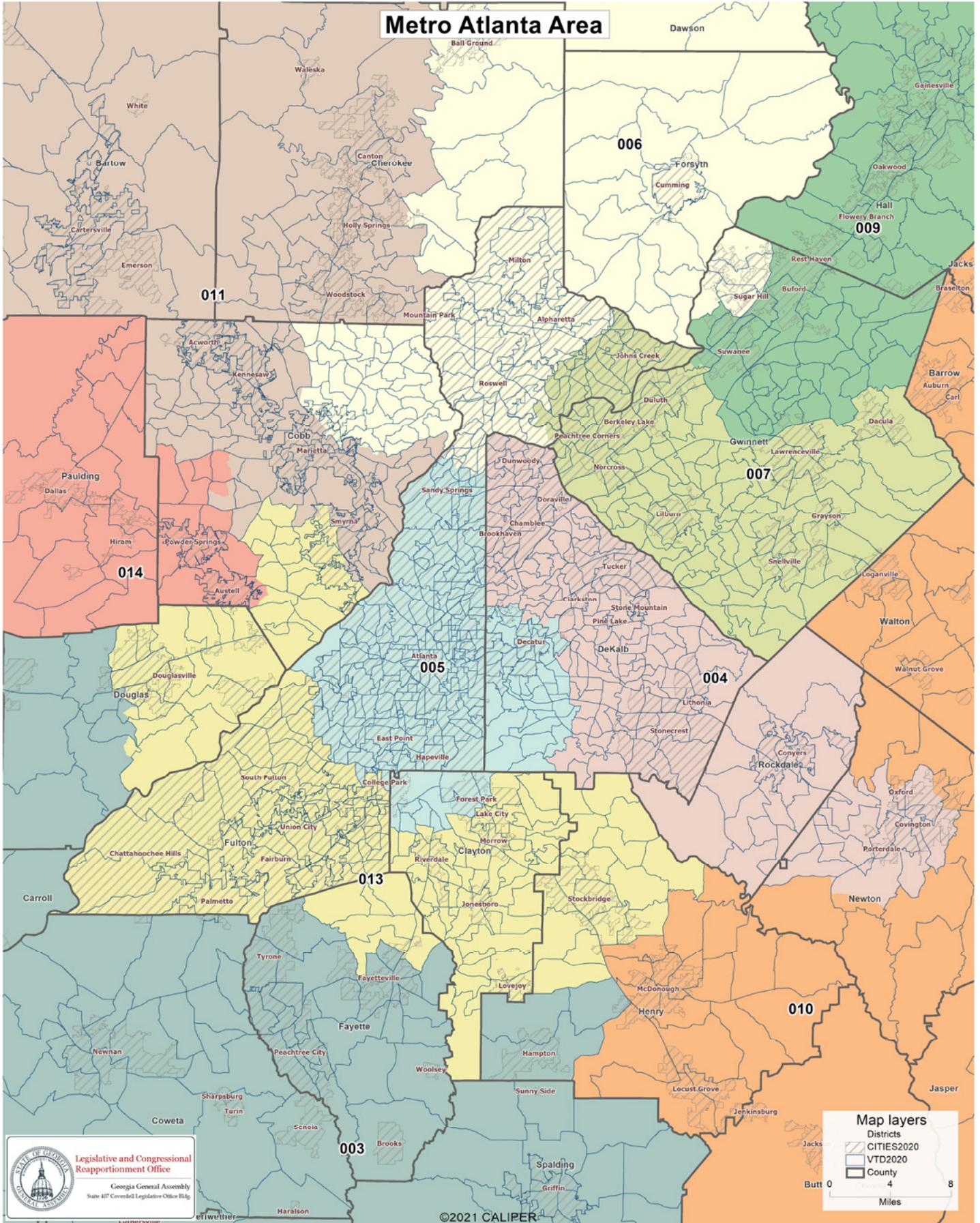
Taking on these services would incur an additional cost for residents.

