

2020



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THE UNION-RECORDER

# VOTER'S *guide*



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## BALDWIN COUNTY COMMISSION DISTRICT 5 CANDIDATE Q&amp;A



Johnny Westmoreland (I) (R)  
Baldwin County Commission District 5

**The Union-Recorder:** What prompted you to want to seek the officer of county commissioner?

**Johnny Westmoreland:** It has been my honor and privilege to serve the constituents of District 5 and Baldwin County for the past eight years. I am seeking re-election to build upon the successes that we have had over my tenure and to continue working with my constituents and other commissioners to ensure that we stay on this path forward.

**U-R:** What do you think you can offer the constituents of this district as a member of the Baldwin County Board of Commissioners?

**JW:** I have devoted countless hours, driven hundreds of miles and received numerous calls addressing various concerns and issues throughout District 5 and the county. After a few months in office I learned that it takes a team to address and resolve these concerns and issues. As a team player I will continue working with District 5 constituents, the board and the county staff to make Baldwin County a better and safer place to live, work and play. As you can see, I am dedicated to Baldwin County.

I have the time, experience and training needed to address the concerns of the citizens of Baldwin County on day one.

**U-R:** In your estimation, what are the two biggest problems facing residents today in Baldwin County, and if elected, how do you plan to

**JW:** The most obvious problem is COVID-19. I am sad that over 50 people in our community lost their lives to this pandemic. We need our community to resume its normal activities. I want to stress to our community to be prepared when they go out in public, use common sense and be prepared in case they get sick. Talk to your doctor about a game plan if you develop symptoms. I recommend our residents get the flu shot. This pandemic has hurt many of our businesses tremendously. I encourage all residents to shop locally to support these businesses. I will do my part to ensure our county facilities are safe places to work and visit and ensure our administration follows recommended protocols.

Second the county is still dealing with road issues. The number one thing I hear from my constituents is "when is my road going to be repaved?" Baldwin County has a total of 407 miles of roads to maintain, 383 miles of these roads are paved. Our county

## Westmoreland seeking new term

By **BILLY W. HOBBS**  
bhobbs@unionrecorder.com

Johnny H. Westmoreland has served as the District 5 member on the Baldwin County Board of Commissioners for nearly eight years and he wants to serve another four-year term.

Westmoreland, a republican, is being challenged by Dr. Kelvin Butts, a democrat.

Westmoreland had never held political office before he was elected to the county commission District 5 seat. From 2018 until 2019, Westmoreland served as chairman of the county commission.

District 5 primarily covers the northern end of Baldwin County.

"For nearly eight years, I've dedicated my life to helping the good people of Baldwin County," Westmoreland said. "I've tried to help the people who live in District 5, but mainly all the people who live in the county because all of the decisions that we make as commissioners are not just about one district, but about the county as a whole. Once we say it's law, it's law. And that's it."

He said during the years that he has been a county commissioner, a lot of things have happened.

"We've done a lot and improved a lot of things," Westmoreland said. "And I want to continue to be a part of helping move those things in our county."

One of the biggest problems encountered during his political years involved the controversy surrounding a new Service

Delivery Strategy agreement, which since has been resolved between the county and Milledgeville City Council.

"It took a lot longer than it should have taken, but we finally got it worked out," Westmoreland said.

He said an agreement was ultimately reached because county and city leaders were finally able to work together on a compromise.

"I'm thankful that is all behind us, now," he added.

Westmoreland, who is retired from Robins Air Force Base in Warner Robins, said going forward that he supports improvements at the Baldwin County Regional Airport.

"I'd like to see us continue the improvements at our airport," Westmoreland said. "I'd like to see us build some new hangars there, and I'd like to see some additional parking space created there."

When it comes to the idea of a walking trail at the airport, Westmoreland said he prefers that the people make that decision.

"We need to listen to what the people want or don't want when it comes to a trail there or anything else in our county," Westmoreland said. "And, after we listen to what the people want, we'll have to make a decision to go forward with it or reject the idea."

Westmoreland said if elected to another term he would like to the county's infrastructure continue to go forward.

"We're working a lot on our sewer infrastructure, and I want to see

that continue to improve," Westmoreland said. "The same is true about our county water service."

He said the county has been able to replace a lot of its fire hydrants along Log Cabin Road and that he is pleased that the county has installed those because it allows for better fire protection to residences and businesses in the northern portion of the county.

Such improvements are saving residents and business owners in that area money for fire insurance.

"It can also help the county eventually improve on its ISO rating and thus allow for lower fire insurance premiums for residents and business owners in that area, too," Westmoreland said.

Another major complaint that commissioners receive all the time is when is a particular road going to be paved, he said.

"A lot of our county roads are in bad shape, but we are doing the best we can do right now with the funds we've got to do with," Westmoreland said.

This year, the county received LMIG funding for \$819,000 to repair certain roads, he said.

"That amount of money will only repair about six miles of roadway, though," Westmoreland said.

Such a problem is of major concern not only to residents but commissioners also, he added.

Westmoreland said during his time of serving as a county commissioner he doesn't remember the millage rate going much.

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engineer travels over these roads each year to develop the Baldwin County Pavement Condition Rating chart, a priority list of our roads and their condition. This list is used to select the roads that will be resurfaced or rebuilt. I will continue to work with the road department and our county engineer to ensure that our roads are maintained, safe and in good repair.

**U-R:** In your opinion, what could make Baldwin County a better place to live and work, and what will you do to make it be as good as it can be moving forward?

**JW:** During my tenure, we as a board have made Baldwin County a better place to live and work. I would like to see the board build upon that success. We have reduced blight in our community.

We have updated our land use regulations to help protect our citizens' investment and to promote higher quality and more affordable housing.

A thriving community must have a variety of housing options for its residents. We increased transit service hours to assist those with transportation needs to acquire and maintain their jobs. We have made improvements to our recreational facilities.

We have a new outdoor basketball court at Harrisburg Park. We offer more indoor sports at the Walter B. Williams Park gym. We expanded hours, including weekends, before COVID-19. We intend to open on

the weekends again as soon as our COVID-19 infection rate declines further.

We continue to work with the Development Authority of Milledgeville Baldwin County and the Central State Hospital Local Redevelopment Authority to attract and retain business. We want our young people to stay and find work here after their schooling.

**U-R:** What do you hope can be achieved over the next four years under your leadership in county government? Please elaborate.

**JW:** I would like to see Baldwin County build upon our successes. We want to continue upgrading our infrastructure. We have replaced over a mile of sewer lines every two years during my tenure as a commissioner. We intend to continue that progress. We are replacing old water lines with new and larger water lines that will improve water flow and improve fire protection. We will continue to replace our fire hydrants as well. We will keep resurfacing roads and replacing bridges and culverts. We will continue to reduce blight and promote affordable housing.

We will continue to support our two development authorities so they can promote our county and bring in new industry and jobs like our partnership that led to Food Service Partners locating at Renaissance Park at Central State Hospital.

## Butts seeking District 5 commission seat



Dr. Kelvin Butts (D)  
Baldwin County Commission District 5 Challenger

Dr. Butts did not  
respond to our Q&A request.

By **BILLY W. HOBBS**  
bhobbs@unionrecorder.com

Dr. Kelvin Butts, a longtime educator, is seeking the District 5 seat on the Baldwin County Board of Commissioners.

Butts, a democratic candidate, is challenging incumbent District 5 Commissioner Johnny H. Westmoreland, a republican.

Butts is a newcomer to the political arena.

Since announcing his candidacy, Butts has attended several county commission meetings and become

abreast of some of the subjects that have been discussed of late.

One such subject involves an amendment to the county's land code ordinance involving manufactured homes.

"I live in a neighborhood where I chose to live," Butts said. "We were the first to build a house over here in Crystal Ridge. We knew going into the idea of doing it that there was a county ordinance and a homeowners' association that would limit what we could and couldn't do."

Nevertheless, he and his wife at the time decided to build their home.

"We ultimately knew what kind of neighborhood we were building our home in and we knew we would be protected by certain regulations," Butts said.

Today in the county, you can have a Dollar General store built in front of a neighborhood where homes are valued at \$300,000 or more, Butts said.

"You mean to tell me we can't put any stipulations in the ordinance or have a vote on getting that done?" Butts asked during a recent interview. "And also have a vote about a mobile home or manufactured home being put somewhere, because, for some folks, that's all they are ever going to ever be able to afford."

At this time, commissioners haven't decided on the route that will be taken. During the last two times the subject has been brought up during separate public hearings, commissioners have tabled taking any action because of certain language in the proposed amendment to the ordinance.

"Even if they decide something before the election, it's not anything in stone that says it can't be revisited," Butts said.

He also believes that the agreement on a new Service Delivery Strategy between the Baldwin County Board of Commissioners and Milledgeville City Council took longer to reach than it should have taken.

"They should have been able to have reached an agreement about the SDS long before they did," Butts said. "You've got to reach some common ground somewhere because it's your responsibility and duty as elected officials to do so and to try to do the right thing for the people you represent."

The SDS agreement also involved the Twin Lakes Library System and discussion that the public library might not be funded because of the dispute between

city and county leaders.

"That SDS thing and the dispute with the library officials should never have gone on, period," Butts said. "No one should have held the library hostage."

Butts said he blames both sides for not being able to work out a compromise in less time.

"At the end of the day, city and county officials need to realize this is just a job and we can't take it home with us or be mad with each other for the next 3 1/2 years because something didn't go our way," Butts said. "And that I'm going to come at you with all my guns the next time around. We have to learn to compromise and make the best of certain situations."

Butts said such a dispute helped him make a decision about seeking political office.

"And I don't make any bones about it," said Butts, who teaches physics in the Rockdale County School System in Conyers.

Butts, who grew up in Milledgeville, has been an educator and administrator for more than 20 years.

He graduated from Baldwin High School in 1991, where he excelled in academics.

"I was one of those nerdy kids," Butts recalled with a laugh.

Butts said he has lived long enough to know that anything positive comes from building working relationships in communities.

"It's about all us valuing each other and finding ways to work with one another to make our community better, more complete, and more enriched," Butts said.

He also was asked about the crime issues within Baldwin County and what he would do as a commissioner to improve that particular problem.

"Let's just face the facts, we have a problem with kids raising kids and fathers who aren't on the home-front helping the mother raise their children the way they should," Butts said. "And let's face the fact, it's easier to get food stamps if you only have one income as opposed to having two household incomes."

Systematically, many fathers are not in the home for one reason or another and some of them have chosen not to be part of their children's lives, Butts said.

"Education is not valued in many cases and that can lead to a life of crime, too," Butts said. "I'm a staunch believer in what my grandmother taught me years ago, if you know better, you do better. And if education isn't valued, they don't do better."

## BALDWIN COUNTY SOLICITOR GENERAL CANDIDATE Q&amp;A



Skye Gess (I) (R)  
Baldwin County Solicitor General

**The Union-Recorder:** What do you perceive as the biggest problem facing you as prosecutor of Baldwin County State Court?

**Skye Gess:** As a prosecutor in Baldwin County for the past seven years, I have seen many problems and issues. While I face challenges prosecuting cases of domestic violence or tackling challenges create alternative sentencing programs, I believe the answer lies in discussing the role and responsibility of a Solicitor General. When talking with members of our community, I am often asked, "What does a Solicitor General do?" The role and responsibility of a Solicitor General is to prosecute misdemeanor crimes, traffic citations, and local ordinance violations. On average, the Solicitor General's Office handles anywhere from 1,800 to 2,400 cases a year, not including minor traffic citations. But being a prosecutor is much more than presenting a case in a courtroom. I believe it is a calling and not a job. A prosecutor wears many hats. Often I have been a counselor for those who need sound advice, a good listener, and an advocate for those who may need a voice.

Prosecutors are tasked with filing correct and appropriate charges on an accusation. You must make a decision based on the facts of the case and the law. As a former Assistant District Attorney, my mentor, District Attorney Fred Bright, required perfection on charging documents. When Mr. Bright would meticulously go over my indictment or accusation, I thought it was to make me a better prosecutor; however, it wasn't until I tried an aggravated assault case with Mr. Bright that I understood why he asked for perfection. In a charging document, there is no room for error because justice is at stake for everyone, justice is at stake for the victim, and justice is at stake for the defendant. So you have to get it right.

My experience, commitment to upholding the law, and passion make me an ideal candidate. I have been a prosecutor here in Baldwin County since 2013 and was trained and mentored by two amazing District Attorneys, Fred Bright and Stephen Bradley. I am an experienced trial attorney who has prosecuted both serious felony offenses and misdemeanor crimes. As a prosecutor in Baldwin County for the past seven years, I have fostered

## Gess seeking full term as solicitor general

BILLY W. HOBBS

bhobbs@unionrecorder.com

Jacqueline Skye Gess said she enjoys serving as solicitor general and living in Baldwin County and she would like nothing more than continue what she has done since being appointed solicitor general by a former Georgia governor.

If elected to that office in the Tuesday, Nov. 3 general election, she will serve for the next four years.

"I've been a prosecutor in Baldwin County since 2013 and I'm very familiar with the criminal justice system and this community," said Gess during a recent interview.

Gess was hired in December 2013 as an assistant district attorney by Fred Bright, the late district attorney. She prosecuted criminal cases, including murder and aggravated assault, as well as ones related to gang violence.

In December 2018, Gess was appointed solicitor general of Baldwin County by former Gov. Nathan Deal following the unexpected death of Maxine Blackwell, who had served as solicitor general for many years.

Gess said she fell in love with the staff in the solicitor general's office.

She said it felt a sense of family with them and she felt she was making a difference.

Gess said she began talking with her husband about that role.

"I told him I thought this was

really what I believe I needed to do, because I care, and I think that shows," Gess said. "I have the heart to do this job. They (staff) in the solicitor's office won me over."

She said she is forever grateful to each of them.

Gess said she wants to continue as solicitor general because she knows her role.

"I'm very familiar with the prosecution and process and kind of since I've been out and about talking with people and telling them what we're doing in the solicitor's office, it's very interesting that a lot of people don't understand or don't know what a solicitor does," said Gess.

She said since assuming the position of solicitor general she has attempted to explain to people that the solicitor general is a prosecutor.

"I'm responsible for prosecuting all misdemeanor crimes in Baldwin County and also enforcing all local ordinances," Gess said.

Annually, she prosecutes approximately 2,000 misdemeanor cases in Baldwin County. And that doesn't include the misdemeanor traffic citations.

"That 2,000 cases includes all of our domestic violence cases, property crimes, DUIs and serious traffic offenses, but it doesn't account for speeding tickets, failure to stop at stop signs, or some of the animal cruelty cases that are handled through Baldwin County

Magistrate Court," Gess said.

With her new job, she fields a lot of phone calls.

"I have to answer questions from officers at 1 or 2 in the morning, and sometimes it even requires me to get up, putting on some clothes and driving from my home on the eastern side of Baldwin County down to my office at the courthouse in Milledgeville," Gess said, noting that the job sometimes requires having to place victims in safe houses or a shelter.

Once Gess was named the county's new solicitor general, she and her husband, Josh, moved from their farm home in neighboring Hancock County to Baldwin County.

"I wanted to move to Baldwin County because I've been invested in this county since 2013," Gess said.

The couple own a farm, J&J Cattle Company, which is spread over property in Hancock, Glascock and Green counties. T

Gess said she believes like other local political candidates that the office of solicitor general should be non-partisan, "because this job requires that I uphold the law and the Constitution of Georgia and the United States."

She added that she represents all people, no matter who they are,

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great working relationships with our law enforcement agencies and garnered the trust of officers. As Solicitor, I worked to develop community programs and good relationships with our community leaders to work towards building a stronger Baldwin County.

To tackle the biggest problems we face such as crimes of domestic violence, or to create changes in our criminal justice system, experience matters. Baldwin County needs a Solicitor General who is prepared and equipped to tackle whatever challenges we face. There is no time for on the job learning when people's lives are at stake. Through the training and preparation I received as an Assistant District Attorney, I was ready on day one to work as your Solicitor General. I am a leader you can trust to continue to work tirelessly to keep Baldwin County safe and ensure everyone is treated equally before the law.

**U-R:** Domestic violence cases have and continue to be a growing concern in Baldwin County, what are some of the things you have in mind to help lessen than number of those kinds of cases in our community?

**SG:** Domestic violence is an extremely complex and multifaceted issue our community faces. As a prosecutor in this county for seven years, one of the largest obstacles I have seen is understanding the cycle of domestic violence. In talking with leaders and members of our

community, it is often hard to understand why a victim stays or returns to an unhealthy relationship. This often creates a stigma surrounding victims of domestic violence and often hampers the willingness of people to help. As Solicitor, I believe it is imperative to educate and teach every person in our community about the complexity of domestic violence. Throughout the year, I speak to churches, civic organizations, and our children about domestic and dating violence.

Proactive community outreach is key to ending domestic violence here in Baldwin County. A consistent part of my message is break the silence, talk about domestic violence, don't be afraid to have a tough conversation with a friend. Victims can face a multitude of feelings such as helplessness, denial, and fear. Leaving is not as simple as just walking out the door. Through my experience as a prosecutor and advocate for victims, I work with victims who do not even realize they are a battered partner until I start talking about the danger signs. We must use our voices to take a stand against domestic violence and create a constant conversation about domestic violence. By talking about domestic violence you might provide a life line to someone.

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Hoggane Harrison-Walton (D)  
Baldwin County Solicitor General Challenger

**The Union-Recorder:** What do you perceive as the biggest problem facing you as prosecutor of Baldwin County State Court?

**HHW:** Protecting the public and our businesses is my primary objective. Deterring future illegal behavior is my next priority. My final responsibility is to recommend the appropriate sentence that accomplishes these priorities. Each case is unique because every victim has different needs. By crafting a sentence that protects society, delivers a powerful deterrent message, and provides rehabilitative services is going to be biggest hurdle as the Baldwin County Solicitor. However, this is a calling that I am honored to accept and I will work tirelessly to uphold.

**U-R:** Domestic violence cases have and continue to be a growing concern in Baldwin County, what are some of the things you have in mind to help lessen the number of those kinds of cases in our community?

**HHW:** In addition to seeking the assistance of the community to speak out and stop any domestic violence situation, I will implement more tracking measures in the sentencing of offenders. In domestic violence cases, the sentence recommendation would entail the usage of: ankle monitors, curfews, permanent restraining orders, substance abuse rehabilitation, mental health counseling, and anger management counseling. To assist the victims of domestic violence, we would seek the assistance

## Harrison-Walton hopes to become new solicitor

By BILLY W. HOBBS

bhobbs@unionrecorder.com

Hoggane Harrison-Walton is one of two candidates vying to become the next solicitor general of Baldwin County.

The other candidate is the incumbent, Skye Gess, who has served as solicitor general since she was appointed to the position nearly two years ago.

Harrison-Walton is running for the office on the Democratic ticket, while Gess is a Republican candidate.

She has her own law firm, The Hogan Law Firm, located in Milledgeville.