"If the public works referendum is approved by voters during the upcoming election, a homeowner with a property valued at \$328,000 would see a projected increase of \$94 annually for roads and maintenance services and stormwater services combined," the city's informational website says. "Businesses located within the City of Tucker would see proportionate increases as well."



Congressional Districts of Georgia- 2022

Client: State
Plan: Congress-prop1-2021
Type: Congress



Candidate Q&As

UNITED STATES CONGRESS , 5TH DISTRICT



Nikema Williams (D)

Candidate website: nikemaforcongress.com

What is your occupation? Member of Congress

What neighborhood do you call home? Princeton Lakes in Atlanta

Why are you running for this position? I am running for re-election to build further upon my commitment to represent Georgia's Fifth District in Congress, out loud and on purpose. In Congress, I will continue to fight to ensure the promise of America for all. In Congress and previously in the State Legislature, I have fought for working families and those most marginalized, especially when it comes to our voting rights and reproductive freedom. My work on the Financial Services and Transportation and Infrastructure Committees has further strengthened my position to fight for what the people of the Fifth District need to not merely survive, but thrive. I am also well equipped to do this work as the first Black woman to Chair the Democratic Party of Georgia, where I lead the fight statewide to expand access to the vote and opportunity for Georgians. I know what is needed and how to fight for a more prosperous Georgia and I look forward to continuing to do this work.

What are your top three priorities if you are elected? Ensuring the right to vote and everyone having their voices heard in our democracy is my priority. In 2022, I worked to pass the Freedom to Vote: John R. Lewis Act and will continue to fight until it becomes law. I also authored key voting rights legislation; the Voters on the Move Registration Act, Expanding the VOTE Act, Youth Voting Rights Act, and Sustaining Our Democracy Act to make it easier for people to register and exercise their right to vote. To further uplift the voices of the marginalized, I focus on ensuring opportunity, autonomy, and power through education and healthcare. Access to affordable quality education is a critical part of advancing marginalized communities, it means investing in universal pre-K and HBCUs. I am a cosponsor of the IGNITE HBCU Excellence Act and worked to secure HBCU funding in FY22 appropriations and the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act. Georgia Republican leadership has failed

marginalized Georgians by not expanding Medicaid and denying affordable healthcare to those who need it most. I support of Medicare for All, universal paid leave, and full reproductive freedom for all to ensure healthcare and care are rights that are not dependent on your bank account or ZIP code.

If elected, how will you work with members of the opposite party to accomplish your goals? When it makes sense, I work with members of the opposite party because the main priority is to get positive policies enacted for my constituents. I am grounded in my values and won't compromise the purpose of legislation, but in Congress, you learn that there are instances where Democrats and Republicans can find common ground for the people.

How will you work with the leadership of DeKalb County to accomplish their legislative goals? I am glad to share that we currently and will continue to work with Dekalb County - engaging directly with leadership, the community and regularly sharing funding opportunities to ensure the needs of residents and the locality is met.

What is your reaction to the closure of Atlanta Medical Center and how would you work to improve healthcare access for all Georgians? Suddenly closing Atlanta Medical Center jeopardizes the well-being of their patients and our entire community and puts the livelihoods of the hospital's employees at risk. Refusing to expand Medicaid has placed an enormous financial burden on hospitals that leaves patients suffering the most, and this is ultimately a failure of Republican leadership here in Georgia. I will continue to fight for strong reimbursements to health providers as well as universal health coverage and Medicare for All. This term, I held a town hall to discuss increased healthcare benefits with experts and constituents and I will continue this work in Congress.

If you are elected, would you favor further regulating technology companies like Amazon and Facebook? If so, what new regulations would you like to see? If not, why not? Congress has a critical job to write the rules of the road as the road is being built, and that is especially true as technology continues to evolve. I support robust conversations in Congress to ensure the laws regulating technology companies are keeping up with modern-day realities and following with evidence-based legislation.

If you are elected, how would you work with your colleagues to address inflation? I will continue building on the success of the Inflation Reduction by continuing to reduce the costs that everyday Americans face - especially the cost of care. I introduced the CEDS Act to take a commonsense first step forward and I will continue this work if re-elected.