Harrison-Walton has practiced law for the past 11 years in the city where she grew up and was raised. She specializes in criminal defense and family law.

During her junior year at Spelman University, Harrison-Walton studied abroad for six months in Cape Town, South Africa. She was there during the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in America.

Harrison-Walton said she was inspired to become a lawyer by an event she saw in Cape Town.

"I was walking down a street with a number of different exchange students from different colleges in the United States, and we saw this woman being sexually assaulted right there in the middle of the street," Harrison-Walton said. "Everybody

just kept walking away. Nobody read anything. It was like it wasn't happening. She was screaming for the man to stop, but the man kept attacking her. Even the police saw it and kept walking right past what is considered a terrible crime in this country."

Harrison-Walton said she and other female students couldn't believe what they were witnessing.

"We were going to try to intervene, but the male students told us we couldn't get involved because we could get hurt, she recalled. "We also didn't know if the man had a gun or what. So, the guys who were with us had to just try to pull us away."

Harrison-Walton said the tragic event stayed with her.

"It actually changed my life," Harrison-Walton said. "I said to myself at the time that that is not OK. Never is that OK. And at that point in my life, I wanted to know how I could [help] women and children."

Harrison-Walton said her entire family is in the medical field.

Her mother is a long-time practicing dentist and her brother was a physician in Milledgeville before he died several years ago. Her older sister, meanwhile, is an oral surgeon and practices in Atlanta.

Harrison-Walton decided to enter the field of law because of the injustice she witnessed years ago in Cape Town.

"And besides, science wasn't really one of my favorite subjects," she said with a laugh during a recent interview.

Harrison-Walton later attended a law school in Lansing, Michigan and graduated.

Asked what prompted her to seek political office, Harrison-Walton explained that some of it was predicated on the fact that she is a juvenile attorney and a criminal defense attorney.

"I've seen how all those areas are interconnected," Harrison-Walton said. "When you have a person who is on probation or parole, they have other obligations on the family side that they can't fully fulfill. Their finances are being diverted to probation fees or paying a citation, criminal fines, etc. And their finances are being decreased because they can't work as much due to community service time."

Harrison-Walton said such negativity affects the family unit as a whole and results in an increased number of divorces.

Keeping a family unit together is one of the best things for a community, she believes.

"And the solicitor general's office is that middle ground, because the office deals with misdemeanor cases — not felony cases, so that office is usually the first

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of Georgia Legal Services to locate a Family Law Attorney that could provide divorce, child support, and child custody representation. By putting these preventive and protective measures in place we will be able to assist and protect the victim, which will lead to a decrease in domestic violence cases.

**U-R:** What can the community do to end the violence we've seen of late when it comes to domestic violence? Please elaborate.

**HHW:** To decrease the number of domestic violence

cases in Baldwin County, there are a number of community initiatives that I would implement. The community initiatives are similar to the ideas espoused in the "neighborhood watch" project except the monitoring is directed at signs of domestic violence. The Neighborhood Watch would consist of family members, friends, coworkers, church family members, and generally speaking the Baldwin County community at large. As neighbors, WE

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## STATE SENATE, DISTRICT 25 CANDIDATE Q&amp;A



Burt Jones (I) (R)  
State Senate, District 25

**The Union-Recorder:** What are your top 3 legislative priorities to improve District 25?

**Burt Jones:** Lower taxes to allow for robust economic growth and job creation

Improve our children's lives through dedication to K-12 and higher education

Protect our rights as Americans, including the second amendment

**U-R:** What, in your opinion, is the single biggest issue facing District 25 and what, as a legislator, are you qualified to do to improve upon this issue?

**BJ:** Small Businesses and Jobs: As a small business owner, I know how important these businesses and jobs are to our local community. I have firsthand experience with creating jobs that drive economic growth within our local community. Today there are many hurdles that must be jumped through for small businesses to receive licenses and permits, many of which curb business growth and job creation.

I will continue my work to eliminate burdensome regulations and to make the licensing and permitting process easier.

**U-R:** The global pandemic and remote learning brought greater attention to the need for rural broadband improvements. What do you propose can be done to improve rural broadband within the local district?

**BJ:** Expanding broadband connectivity and access remains a top priority.

Over the past several years, the Georgia General Assembly passed legislation to address areas where connecting is a real issue. Senate Bill 402, "Achieving Connectivity Everywhere (ACE) Act," went into effect in 2018 and addresses broadband services planning, deployment, and incentives.

In 2019, we made additional progress by passing Senate Bill 2 enabling EMCs to provide internet services and broadband to their customers, in addition to supplying electrical energy.

Central Georgia EMC started their work on this and others in the region have agreed to do the same.

## Jones seeks a fifth term

By **BILLY W. HOBBS**  
bhobbs@unionrecorder.com

State Sen. Burt Jones is seeking reelection to his fifth term in the Georgia General Assembly. The 41-year-old Jones, a Republican lawmaker from Jackson in Butts County, has been busy on the campaign trail like many other political candidates. Jones, who majored in history and earned his degree from the University of Georgia, is being challenged in this year's general election by Veronica Brinson. Jones was first elected to the District 25 Senate seat in 2012 when he defeated former Sen. Johnny Grant. Jones said he still enjoys serving as state senator and has attended dozens of political rallies and events in his quest to continue to serve constituents in the nine counties that he represents within the district. Jones said he believes it is important for everyone to remember that a health crisis is still among us in COVID-19.

"As citizens, we still all need to practice those basic habits of washing our hands often, and being ever-mindful of our overall hygiene," Jones said.

And while taking every precaution that can be taken during the pandemic, Jones said he also believes it's important to get the state's economy back rolling in a positive direction. As a businessman, Jones said he can sense the economy steadily coming back even though the pandemic remains intact.

"We can see it without workforce and the amount of trade that we are seeing every day from a business perspective," Jones said.

From a legislative standpoint, Jones

said he firmly believes that it is important that they lead that effort.

"We should be leading in that effort and trying to help accommodate businesses as much as possible and continue to lead the nation with getting our economy back on track where it was before the pandemic struck," Jones said. "We've had our peaks and valleys like you see with anything else, but I feel good about the direction that we're heading."

Jones said he is ready to get the election behind him and he believes a lot of other people feel that same way.

"I think a lot of the anxiety that's going on not just here but everywhere else, too, has to do with this election cycle," Jones said. "So for that reason, I will be glad when the election is over."

Jones said the counties that he represents within middle Georgia that he has witnessed a lot of growth since he first was elected to the state Senate.

"A lot of new people are moving into various communities and the 25th District has really become a major logistics corridor," Jones said. "Interstate 75 runs through it; I-20 runs through it, and all of these major state highways can literally connect you from I-20 over to interstates 75 and 85, as well as Interstate 16."

Jones said growth and new jobs will continue to develop in the near future and even longer-term when it comes to District 25.

"With Georgia being basically the gateway to the south, and with a logistics hub, I think you're going to see e-commerce become an even bigger industry than it currently is in Georgia," Jones said.

And a lot of communities that help

make up District 25 are going to reap the benefit of it all, said Jones, who is founder and president of JP Capital & Insurance, Inc. in Jackson. Asked what he envisions looking down in the road in Milledgeville and Baldwin County, Jones said the area has a lot of resources with the colleges, etc.

"It's a great community with a great lake in Lake Sinclair that has become a real destination point for a lot of people," Jones said. "I can't tell you how many people I know that have purchased homes around the lake. I know the real estate market is doing well and that when a house goes on the market for sale, it's only there for a few days before it sells."

Jones said he continues to support economic development and repurposing of buildings on the campus of Renaissance Park at Central State Hospital where members of the Central State Hospital Local Redevelopment Authority have done much to enhance the properties there, as well as to help create new jobs.

"I think they've (CHSLRA) have done a fabulous job," Jones said. "I've been supportive of the projects at Central State Hospital ever since I've been in the legislature. We've had some good wins there with different projects and we've even got the Bobby Parham Kitchen reopened now thanks to Food Service Partners, LLC."

The veteran state senator said Milledgeville, as well as several other cities within his district, are fine places to call home.

"There's a lot of great people throughout this district and that is what makes it nice for me to represent all of the citizens of the 25th District," Jones said.

There are some issues that need to be addressed regarding pole attachment fees, but I believe the local EMCs are making progress on this issue.

I am never in favor of government telling private companies how to do business but if this cannot be resolved, additional legislation might be necessary. Getting broadband connectivity to areas without access is critical now more than ever. We have seen the negative impact lack of access can have on families who are trying to adjust to a new normal – working from home or even homeschooling their kids.

**U-R:** What can you as a legislator do to support rural hospitals such as Navicent Health Baldwin and health care access within the district?

**BJ:** We need to address three main things to increase healthcare access in rural communities – promote the tax credit incentive for contributions, support telehealth development and enhance the tuition forgiveness program for medical professionals.

In 2016, we passed SB 258 allowing individuals and businesses to receive a tax credit for making donations to Georgia's rural hospitals.

In 2018, legislation was passed to increase the tax credits to 100 percent of the donations.

Telehealth has become a vital piece of the healthcare puzzle and we need to expand on the progress

that has been made during the pandemic.

We need to invest in broadband and other infrastructure that will enable telehealth and telemedicine to expand in our communities where access to healthcare is minimal or not in existence.

Georgia's tuition forgiveness program for medical staff needs to be advertised and utilized more. We need to keep the brightest and best in the medical field not only in our state but specifically in our rural communities.

**U-R:** How do you plan to keep the residents of both counties informed, if you are elected to this office? Please be specific.

**BJ:** Weekly columns during session with real time updates on what is happening at the Capitol

Post session legislative column series with an in-depth analysis of any legislation passed and how it will impact our citizens and community

Press Release and alerts on my website and social media regarding events round Senate District 25

Citizens can always reach me on both of my emails – burt.jones@senate.ga.gov and burt@jpcinsurance.com

I can also be reached at my Capitol office at (404) 656-0082 or my cellphone at (404) 273-7517

See **JONES**, page 6



Veronica Brinson (D)  
State Senate, District 25

In order to respond to the questions, I have to share about my professional background and why I have decided to run for Georgia Senate.

### INTRODUCTION TO VERONICA BRINSON

I am Veronica Brinson, candidate for Georgia State Senate, District 25. I am a lawyer, entrepreneur, concerned citizen, and public servant.

I am a graduate of Mercer University with a degree in English and Political Science. I am also a graduate of Walter F. George School of Law with a Juris Doctor degree. I also received a Certificate in Legal Research and Writing from Walter F. George School of Law.

I also have certifications in Mediation and Arbitration. I have also received additional training and education over the years pertaining to other educational areas.

As an entrepreneur, I have operated the Law Offices of Veronica Brinson, LLC. since 2003. My practice consists of civil, family, business, litigation, select criminal, and appellate law. I also associate with other attorneys in other practice areas.

I have also served as a City Solicitor for the City of Macon, Georgia. I have also served as a Municipal Court Judge. I have also served in private practice with a firm prior to starting my law office.

Via my work experience, I have acquired advocacy,

negotiation, and problem solving skills. I have also obtained additional skills from my work experience and community service involvement over the years.

I have also authored several legal and community articles over the years as well as other literary works. I would like to see my work used to help people grow and as a resource tool.

I am the mother of two sons. My father (and the wind which supported my wings) departed this life on July 13, 2016. However, I still have my mother, Marie.

## Brinson seeking 25th District Senate seat

By **BILLY W. HOBBS**  
bhobbs@unionrecorder.com

Veronica Brinson is a candidate for the Ga. Senate District 25 seat in this year's Nov. 3 general election.

Brinson, a Democrat, is challenging incumbent Sen. Burt Jones, a Republican from Jackson in Butts County.

The district is comprised of nine counties, including Baldwin.

The 48-year-old Brinson is a lawyer who practices criminal, domestic, personal injury and appeals law, and lives in Macon-Bibb County.

"Appeal cases are what has given me a lot of insight into rural areas of Georgia," Brinson said. "I've met a lot of people working on appeal cases."

This marks the second time that she has sought political office. Several years ago, she put together a write-in campaign to run as mayor of Macon-Bibb County. She ran as an Independent candidate.

Brinson, who has been a practicing lawyer since 2000, is a 1991 graduate of Central High School in Macon, and a graduate of Mercer Law School in Macon.

"I am a fierce advocate for doing what is right and over the years I've had to stand my ground as an African-American woman running her own business," Brinson said in a recent interview.

Brinson said she's also learned the importance of learning how to negotiate and about the importance of being able to reach a solution.

Brinson said she realizes that such things are oftentimes difficult, but yet so important.

She said she often does such on behalf of her clients.

"I've had to work in a male-dominated field all of my legal career, so I have to be prepared to take on a lot of heavy-weight attorneys in the courtroom all of the time," Brinson said. "I have to be ready for their challenges at all times because I know that they are ready for me."

She said it's always been important for her to be prepared because it's one of the ways she feels she is taken more seriously by opposing counsel.

Brinson said she had given it some consideration, but not serious consideration about running for the District 25 Georgia Senate seat until after she was approached by officials with the Georgia Democratic Party.

She said she was humbled by the party's invitation.

Brinson said when certain officials approached her from the political party that she began to think that now was an appropriate time for a change in representation when it comes to the state Senate.

She talked about some of the issues as she views them.

One is the subject of the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic.

"COVID-19 remains my No. 1 priority," Brinson said. "I think we have to get COVID-19 under control first and foremost. We have people dying and I don't take that lightly. We've got to get this virus under control."

Brinson said she believes everyone must stay vigilant about wearing a mask or facial covering, washing their hands often, social distancing, and staying away from large crowds.

"We cannot let our guard down," Brinson said. "We've all got to realize that there is still a disease out there and it's killing people."

She gave her assessment on how COVID-19 has been handled by state and national leaders.

"I'm not a doctor or a medical researcher, but from my personal observation, I would have waited much longer to have opened Georgia," Brinson said.

If elected to the Senate, and COVID-19 is still a health crisis, she said she will advocate the same health guidelines as currently imposed by officials with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and those of experts with the Georgia Department of Public Health. Brinson said she also is supportive of Georgia families.

"When we talk about Georgia families, it goes into many other directions," Brinson said. "Another important priority of mine is to find ways to better strengthen Georgia families." Brinson said when she talks about

See **SEAT**, page 12

I may be reached for further discussions via my website at [Vbrinsonsenate.com](http://Vbrinsonsenate.com). My website provides additional contact information.

### WHY I DECIDED TO RUN FOR GEORGIA STATE SENATE-DISTRICT 25

I have always been a public and community servant since my college years and maybe even prior to such. Over the years, I have developed advocacy, problem

See **BRINSON**, page 6

## New

Continued from page 3

stop,” Harrison-Walton said. “So, if we can stop some of those cases from getting worse and getting to the level of a felony, and get those people the help they need we can stop them from having to appear in Superior Court on major felony charges.”

One way of stopping such is to provide mental health treatment, as well as drug treatment, and anger management classes, and various counseling opportunities with people who are specially trained

to handle those kinds of matters, Harrison-Walton said.

“I think if we did those kinds of things we could begin to see a reverse in criminal recidivism, and hopefully the family structure would become stronger and stay together,” Harrison-Walton said. “And as a result, I think we could see a decrease in the number of juvenile and DFACS cases.”

Harrison-Walton contends the solicitor general’s office is a crucial office within the local criminal justice system.

“I will help families and

provide them with the resources and access to those resources that they may or may not know exist,” Harrison-Walton said.

She also talked some about the growing number of domestic violence cases within Milledgeville and Baldwin County and what she believes can be done about those crimes.

Harrison-Walton said, if elected, she will create some sort of organized group similar to a neighborhood crime program within communities.

“I want to see people more willing to step up and do things — and that

can be anything from opening up one’s home to an individual who is trying to get away from the person who continues to assault them,” Harrison-Walton said. “It might be something as little as giving them a place to safely sleep overnight or helping them find a job so they can become self-supportive.”

Harrison-Walton strongly believes that there are a lot of community resources that can become useful resources when it comes to the fight against domestic violence.

“We need to use them

a lot more, as well as our churches,” she said. “We need our local churches to get more involved where we can provide additional counseling and more spiritual guidance.”

The community, overall, is doing a good job where domestic violence is concerned, but like anything, Harrison-Walton believes there is always room for improvement.

“We need to be respectfully nosy when it comes to domestic violence,” Harrison-Walton said.

She believes that being born and raised in Baldwin County that she knows many of the families living

here.

“I played basketball with them, and know them from cheerleading, dance and piano, and other things in our community,” said Harrison-Walton, who graduated from Baldwin High School in 1999.

In her junior and senior year of high school, she was stricken with cancer. But she was determined to beat it and did through various medical treatments.

“I’m now cancer-free, and I want to continue to give back to the community that I call home and where I work,” Harrison-Walton said.

## Gess

Continued from page 3

Additionally, it is important to train and work with our law enforcement. Our officers are on the front lines of domestic violence and are often the first person a victim encounters. As Solicitor, I meet with each shift to discuss changes in the law, review issues I see as a prosecutor, and to offer guidance on working domestic violence cases. When an officer arrives on scene, it is not always a simple task of recognizing instances of domestic violence. Domestic violence is not solely physical violence, but also consists of emotional abuse, financial abuse, and sexual abuse. Training officers to ask particular questions and offering different approaches to working with victims, helps to strength a case and provides valuable information to me as a prosecutor. Having open lines of communication and the trust of law enforcement is imperative to making an impact on domestic violence cases. Officers do not hesitate to call in the middle of the night to seek guidance on a domestic violence case. Moreover, it is important for penalties to be consistent and firm. This sends a strong message to abusers in our community.

**U-R:** What can the community do to end the violence we’ve seen of late when it comes to domestic violence? Please elaborate.

**SG:** As a community, we must unite and take a stand to end domestic violence. Last year, I began the #1THING initiative for Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October. I asked our community to commit to doing just one thing to bring awareness to the issue of domestic violence. The premise behind #1THING is if every person in Baldwin County committed to doing one thing, no matter how small, our collective “one things” would have a major impact on breaking the cycle of domestic violence. I continue to challenge our community to think about one thing you can do to take a stand against domestic violence. One easy thing we can all do is listen. If a victim reaches out to you, take the time to listen and hear what they are saying. Domestic Violence is all about power and control. Often victims feel completely isolated and are belittled by their partner. It is important for a victim to know you believe them and you do

not judge their choice. By taking the time to listen, you could empower that person to break the cycle of domestic violence.

Additionally, if you see something, say something. Conversations regarding domestic violence can be uncomfortable. Often we can feel like this is not our business or we do not want to risk losing an important friend by asking tough questions. But these conversations are necessary. Be the nosy friend who isn’t afraid to ask questions and keep asking questions. Let your friend or family member know you are here to help and be a source of support for them. Even though these conversations might make your friend or family member upset or may impact your friendship, by asking questions and talking you may also save their life.