Should the U.S. Congress pass a law that guarantees a right to have an abortion? Yes

Do you support decriminalizing marijuana at the federal level? Why or why not? Yes, in fact, I support full legalization of cannabis. However, this is only step one toward criminal justice reform and racial justice - one of many. Black and brown people have suffered from our federal marijuana policies and are disproportionately jailed and arrested for marijuana-related offenses.

The MORE Act will help right some of these injustices while reinvesting in communities that were harmed by our misguided federal marijuana laws. The House of Representatives did its job. Now, I am pushing to encourage my colleagues in the Senate to quickly act to pass this bipartisan legislation. We must undo the damage from our failed war on drugs.

If you are elected, do you promise to conduct yourself in an ethical and transparent manner? How would you work to promote ethics and transparency in government? I always center the most marginalized in my decisions and challenge my colleagues to do the same. If re-elected, I promise to continue this ethical and transparent stance. I serve on the Modernization of Congress Committee, where I remind everyone that people like me, a Black woman named Nikema, are here and there have to be changes in government to recognize the diversity and increase equity.

(For the opponent's answers. see page 30.)

Decatur School Board will review school district's dress code

By Zoe Seiler, reporter

Decatur, Ga. — Parents raised various concerns about City Schools of Decatur's dress code during the school board meeting on Sept. 13. The concerns arose after the Beacon Hill Middle School principal emailed parents reminding them about the dress code.

Superintendent Maggie Fehrman agreed to review the dress code policy and bring it before the school board to look at any potential changes. She added that she is open to working with the student advisory committee to review and update the dress code.

Parent Emily Beard said the dress code checks all the boxes against the kind of equity CSD purports to uphold.

"My 12-year-old is uncomfortable in her learning environment because the adults around her as so focused on the length of her skirt and whether her classmates' bra straps are showing," Beard said. "Dress coding contributes to rape culture where blame is conveniently shifted from the one who harms to the one who is harmed because look at he, she, they are wearing and how could they, she, he resist."

Fehrman said the dress code has been in place and unchanged for a while. The policy was updated during the COVID-19 pandemic to include information about masks.

The dress code was also revised several years ago to remove gender-specific clothing items and wanted to make sure there was flexibility for all students to dress in a way that they feel comfortable, she added.

"I want to point out that in no way does our code reference any type of length of shorts or skirts or even bras. It was designed to be appropriate for students in every grade level," Fehrman said.

Board member Dr. Carmen Sul-ton mentioned that one line of the dress code policy is being focused on "and we've run away with it, which is how much of your behind or how much of your belly button is showing when you walk through

the school door."

"But in that policy as well, it says that you are not allowed to wear clothing that is racially offensive, that is religiously offensive. It gives our Muslim sisters the ability to wear a hijab peacefully," Sul-ton said.

Some parents also raised concerns that the dress code disproportionately impacts girls, especially girls of color.

Sulton, a mom of four Black girls, said that policies like a dress code can be used as a disciplinary tool.

"That's what it means when we say that these policies are different for our African American girls," Sul-ton said. "But I want to be clear that I didn't take this position to put across any policy that would harm any female student at all."

School Board Chair Jana Johnson-Davis was a teacher at Beacon Hill Middle School. She said she has witnessed the dress code used as a disciplinary tool against Black girls.

The school board members also agreed that the dress code needs to be enforced consistently and equitably.

"My issues I will highlight are one, the dress code is being sold differently by different teachers. Leggings, no leggings, tights, no tights. My sixth grader brought home the 2017 pre-amended dress code. That's a problem because that creates mixed messages," School Board Vice Chair James Herndon said.

Johnson-Davis added that she knew girls who were suspended for wearing leggings to school when she was a teacher.

Board member Hans Utz suggested the district look at two sections of the policy.