Another important aspect is learning about the resources available in our county. As Solicitor, I have the pleasure of working everyday with two talented and amazing victim advocates. Each year, the advocates receive state and national training for victim advocacy and learn new approaches to helping victims. The Solicitor General’s Office is a resource and here to assist anyone. When a person comes to or calls the office, I meet with them to understand their needs and what we can do to help. Our office can assist with helping with placement at a domestic violence shelter, creating a safety plan, and most importantly document any type of domestic violence. Also, my office continues In Our Best Interest, a women’s support group, started by Mrs. Maxine Blackwell, to help women break the cycle of domestic violence. October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month; please join me in wearing a purple ribbon to take a stand against domestic violence.

**U-R:** What sort of community education are you offering or would you offer to say our schools, churches, etc. to help curtail domestic violence? Please elaborate.

**SG:** As a prosecutor here in Baldwin County for the past seven years, I noticed victims and defendants in criminal matters where younger and younger each year. As Solicitor, I felt the need establish an education program to teach our students about healthy relationships and the warning signs of dating violence. Thank you to the teachers and school administration for allowing me to work with and talk with the students in Baldwin County each year.

February is Teen Dating Violence

Awareness Month. Research shows unhealthy relationships begin to form as early as middle school. Each February, I go to Oak Hill Middle School to present to 6th, 7th and 8th grade students. My presentations discuss how to spot the warning signs, what characteristic a health relationship has, and the importance of setting boundaries. This year I was able to expand our program and also talk with the students at John Milledge Academy. Also, I had the opportunity to talk with students at Baldwin County High School in a smaller class setting. I conduct exercises such as spot the red flag where students are given a scenario and they have to decide if this is a warning sign for an unhealthy and dangerous relationship. In a small class, I have the ability to have great discussion with students and the opportunity to answer their questions.

Additionally, I host two other programs for our young men and women. This year marked the third year for our Girl’s Know Your Worth Paint Party. This particular program focuses on building positive self-esteem in our young ladies. As a woman, I know the pressure we can face from society. While the girls have a fun night painting a picture, we talk about the importance of loving and respecting oneself. For our young men, I host the Boy’s Building B.A.S.H. (Boy’s Achieving Successful Heights). I started this program two years ago when I became Solicitor because it was important to have a program geared towards our young men. The building bash focuses on the importance of building strong character traits. I invite male leaders and mentors to lead the program. One of the main focuses of this program is to connect our young men with strong male leaders in our community.

My office continues In Our Best Interest, a women’s support group, started by Mrs. Maxine Blackwell, to help women break the cycle of domestic violence. In Our Best Interest helps women free themselves from domestic violence situations and abuse by providing education and resources that empower women with knowledge and courage to leave an abusive relationship. In Our Best Interest is a series of classes focused on elevating self-esteem and counseling local women to empower them to get help.

**U-R:** What are your thoughts when it comes to additional criminal justice reform in Georgia and how would it apply

to what happens in State Court?

**SG:** I believe it is important to actively engage in conversations about our criminal justice system as a whole and on the local level. While it is important to protect our community from violent criminals and repeat offenders, I understand we have a duty to provide a path forward for those who have made mistakes and want to help themselves. I believe using alternative sentencing programs can provide a path forward for our children and youthful offenders so they can be productive members of society and not another statistic. We cannot continue to support the school to prison pipeline that destroys families. This perpetuates the cycle of poverty that leads to future offenses like domestic violence, drug addiction, and joblessness.

As Solicitor, I expanded our pretrial diversion program for youthful and first time offenders. A pretrial diversion program can consist of community service, counseling for substance abuse, and/or a variety of classes. I have audited several of the classes utilized for our pretrial diversion program. These programs are Cause and Consequence, Integrity Project, and Better Boundaries. The core of each class focuses on building strong core values such as integrity, honesty, and respect. I believe by developing and educating our youth about core values directly affects future behavior and actions.

Additionally, I utilize and work with the mental health and drug court program. The Georgia General Assembly enacted legislation in 2012 establishing Accountability Court Programs to provide effective alternatives to sentencing for nonviolent offenders.

By working with our mental health and drug court, people are held accountable while they receive needed treatment. While treatment is a large component of the court program, participants receive help with getting a GED, enroll in technical or college classes, and assistance with finding stable employment.

As Solicitor, I have an open door policy.

The prosecution of a case is not always straight forward.

It is important to have open lines of communication with the community, victims, defense attorneys, and when appropriate, even defendants themselves. I believe it is important to take the time to listen to the needs of our community so I can help provide a path forward.

## Walton

Continued from page 3

must pay attention to signs of domestic violence. WE cannot ignore or make concessions when we see controlling behavior. WE cannot be afraid to intervene when we see or know someone is being abused. WE cannot be afraid to seek help from law enforcement. WE should assist victims of domestic violence to ensure the victim and the victim’s family are kept safe. I would also work with local mental health agencies to recruit counselors and therapists that

are diverse in gender, culture, ethnicity, sexuality, and religious backgrounds. Domestic violence does not affect one particular group; therefore, the professionals that deal with domestic violence victim should be diverse.

**U-R:** What sort of community education are you offering or would you offer to say our schools, churches, etc. to help curtail domestic violence? Please elaborate.

**HHW:** During the school year, I volunteer in the after-school program at Lakeview Academy and host positive image and self-esteem activities for the kids. In these programs I encourage positive relationships and help children

realize they CAN achieve their goals if they work hard. I place special emphasis with 5th graders because they are about to enter a phrase in life when they will start forming girlfriend/boyfriend relationships.

I believe that if we can instill ideas of what a healthy relationship should be, when a child is ten and eleven years old, they will be less likely to engage in abusive relationships or exhibit destructive behaviors. This program should be expanded into the churches and other civic groups. I believe that laying this foundation at an early age will aid in the reduction of domestic violence cases in future generations.

**U-R:** What are your thoughts when it comes to additional criminal justice reform in Georgia and how would it apply to what happens in State Court?

**HHW:** There is always room for growth and improvement in Georgia’s criminal justice system.

Any changes should include increasing the funding for all of Georgia’s accountability courts. We need to expand treatment programs for nonviolent offenders.

We need to ensure a mental health provider and some type of substance abuse program are within a 50 mile radius of every Georgian. We must be proactive and not reactive!

## Term

Continued from page 3

where they come from, or what they believe.

“I’m asking the people of this county to select the person — not the political party — who they feel is the most qualified to do this job,” Gess said. “I want them to look at the names of who is running for this office, and to determine who the best person is for this job. Obviously, I believe the best person is

me because I’ve been a prosecutor since 2013. And I’ve been through many trials. I’ve sat on trials with Mr. [Fred] Bright and Mr. [Stephen] Bradley. I’ve tried murder trials with Mr. Bradley, and I understand how to prosecute a case.”

As solicitor general, Gess said she sometimes sees men and women who have never before been arrested. Gess said she believes her job is to look at the person on an all-around basis.

“There are a lot of solicitors who will not talk to defendants,

but I believe that’s something that’s not a good thing,” Gess said. “I talk to everybody. If a defendant wants to come in and talk about a case, I’m more than happy to sit down and explain all of their rights to them.”

It’s a way of getting to know more about the person, she explained.

“And we are able to give them a second chance,” she added. “Sometimes people make very bad mistakes, but we’ve been developing programs the last two years to make sure we give

people those second chances.”

She said her office has an excellent pre-trial diversion program, where if individuals complete it, they receive a formal dismissal of the case from their record. There are also programs where individuals attend classes for anger management.

Her office also is involved in a teen dating violence awareness program through the Baldwin County School District and she believes it’s making a difference, too.

“I want the people of this county to know that this is the people’s court,” Gess said of the solicitor general’s office. “State Court is all about the people. We have so many people’s lives that we impact. I know that and it’s such a huge responsibility. And it’s one I didn’t take lightly when I sought the appointment, because I understood what Mrs. Blackwell had built and the lives she impacted and touched during her entire career. She truly built a tremendous foundation.”

## Westmoreland

Continued from page 2

“We’re trying to hold it down and not stick the people with

high taxes,” Westmoreland said. “This county is a beautiful county, but if you don’t have the money to keep things up, it won’t take long for the county to be a bad looking county.”

Westmoreland said he is proud of the accomplishments involving blighted areas of the county.

“There’s still a lot to do, but our code enforcement officer

and Steve Owens have done a great job of running these old buildings and residences down to make those properties look so much better,” Westmoreland said.

He also said he is also very proud of the new government complex, where county commissioners now meet off North Columbia Street in Milledgeville.

## Jones

Continued from page 4

**U-R:** Any additional thoughts or comments?

**BJ:** I have lived and worked in this community my entire life. As a small-business owner, I know how

impactful legislation can be to our daily operations, workforce and success.

In addition to bringing a business perspective to the legislative process, I have always had a calling to serve on behalf of our rural communities.

These communities need a strong voice and advocate, so we don't get lost in the shuffle in Atlanta. I want to ensure

our community needs are addressed and not overlooked. As the Senator with the most conservative record on business votes, I will continue to promote economic development and financial stability within Senate District 25 and the region.

With the political future of this country uncertain and more divisive than

ever, it is evident that we need a true leader to represent our community under the Gold Dome. I will continue to listen to our citizens and to represent you.

I live by one simple rule - "Treat others the way you would want to be treated."

I am the man for the job and am ready to continue to fight for us.

## Brinson

Continued from page 4

solving, negotiation, and related skills in reaching solutions. I have also been advocating on behalf of many citizens for years. Additionally, I have concerns about laws, policies, and overall issues impacting the public which I believe I can help solve and bring awareness to those important issues. Likewise, over the years, I have implemented community and public service projects associated with legal education including law camps, a business conference for women, the Arts, food drives, and other social concerns.