"I think the section where we talked about under layers, like long underwear, tights and leggings, that is targeted towards women. When we talk about dress to cover your waist, torso, midriff, chest and undergarments that is principally targeted towards women. I think that those two sections need a really heavy rethink on how that's worded and how hard we go after that. This is not, I think, the hill that we need to die on," Utz said.

Tucker moves forward on Northlake Trail as others near completion

By Sara Amis, contributor

Tucker, Ga. — The Tucker City Council at its Sept. 12 regular meeting passed a framework agreement with the Georgia Department of Transportation for the construction of a Tucker-Northlake trail that will run from downtown Tucker to Northlake at I-285.

City Engineer Ken Hildebrandt stated that the project engineering by Heath & Lineback will cost \$1.97 million. Federal funding will provide \$560,000, and \$50,000 will come from the Tucker-Northlake Community Improvement District.

Federal funding will also be available for future right-of-way acquisition in the amount of \$920,910. Hildebrandt estimated that the total construction cost for the trail would be \$5 million to \$7 million, and said that the city would seek additional funding for later stages of the project.

Hildebrandt put the trail in the context of a plan to build trails and sidewalks, including downtown and Hugh Howell trails that are currently approaching completion, which will make Tucker more pedestrian and bicycle friendly.

The city council also took measures to control vehicle traffic. The city awarded a contract to Summit Construction & Development, LLC for traffic-calming measures on Brockett Road in the amount of \$1,275,679.

Public commenters including Jimmy Martin and Babs Douglas spoke in favor of the Brockett Road calming project and described the road as dangerous for pedestrians. Douglas added that while she favored calming measures, the road is narrow, and she was concerned that added medians or anything that extended along the length of the road could back up traffic.

The city also approved purchase of digital speed detection signs for \$31,700 and a task order for a north/south connectivity study by Kimlee Horn in the amount of \$209,105.

In other business:

— The city council approved a contract with GDOT to acquire the right-of-way at Mountain Industrial and Hugh Howell Road, for adding dual left turn lanes from Mountain Industrial onto Hugh Howell as well as an eastbound right turn lane. GDOT has confirmed contributing \$750,000 towards construction and the Tucker CID has contributed \$50,000.

Hildebrandt described the intersection as the most congested in the city and said that the GDOT formula projects right-of-way costs at \$290,000, however he expects that the actual costs will be less.

— The city has a contract with Helix Group to replace the sewer line at Fitzgerald Park. Citing a global increase in the price of the pipe to be used, Director of Parks and Recreation Rip Robertson requested a change order to the project for an additional \$32,045, which was approved by the city council.

In addition, the city is negotiating to use parking and field space at a church adjacent to Fitzgerald Park. The church has requested that part of the lease agreement be a connection to the DeKalb County sewer system through Fitzgerald Park, which would require an additional sewer line and manhole, for an amount not to exceed \$105,000. The project will only be completed if a satisfactory lease agreement is signed with the church. Robertson stated that he would bring the full lease agreement back for approval by the city council.



City Schools of Decatur School Board from left, James Herndon (vice chair), Dr. Carmen Sul-ton, Jana Johnson-Davis (chair), Superintendent Dr. Maggie Fehrman, Tasha White and Hans Utz. Photo by Dean Hesse.



Christian Zimm (R)

Candidate website: christianzimm.com

What is your occupation? Attorney

What neighborhood do you call home? Buckhead

Why are you running for this position? My top priority is to reduce crime in Metro Atlanta which has been increasing over the past few years. We must fully fund our police departments, hire more police officers, pay them more, invest in more 911 operators so that citizens aren't getting voicemail, and show our appreciation for law enforcement again. My opponent doesn't acknowledge crime is even an issue and supports defunding the police.

What are your top three priorities if you are elected? 1) Reduce crime in Metro Atlanta by fully funding our police, hiring more officers and 911 operators, and respecting our police again

2) Reducing inflation since these higher prices are hitting average working people in the district and squeezing their budgets

3) Invest more into our crumbling infrastructure

If elected, how will you work with members of the opposite party to accomplish your goals? I simply want to make our community a safer place for everyone, I don't care about political party. If we agree that crime is a problem and needs to be addressed, I will work with whomever to find common ground in order to make Metro Atlanta safer.