In order to serve my family, community, state, and country, I decided to run for the Georgia State Senate. I was also actively encouraged to do so.

### LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

I am committed to serving all Georgians. I am Every American. I am Georgia made. I am dedicated, hardworking, and loyal to the people of the State of Georgia.

I have visited every county in Senate District 25 since March 2020 (more than once) to learn more about the citizens of this district. I care about all of Georgia including rural Georgia. Safety and COVID-19, affordable healthcare, economic empowerment for Georgia small businesses and families are important to me. These are my top priorities at the time. I want to see Georgia's greatest assets, its people, safe and health. Next, I want to see Georgia Families and businesses prospering: all of them. The business community is tied in with the prosperity of Georgia's families. Taking care of and strengthening all of Georgia's families is important to me.

Other issues important to this campaign are: first

responders' support, safety and violence deterrence of all kind, anti-bullying efforts designed to increase wellness and satisfaction in the various professions and academic environments, oppressive and burdensome mechanism hindering the growth of Georgia's citizens and reform efforts, and other issues shared on my website, vbrinsonsenate.com, are of utmost importance to me.

Please visit my website at vbrinsonsenate.com to learn more about my campaign. Please feel free to reach out to me about your issues and concerns. Please feel free to reach out to volunteer and to help this campaign. I would like to be the person to implement these thought, ideas, and plans. I am Every American. I am Georgia made.

### COVID 19 AND SAFETY

I think right now, the single most important issue facing Georgia Senate District 25 is minimizing COVID-19 and protecting the safety of our people. We have to properly address and put a stop to this pandemic so that we can focus on the other priorities.

My advocacy and related skills will help make COVID-19 a safety priority. I also would plan to put to use my legal and related skills obtained over the years in order to do so. As stated previously, my career in law and operating a small business have helped me developed skills as a problem solver too. In the course of my career, I have also learned how to disagree without being disagreeable thereby achieving results with a diverse group of people.

### RURAL COMMUNITIES AND BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY

Broadband Connectivity is important to rural Georgia. In order to bring awareness and initiate solutions to the problem of lack of broadband connectivity, I would act as

follows:

First, I would put together a committee of stakeholders to bring about awareness of the problem: the need for broadband connectivity in rural communities. In light of COVID-19 and the pandemic, broadband connectivity in rural communities is even more needed.

I would reach out to stakeholders including businesses such as but not limited to internet service providers, institution of higher education, other public officials, and families to discuss the issue and present solutions. In doing so, I would present a study to show the benefits of internet access in rural communities especially in the age of the pandemic where many folks are communicating virtually and via internet access.

Next, as stated earlier, I would seek the resource assistance of (1) educational institutions, (2) grants, (3) businesses, (4) banks, (5) local and state fundings, (6) other resource providers to tackle this issue.

Moreover, I would establish time deadlines to accomplish this goal of broadband connectivity in rural communities. As discussed earlier, I will set a time period to review the problem with the various stakeholders. Thereafter, I will set another goal deadline by which to obtain the resources to implement better and additional broadband connectivity in rural communities. Third, implementation of the goal would take place. Thereafter, there will be a review and progress analysis period.

As an attorney traveling throughout rural Georgia in my post trial and appellate practice over the years, I have noticed the need for better broadband connectivity or services. Such services is not only necessary to complete online tasks in rural communities efficiently using the internet but can also help with safety and other precautions via the ability to communicate more

effectively at times.

### HEALTHCARE IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Healthcare in rural counties should be a priority. As such, my plan to help with the availability of healthcare in rural communities are as follow:

(1) Additional Recruitment Efforts targeting healthcare professionals

Additional recruitment efforts targeting healthcare professionals with attractive benefits.

I believe that the recruitment of healthcare professionals to rural communities must remain an active goal. There will need to be attractive incentives to encourage individuals to practice in rural communities to offer health care services. As such, we will have the expertise of these professionals to help look for solutions to addressing the healthcare issues in rural communities.

(2) Additional creation of satellite health offices including virtual offices

I would continue to look for opportunities to locate satellite hospitals in rural communities such as emergency rooms, clinics, virtual offices, and the like. These offices via their availability should make it easier and quicker to serve constituents with emergency and similar needs. It would also alleviate the transportation burden which is also necessary to transport folks to larger cities to be served medically.

(3) High School Student Recruitment in the Health Profession

Long-term recruitment of students: Scholarships to Students from rural communities willing to commit to return to rural communities

I would also look for opportunities to recruit high school students from rural communities to become involved in the healthcare profession because these individual will most likely care about their relatives and

friends in rural communities. These individuals will most likely return to rural communities to open practices. In fact, I think scholarships should be offered to students in rural communities who promise to return home after healthcare training to open practices for a number of years in said communities.

I may supplement or amend my responses to any of these questions via my website at Vbrinsonsenate.com as I further research any particular question or issue.

### KEEPING CONSTITUENTS INFORMED

I desire to keep the constituents in the loop regarding legislative affairs.

First, I will seek to set up social media venues where constituents may reach out to me to share concerns and interests. Likewise, I will have periodically scheduled town hall meetings with legislative updates and/or progress regarding the citizen's concerns.

Second, I will also seek to share the citizen's concerns and legislative resolutions and/or progress via newspapers and other communication options.

Third, I will build relationships with businesses, civic organizations, schools, families, neighborhoods, public officials, religious leaders of all kind, and other leaders in order to have a better civic engagement with citizens.

Fourth, citizens will also have an available telephone number and email of the State Senator so that the citizens may leave concerns, share news, and provide other helpful information.

Finally, an active website will be maintained to update the citizens in the district about legislative actions and news.

Veronica Brinson, Attorney at Law

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REPUBLICAN

**BURT JONES**  
FOR GEORGIA

**Senator Jones voted YES.**

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-AJC; March 30, 2017

**House Bill 874**  
Tough on Gang Activity-2016

**House votes to stiffen penalties for gang activity**  
-AJC; Aug. 16, 2016

**House Bill 838**  
Police and First Responder Protections-2020

**Georgia governor signs new law to protect police**  
-Savannah Now; Aug. 6, 2020

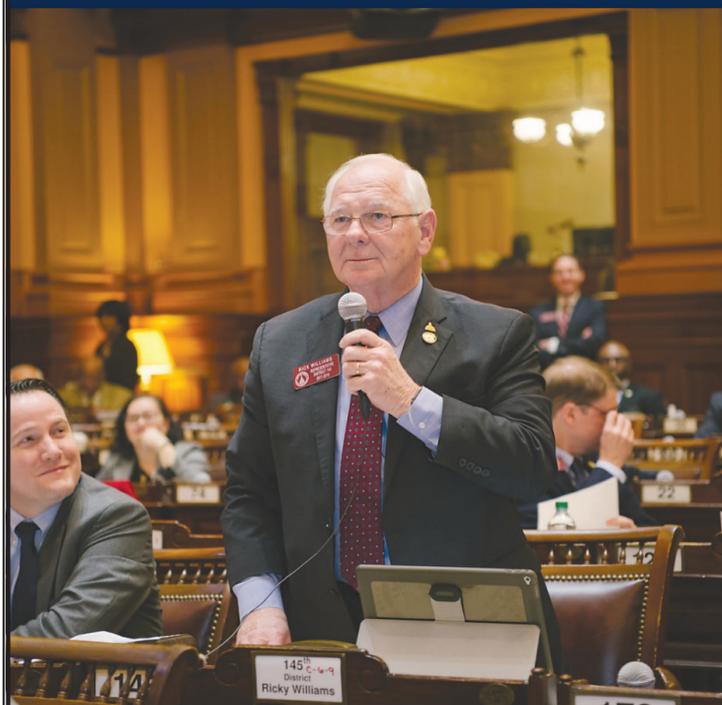
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# Williams

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# QUENTIN T. HOWELL

— FOR PUTNAM & BALDWIN —

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*Christian Principals,  
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**56,000**  
JOBS CREATED  
EACH YEAR

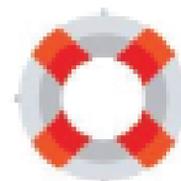


**\$6.5 BILLION**  
PER YEAR IN STATEWIDE  
ECONOMIC OUTPUT

**\$3 BILLION**  
FEDERAL MATCH  
AVAILABLE ANNUALLY



**240,000**  
GEORGIANS IN  
COVERAGE GAP



The federal government pays for 90 percent of the costs for the expansion group, a higher share than the 67 percent the federal government pays for Georgia's traditional Medicaid program. Georgia is one of 14 states not to adopt the expansion of Medicaid eligibility. As the state continues its response to the COVID-19 pandemic and prepares for future public health events, immediate adoption of the Medicaid expansion would allow the state to bring in more federal money to spend on health care services and ensure more Georgians can afford to get care for COVID-19 and underlying health conditions that could put them at higher risk.

**DOUBLE TAXATION**

If you own property in Baldwin or Putnam counties, unfortunately because of politicians playing politics you are being taxed twice for the same thing. Americans believe so deeply against this, our country fought a war over double taxation. By our state not accepting Medicaid Expansion, our hospitals are denied their federal tax dollars to stay in operation. This is why over the past four years states such as Georgia that has not accepted Medicaid Expansion have had dozens upon dozens of hospitals close their doors. Baldwin county hospital have suffered grave financial losses and been in bankruptcy. Trying to put a bandage on this bleeding is why property owners are seeing new taxes each year from our county courthouse. The 600,000 dollars the county is trying to raise in taxes will not and cannot substitute for the millions of federal tax dollars that are being sent back to Washington D.C. As some politicians play politics our hospitals are continuing into bankruptcy and closing their doors. **TAXES SHOULD NOT DOUBLE**

**JOB CREATION**

Expanding Medicaid according to the, non partisan Georgia Budget & Policy Institute, will create over 56,000 jobs in Georgia each year and boost the state's economic output by \$6.6 billion annually. This will also create 12,000 jobs and \$1.8 billion in new economic activity in Georgia's rural communities each year. Over the past five years, that's over 60,000 jobs in areas such as Middle Georgia alone. Baldwin and Putnam Counties can benefit automatically from this infusion of jobs. Instead of our community having to only look through low paying jobs without benefits, through Medicaid Expansion our community will have an opportunity to choose from jobs with long lasting careers.