How will you work with the leadership of DeKalb County to accomplish their legislative goals? The leadership of DeKalb County and I have a great relationship as many of them are my friends. I lived in Decatur for six years and have developed deep relationships with many people in the community. We will put our differences aside to ensure that all of DeKalb County is a better community.

What is your reaction to the closure of Atlanta Medical Center and how would you work to improve healthcare access for all Georgians? The closure of the Atlanta Medical Center is detrimental to our already stressed healthcare system in Metro Atlanta. Our current leaders did nothing to prevent this from happening. AMC's closure proves that hospitals must be run like businesses and not charities; and as a result of AMC losing hundreds of millions of dollars over the last years, its closure will now cost citizens another important source of healthcare. The VA Hospital in DeKalb is another poorly run system costly our veterans. First, these hospitals must change

to be run like businesses not charities to stay open and, second, our government leaders must support them properly.

If you are elected, would you favor further regulating technology companies like Amazon and Facebook? If so, what new regulations would you like to see? If not, why not? Tech companies pose the biggest threat to free speech. Companies like Facebook, Twitter, and others have progressed to become the beacons of speech and they are constantly censoring certain forms of speech on their platforms. Misinformation and obvious fake news should not be allowed; however, these tech companies should not be oppressing users' first amendment right to freedom of speech. I would support investigations, and potentially very strong legislation, to ensure that these tech companies are not censoring free speech on their platforms.

If you are elected, how would you work with your colleagues to address inflation? First, we must not pass laws that contribute to the deficit such as eliminating student loan debt. It's purely principle that individuals who take out loans must pay them back, regardless of the kind of loan. My opponent and her husband have over \$250,000.00 of student loan debt*, and by her supporting the elimination of her own debt and that of others is directly contributing to the higher inflation. We cannot continue to forgo the debt that we owe and spend more money than we bring in. We need more common sense.

Should the U.S. Congress pass a law that guarantees a right to have an abortion? With the overturning of Roe v. Wade, the issue of abortion is now left to the states to decide.

Do you support decriminalizing marijuana at the federal level? Why or why not? I do believe marijuana should be decriminalized, but this issue should be left to the states. I believe in federal legislation that incentivizes states to decriminalize marijuana.

If you are elected, do you promise to conduct yourself in an ethical and transparent manner? How would you work to promote ethics and transparency in government? Yes. I absolutely believe those in positions of power must be open, transparent, and conduct themselves in an ethical way. I will work to promote ethics and transparency through disclosing any potential conflicts of interests with my constituents prior to a vote. If there is a clear conflict, I will not vote on that subject. This is in sharp contrast to my opponent, who has not disclosed her and her husband owe over \$250,000.00 in student loan debt and is not only campaigning to eliminate her own debt but is also promoting to vote to do so.

*** Decaturish asked Williams about her opponent's claims regarding her student loan debt. Williams said, "My and my husband's student debt is not something I'm ashamed of as it's my lived experience that leads me to fight for the millions of people struggling with student debt. I was raised in a home with no indoor plumbing and no running water. My family didn't have the means to pay for my college education. I combined scholarships, pell grants and student loans to go to college."**

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AVONDALE ESTATES FAMILY'S STICKER BALL WEIGHS IN AT ABOUT 625 POUNDS

By Zoe Seiler, reporter

Avondale Estates, Ga. — The Moricle family of Avondale Estates has been working to break the Guinness world record for the world's largest sticker ball for four years. During a weighing ceremony at the Avondale Estates City Commission meeting on Sept. 28, the sticker ball weighed in at 624.6 pounds and is 8 feet and half an inch in circumference.

Over 200,000 stickers have been stuck to the ball. Wade Moricle, Sofie's father, said during the city commission meeting that the ball is over one foot larger than the current world record holder.

"I was shocked. I didn't think we were going to break 600 pounds," Wade said.

During the meeting, Wade and his friend, Brian Higgins, rolled the ball up a small wooden ramp to rest it on top of a scale. Mayor Jonathan Elmore served as the surveyor who certified the weighing apparatus used to weigh the sticker ball.

The family also invited the city commissioners, city staff, and the audience to add stickers to the ball as well.

Sofie Moricle got the idea from the Guinness Book of World Records that she bought at a book fair in fifth grade. She started the project with heart stickers she rolled into a small ball in 2018.

"I am impressed," Sofie said. "I did not think we would be able to do this. It shocked me that I was able to get it this far."

She added that at the time, the sticker ball looked easy to do to get stickers and form them into a ball.

"It's been fun because during quarantine you didn't really have anything to do at home, so this really took up my time, and it was fun to do because I was bored most of the time being stuck in the house," Sofie said.

StickerGiant set the original record at 231 pounds in 2016 to celebrate national sticker day. StickyBrand broke that record in 2020 with a 308-pound sticker ball.

Over the past few years, the Moricles have partnered with Signarama to "funcycle" their stickers. Former owner John Conley agreed to provide stickers, since the city of Decatur didn't pick up their stickers as waste because the adhesive gums up the garbage trucks. Current owner Danya King also agreed to provide stickers for the project when Conley retired.

Wade said that the family's partnership with Signarama made the project possible.

The sticker ball has also taken on several themes with various layers of stickers, such as Christmas, Easter, Valentine's Day, Fourth of July, St. Patrick's Day, Halloween, Star Wars, a giant eyeball, a Magic 8-Ball, and a celebration of graduation from seventh grade.

"Making a theme for each holiday was so much fun," Sofie said.

She added that her favorite themes were Star Wars and the Magic 8-ball.

The various periods of quarantine during the COVID-19 pandemic kept the family secluded in their home for about a year, but the sticker ball gave them something fun to work on.

The sticker ball was also a therapeutic activity for Wade when he went through cancer treatment in 2021. He was diagnosed with stage three colon cancer in January 2021.

"Really and truly, the sticker ball was very relaxing. It was something that was kind of mindless, and you would just sit there, and you would peel stickers. Oddly enough, I've become very adept at peeling stickers and putting them on the ball without get-



TOP: The Moricle family, Wade, Sofie and Julie, pose with the 600-pound sticker ball Sofie started at church with a couple rolled up stickers four years ago before a weighing ceremony for the 2024 Guinness Book of World Records during the Avondale Estates City Commission meeting on Sept. 28. BOTTOM: Avondale Estates Mayor Jonathan Elmore looks on as Mark Hogstrom videos the proceedings according to Guinness Book of World Records rules that require the entire weighing process be recorded from start to finish. Photos by Dean Hesse.

ting the little creases in them," Wade previously said. "When you combine COVID plus cancer, you end up with a 600-pound sticker ball."

Wade, Sofie and Julie Moricle will submit for the record digitally. Due to COVID-19, the Guinness

World Record Company did not send a representative to see the record attempt.

"They are having us do the work ourselves," Wade said. "We will submit this record, and it might be as long as a month, but they will let us know."

Agnes Scott College contracting with Aramark for facilities maintenance

By Zoe Seiler, reporter

Decatur, Ga. —Agnes Scott College announced to its facilities staff, students and faculty during a meeting on Wednesday, Aug. 24, that the college is extending a contract to Aramark to be the facilities maintenance partner going forward.

The contract will be for five years with a five-year renewal.

“Continued deferred maintenance, labor shortages and supply chain challenges caused us to look at how other institutions have addressed these issues,” Agnes Scott College spokesperson Danita Knight told Decaturish. “The use of managed services is a very successful solution employed at other colleges, like Spelman and Morehouse.”

The Aug. 24 meeting was meant to be for the facilities staff to get to know Aramark and ask the company questions, but then students and faculty showed up to the meeting with their own questions.

The process of searching for a company to operate the facilities department was a continuance of the initiative in 2020 when the school looked at how to address deferred maintenance, according to Agnes Scott officials who spoke during the meeting.