**BALDWIN COUNTY SOLICITOR  
GENERAL**  
**HOGANNE**  
**HARRISON WALTON**  
**FROM BALDWIN, FOR BALDWIN.**

**I PLEDGE TO PURSUE:**



**ACCOUNTABLE JUSTICE**

Each person's constitutional rights will be protected and the appropriate sentence will be recommended.



**EFFICIENT JUSTICE**

streamline traffic and ordinance violations



**RESTORATIVE JUSTICE**

Offering alternative programs for young offenders, mentally ill, and non-violent offenders through community resources, implementing innovative community service projects, promoting rehabilitative programs, and job skills development as alternatives to incarceration and prolonged



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- ✓ **Deliver Fair and Equal Justice**
- ✓ **Always Follow the Law**



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## STATE HOUSE, DISTRICT 145 CANDIDATE Q&amp;A



Rick Williams (I) (R)  
State House of Representatives, District 145

**The Union-Recorder:** What are your top 3 legislative priorities to improve District 145?

**Rick Williams:** Bring more Jobs to our District. Relief for Businesses affected by Covid 19. More relief for the Medical Community for impact felt by Covid 19. Support Law and Order in our District.

**U-R:** What, in your opinion, is the single biggest issue facing District 145 and what, as a legislator, are you qualified to do to improve upon this issue?

**RW:** Our economy has been impacted by the Pandemic. I am on the Regulated Industries committee and I am always looking for Quality Jobs to be brought into our district.

I also serve on Committee for Economic Development and Intragovernmental Coordination along with Public Safety and Homeland Security and Higher Education.

Security and jobs and medical care for our families at an affordable price.

We have to continue to look for ways to help our hospitals and support our Dr.'s and nurses as they have been on the front lines of this Pandemic. There are differing opinions on how to battle this pandemic, but the truth is no one knows for sure, we have never been faced with anything like this before. But we can't shut down the economy we have to keep moving and trying to do the best we can. Only God knows what is in our future. Only time and listening to our doctors and scientist is how we are going to get through this.

The global pandemic and remote learning brought greater attention to the need for rural broadband improvements. What do you propose can be done to improve rural broadband within the local district?

We passed a bill allowing the Public Service commission to set rates to allow more utilities to attach to poles and to hold the fees down so that it is more cost effective to be able to do this. We are seeing more broadband being available in more communities. We have some issues here in our district, but south Georgia is really suffering because of the acres of farmland where it is too costly to run cables and fiber. We are seeing technology making strides everyday in bringing this service to more and more people.

**U-R:** What can you as a legislator do to support rural hospitals such as Navicent Health Baldwin and health care access within the district?

**RW:** The legislature has fought to lower drug cost and

## Williams seeking 3rd term as state rep.

By **BILLY W. HOBBS**  
bhobbs@unionrecorder.com

State Rep. Rick Williams, a republican from Milledgeville, is seeking re-election to another two-year term in the Georgia House of Representatives.

Williams, owner of Williams Funeral Home and Crematory in Milledgeville, Eatonton and Gordon, is challenged for his seat by Quentin T. Howell, a democrat.

"This is my first opponent since being elected," Williams said in a recent interview. "But we feel real good about the race at this time. We've had a number of phone calls from people reaching out and letting us know they support me and what I've done. I've tried my best to be open to the needs of the people of our district, and with the help of the newspaper, of course, I've been able to keep the public aware of issues, legislation and various bills."

Williams said he is proud to say that he has lived in Milledgeville for the past 51 years.

"Everyone knows where I am and they know how to reach me 24-7, and they have from the days when we first came here as a family business running an ambulance service," Williams said. "I consider myself very lucky and fortunate to represent all the people of the 145th District."

Since before being elected to the Georgia House of Representatives,

Williams has wanted everyone to know how to reach him, so he gives out his cell number.

Williams said it's always been important to him that his constituents know how to reach him about matters that concern them.

"I want to have that one-on-one connection with the people that I represent," Williams said. "I want people to know that I am available and I want them to reach out to me."

During the campaign, Williams said he had heard criticism of the governor and the president concerning the handling of COVID-19.

"But you know, we have to remember all of us are human; and all of us can only rely on what advice we've been given by other professionals, but we have to also remember that none of us are God," Williams said. "So, we don't know really. A lot of this has been trial and error. I think, basically, all in all, the governor has made a lot of great decisions because what we had to do was to get our economy back up and going again. I fully support what Gov. (Brian) Kemp has done. I don't know of anyone who could have done any different."

He added that it was unfortunate that he and a lot of other people had lost loved ones and close friends to COVID-19.

Williams said he believes it's now time to focus on re-stabilizing small businesses because they have been impacted so badly as a result of

the coronavirus COVID-19 global pandemic.

"So many small businesses have closed in our communities and across the state because of this pandemic," Williams said. "Several of our local industries have felt the effects of it. They've had to layoff workers, so we've got these industries and small businesses back up and running again."

Asked how he plans to make that work, Williams responded.

"We've got to look at possible tax incentives for restaurants and for special other businesses and industries that have been critically affected by this pandemic," Williams said. "So many mom and pop type restaurants were literally forced to shut down when this hit. They could not afford to keep going on."

The 68-year-old state lawmaker also talked about his plans going forward during the last few days on the campaign trail.

"I want to continue to reach out to as many constituents as possible between now and the election," Williams said, noting he wanted to reassure them that he wanted to continue to serve them and be their voice at the Gold Dome. "And I want them to know that I want to be responsive to them and their needs."

Williams said he wanted everyone in the law enforcement circles to know that he will continue

See **WILLIAMS**, page 13

expand medical services to our community. As the tax exemption bill we passed a couple of sessions ago for people to make contributions to our hospital and get a tax break. We will continue to partner with our medical community to find ways to supplement the Hospitals. We also passed legislation expanding Medicaid to new mothers. Giving them more benefits for a longer period of time. The Medicaid waivers are coming along that will improve healthcare accessibility and cost. There was legislation passed that will allow you to make donations to our hospitals that reduce your taxes to our state.

We continue to partner with our health care professionals to make sure it is accessible to everyone.

We have to remember that we are not raising Taxes. There is no such thing as free, someone pays the bill. Whether its taxpayers or businesses. It comes back to the consumer.

**U-R:** How do you plan to keep the residents of both counties informed, if you are elected to this office? Please be specific.

**RW:** Besides staying in touch with our district utilizing social media, I am always available to meet or telephone consulting. I have publicized my cell number and am easily accessible by phone. In my four years serving this district I have been open ad available to all of my constituents. I am always available. My family and team at our businesses have allowed me the freedom to be out and work in the legislature for you.

I don't depend on the pay to make a living, I have been donating my pay to different charities and businesses to help

them stay viable. We cut our legislative pay to show support to our communities and state.

**U-R:** Any additional thoughts or comments?

**RW:** Yes, look at Georgia's economy now, we are in much better shape than a lot of states. This comes from being conservative with your tax dollars and not raising taxes. Remember the more the state gives away the more taxes it has to raise. Look at the price of gasoline. \$2.00 a gallon compared to just a few short years ago it was 5 and 6 dollars a gallon. That is a tax cut for all of us. That money goes for food and other expense now. As I go over our district I see signs, help wanted. There is a shortage of workers, we have training in our Vocational technical schools for job training. We are working to expand nursing programs to allow more people to receive training.

Yes, we are all better off now than we were, and our Georgia economy is getting stronger. In August 2020 our state net tax revenue was up 7.7% over 2019 and we didn't have a pandemic in 2019. Over 10,000 new jobs have been created in our state during our first quarter of this fiscal year. More jobs in our state mean less taxes to our taxpayers. We are seeing 441 construction starting in Putnam county that will have a four lane type interstate from I-16 to I-20. This means freight can move through our district easily and with transportation comes jobs, manufacturing and industry.

I am your full time legislator and have worked tirelessly for our district, with Honesty, Integrity and Truthfulness.



Quentin T. Howell (D)  
State House of Representatives, District 145

**The Union-Recorder:** What are your top 3 legislative priorities to improve District 145?

**Quentin T. Howell:** Raising the minimum wage to a livable wage - In some positions in our state employees only earn \$2.13 an hour as minimum wage. In other positions minimum wage is only a little more than \$5 an hour. We are only one of a few states that pay a minimum wage not a livable wage.

Public Education

Increasing the voluntary age a student can drop out of school. Every school official, I have spoken to says this should be a no brainer bill, but it has repeatedly been voted down in Atlanta. Superintendents, principals, and teachers across our state say a 16 year old should not be able to decide to drop out of school. By simply rising this age to 17, the graduation rate across our state would dramatically increase.

Fully funding early childhood education and early literacy initiatives. Unfortunately we have a literacy issue in our public schools, and this directly affects the recurrent effort to attract new business and industry to our area. We must give our school teachers the tools they need to be effective while teaching our youth in all areas. And we cannot as state leaders continue to over look early childhood education and literacy initiatives.