“Through that process, we decided to extend our relationship with Aramark and Aramark will now be our facilities service partner going forward,” said Scott Randazza, interim vice president for finance and administration.

Knight added that Aramark providing similar services to Morehouse and Spelman carried some weight in making the decision.

The college has used service companies in the past.

According to the college’s 2019 tax filing, the school has previously contracted with Aramark for food service and contracted with Padgett Services for HVAC and mechanical maintenance.

During the request for proposals process, Randazza said a key priority for him was that the facilities employees would have a job under the new facilities service company.

“The No. 1 thing was all of our employees have a job and are guaranteed a job. Nobody except tenured faculty on campus are guaranteed a job today. The only other people that will be guaranteed a job is the facilities team,” he said. “The second thing around compensation was everyone was going to have equal or better compensation, so nobody was going to have an issue around compensation, and the third was around benefits. Again, everyone will have equivalent or better benefits.”

Subject to performance, the employees will contractually have a job for two years.

During the Aug. 24 meeting, students and staff asked why the college doesn’t hire more facilities employees, but can afford to hire a new company.

“We do not have the money,” Randazza said. “We have a compensation issue. The only way that that is going to be fixed is if we have more money. If we can bring in a company like Aramark that is able to leverage their resources, the reality is we can address these things without costing us more money.”

Knight, who answered questions following the Aug. 24 meeting, said the college will reduce costs by leveraging Aramark’s supplier agreements.

“Addressing deferred maintenance will lower repair costs. Savings will be reinvested into facilities and other Agnes Scott priorities,” Knight said.

She added that the college is currently in a strong financial position.

“This was recently affirmed by Fitch’s upgrade of the college’s bond rating,” Knight said. “A managed



Agnes Scott College. Photo by Dean Hesse.

services model, which is very common in colleges, will provide the best value for the money spent. This enables the college to better serve our students, faculty and staff by providing more and varied services in a more timely manner and relieve the burden on the current facilities staff resulting from the ‘Great Resignation’ and supply chain issues.”

Randazza also pointed out that the college has tried to hire facilities positions, and others, but has struggled to fill those roles.

“We went a whole school year without the second most important person in facilities and not because we didn’t try to hire them, we could not find a resource,” he said. “That’s the reality of the labor market today. It simply is. We’re seeing across other aspects of campus.”

Bray Brunkhurst, vice president of sales and retention at Aramark, explained that Aramark is in the business of helping universities improve their performance regarding facilities.

“What we do is we leverage our engineering resources, our supplier agreements for supply chain in our world-class programs to improve the reliability and the function of the buildings where people learn and where people work and where people experience their full college education,” Brunkhurst said.

He also told the facilities employees, especially as concerns about reducing pay were raised, that Aramark will not cut wages and benefits.

Brunkhurst said facilities employees will see the same or better benefits and will be paid \$15 an hour or greater.

“I would say that the decision by Agnes Scott is not against anyone in this room,” Brunkhurst said during the Aug. 24 meeting. “The decision by Agnes Scott is to say we’re a small, private university. The environment is changing in regard to finding people to come to work, in regard to finding engineers that can help us with deferred maintenance needs, and you’ve got a supplier base that can help bring new companies here to improve the campus life. That’s what this decision was based on.”

Another representative from Aramark said employees will transition onto Aramark’s payroll at their current wages and will have the opportunity to either apply for their current position or a different

position. Depending on the positions they apply for, the employees could receive a higher wage.

Knight said the current staff will maintain their positions with the same, if not, better compensation and benefits.

“We are providing for a transition in which every employee may stay in their job if they wish and receive compensation, including benefits, that will be as good or better than they are currently receiving while at the same time providing greater services to our community and more opportunities for our staff members,” Knight said.

Following the meeting, students and faculty still had questions about the contract with Aramark.

“It’s going to definitely impact the sense of community here,” a student who declined to give their name said. “Especially last year, our facilities workers were the closet thing I had to having my family around all the time.”

The student added that the college can’t run without the facilities staff.

“All of their jobs, we couldn’t exist without them,” the student said. “We can’t run without facilities.”

Student Molly Edlein said that students interact with the facilities staff and other staff members daily.

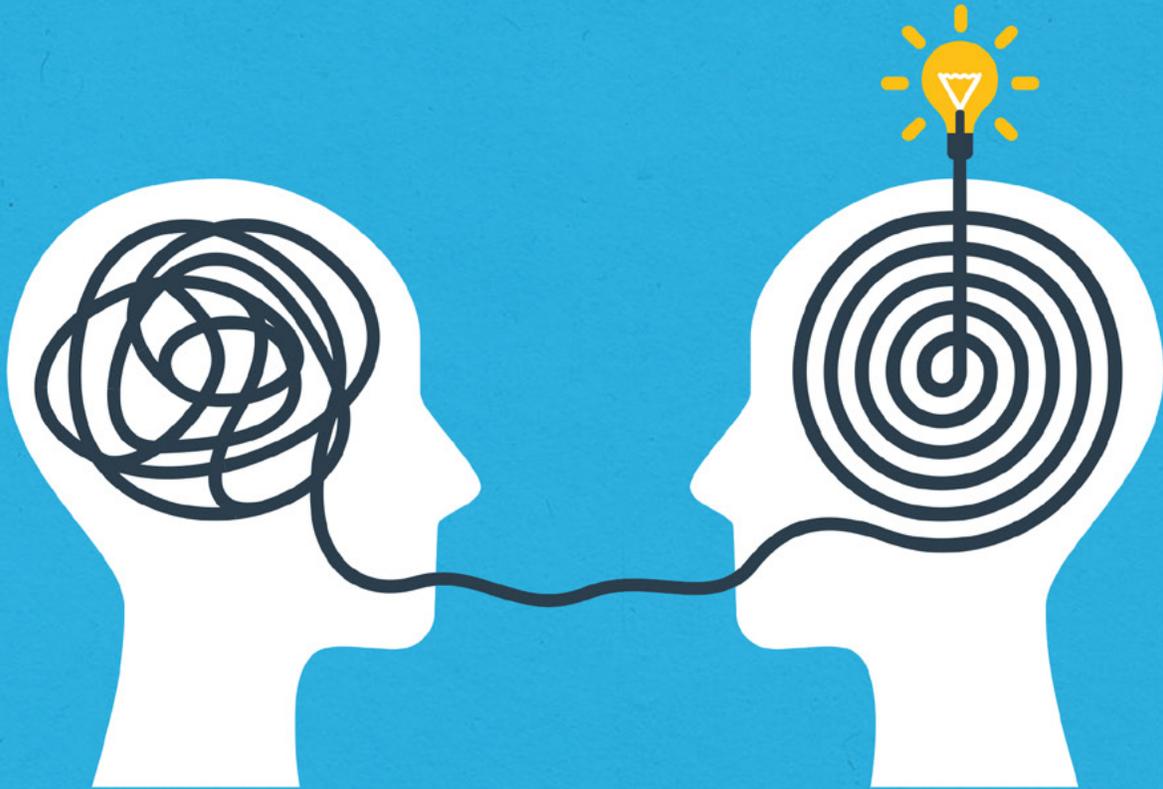
“You walk out of your dorm every day, who do you talk to? You talk to Miss Maria, who’s cleaning the dorm. You talk to Miss Mary, who’s serving you your food,” student Molly Edlein said. “The interactions we have on campus are with facilities and dining workers and all of those people who are the lifeblood of this campus and who have continuously and historically been shown nothing but disrespect.”

She also added that since the college is signing a five-year contract with Aramark, then they should be guaranteeing wages and jobs for facilities employees for five years.

Students were also concerned about the lack of transparency throughout the decision-making process.

“I also want to mention our other concern is this process has not been democratic at all,” Jasper Potts said. “Allegedly they’ve had these decisions in the works since 2020 and people have just heard about it in the last few weeks.”

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