Medicaid Expansion - In 1776 we fought a war on

## Howell seeking Ga. House of Representative seat

By **BILLY W. HOBBS**  
bhobbs@unionrecorder.com

Quentin T. Howell believes his bid to become the first Black man to ever win election to the Georgia House of Representative District 145 seat will be one of the biggest local races on the Nov. 3 general election ballot.

Howell, chairman of the Baldwin County Democratic Committee and chairman of the Georgia 10th District Democratic Committee, is hopeful of unseating incumbent state Rep. Rick Williams, a Republican businessman from Milledgeville. Williams is seeking his third two-year term in office.

"This campaign has been the definition of getting into trouble doing good work," said Howell during a recent interview.

He admitted adopted that phase from the late U.S. Rep. John Lewis of Atlanta, a civil rights pioneer who died earlier this year.

Howell, who owns and operates a medical supply business in Baldwin County, said the campaign has thus far been an uphill battle.

"It's like carrying a large load," Howell said. "But the good part about it is that we're bringing voices to people who haven't had a voice brought to them before. And we're bringing a future to these communities. This is a historical election in a lot of ways, and on a lot of fronts."

Howell was asked about what he considers to be the top priorities in his quest to become one of the state's newest lawmakers.

He has a three-point political platform.

Howell said one of his main objectives is to get the minimum wage in Georgia raised to the federal level.

Currently, the minimum wage in the Peach State is \$5.15 an hour compared

to the federal level, which is \$7.25 an hour.

"I think it's time for us to bring our state's minimum wage to at least that of the federal

government," Howell said. "Unfortunately Georgia is one of only a few states that still pays a lower minimum wage — not a living wage."

He said if elected, he will advocate for such fairness in Georgia.

"I think there needs to be discussions held between state lawmakers and business owners across the state about this important matter," Howell said, noting that some surrounding states are higher than even the federal government when it comes to the minimum wage.

Another important aspect of his platform includes higher education.

Howell said he had talked in-depth with Baldwin County School Superintendent Dr. Noris Price, as well as several other educators in surrounding counties to get their feedback about education going forward and increasing the age that a boy or girl can legally drop out of school.

"I'm advocating that a child be 17 instead of 16," Howell said. "By increasing it one year, I believe the graduation rate — not just in middle Georgia, and not just in Baldwin County, but I believe it would be phenomenal throughout the state."

He contends that it ties into industry growth.

"You cannot bring industry to a community that has low graduation rates," Howell said. "And throughout our state, we have that kind of a problem. A 16-year-old student should not be able to decide on their own whether they are going to stay in school or not."

Howell believes that allowing students that kind of ability to decide something

so important in their lives only leads to all kinds of other problems.

"This would not cost our taxpayers a dime to up the age by a year for students wishing to drop out of school," Howell said.

He said he has already talked with state Sen. Lester Jackson (D-Chatham County) about his having authored such a proposed bill in the General Assembly.

Another problem that Howell says wants to address, if elected, is literacy.

"We have a literacy problem in this state and we need desperately to address it," Howell said. "Part of that literacy problem is because the state of Georgia is not funding early childhood literacy initiatives."

Howell also is pushing for Medicaid expansion across the state.

The non-partisan Georgia Budget and Policy Institute contends that Medicaid expansion in Georgia will help create 56,000 jobs, according to Howell.

"And it would boost the state's economic output," Howell said.

He pointed out that anytime there is talk about Medicaid expansion the subject must shift to the topic of double-taxation.

"If you live in Baldwin or Putnam counties, and you own property, you're going to be paying two taxes to local hospitals," Howell said. "We actually fought a war in this country about double-taxation. This remains a problem today because we're still being double-taxed."

Howell said his opponent along with his colleagues had chosen to send back to Washington, D.C. more than \$40 million in tax dollars.

"That's why we've had three hospitals close in the past 45 days and a fourth one expected to close on Oct. 27," Howell said. "We can do better than this — much better than this."

double taxation, and as Americans we declared it to be unconstitutional. If you live in Baldwin or Putnam county the clock has been rolled back and we are being double taxed for our hospitals. You pay a federal tax and now

because of the lack of Medicaid expansion, you pay and additional tax on each property you own. Which means

See **HOWELL**, page 11

PUTNAM COUNTY COUNTY COMMISSION, DISTRICT 4



Jeff Wooten (R)  
Putnam County Commission District 4

Wooten seeks District 4 commission seat

By BILLY W. HOBBS  
bhobbs@unionrecorder.com

EATONTON, Ga. — Jeff Wooten, a retired dairy farmer who along with family members now raises beef cattle, is one of two candidates seeking the District 4 seat on the Putnam County Board of Commissioners.

The 58-year-old Wooten, a fifth-generation dairy farmer for many years on The Wooten Farm off Joe Wooten Road, is a republican candidate. His challenger in the general election is Randy Kasprzyk, who also is seeking the office as a republican.

The race is for the vacant seat that Trevor Addison left when he resigned to seek the office of clerk of Putnam County Superior Court.

Wooten said he and his brother, Joe Wooten, a retired special agent with the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, now work

together on the family farm. His other brother, Ricky Wooten, has his own farm nearby and works for Georgia Power Company.

Wooten said in the back of his mind, he's always liked giving back to others, and believes he may have inherited that trait from his father, who served as chief of police in Eatonton for several years.

"I just kind of decided that I wanted to run for county commission, so I got together with the family and we all discussed it and agreed that was what I would do," said Wooten in a recent interview. "Whatever one does, the rest of us just sort of agree to it. We just all hang together."

He said he also prayed to God about his decision to seek political office.

If elected, Wooten said he wants to be part of doing what he can do to make Putnam County a better place to live and work.

"The commissioners who are in there now have worked so well from a harmony standpoint and accomplished so much, even after losing the Georgia Power Company's Plant Branch from a tax base standpoint," Wooten said. "They didn't have to go up on the mill rate and they were able to keep the budget going well, too, without a big tax increase. It is just unheard of to tell you the truth."

Wooten said he would like to pick up where Addison left off as a commissioner and wants to be the county commissioner who can be accessible to the people.

He said he would seek new, clean industry and high-paying jobs for the county, as well as promote the county in hopes of attracting more residents to the county from surrounding Atlanta metropolitan counties.

"They want what we can offer them here in Putnam County," he said.

**The Union-Recorder:** what prompted you to want to seek the officer of county commissioner?

**Jeff Wooten:** As a lifelong 5th generation farmer in district 4, I have seen this district grow in population and still maintain the tranquility and harmony that I enjoyed throughout my childhood and adult life. Now semi-retired, I want to give back to this district by way of my public service to the needs and growth of the district. I have many childhood and adult memories of recreation on Lake Sinclair and have enjoyed getting to know and becoming friends with the many lake sinclair residents and would certainly be open minded and attentive to their needs as well as all District 4 residents.

**U-R:** What do you think you can offer the constituents of this district as a member of the putnam county commissioners?

**JW:** As a private businessman for all my life I have learned many things about leadership, the value of the people and the importance of carefully spending money to ensure each and every expenditure is well justified and necessary. As a dairy man, I have served on many of the dairy industry boards and was elected as an executive board member for the maryland virginia dairy co-op. I believe this knowledge of procedures and budgeting that is inherent with serving on these boards will provide me with experience. No doubt, I will have a lot to learn

if elected but I will be open minded towards learning the governmental process of an elected official on a board.

**U-R:** In your estimation, what are the two biggest problems facing residents today in putnam county, and if elected, how do you plan to address them?

**JW:** One of the bigger problems in my estimation is keeping the hospital open. For reasons being we are not going to get any industry here if we do not have an active hospital. I will put a lot of work into finding a solution that will benefit all residents of our county. The next problem would be industry as mentioned before. We have to have the infrastructure to draw industry into the county. Which would include water, sewer, roads, schools.

**U-R:** What do you hope can be achieved over the next four years under your leadership in county government? Please elaborate.

**JW:** If elected, I want to ensure that transparency in the county government remains on the trajectory

it is taking.

I am a supporter of open government because it holds all county government officials accountable which builds trust in the process and further ensures that all government officials are good stewards of the tax payer's money. If elected, I would support law enforcement and all facets of public safety to include our emergency management services. I would also review and support all services that the county provides and make any necessary decisions for funding and budgeting if properly justified during the budgetary process.

If elected I want to support the establishment of an additional local volunteer fire department in a neighboring district which would greatly reduce home insurance rates to the many residents living within five miles of its tentative location.

I realize that budgeting could become an issue but it will be my intention to move through the process with as little budgetary impact as possible.



Randy Kasprzyk (R)  
Putnam county commission district 4

Kasprzyk running for District 4

By BILLY W. HOBBS  
bhobbs@unionrecorder.com

EATONTON, Ga. — Randy Kasprzyk is a political newcomer and is seeking to become the new District 4 commissioner in Putnam County.

The 57-year-old Kasprzyk, a republican candidate, will square off against another Jeff Wooten, another republican candidate for the seat left vacant when Trevor Addison resigned to become a candidate for clerk of Putnam County Superior Court.

Kasprzyk said running for public office is something he has wanted to do for several years.

"I have a lot of genealogy history and famous politicians in my family," Kasprzyk said in a recent interview. "I have told a lot of people that it's in my blood, so I finally decided this is the time to seek the office so I can do what my other members of my family have done

in the past in serving others."

Kasprzyk, who works as a butcher at Ingles' Supermarket in Madison, said he felt proud about his decision to seek public office, and "fill the family shoes, so to speak, in a small way."

Kasprzyk said he loves Putnam County.

"There are nine Putnam counties in the United States and I'm fortunate to live in the best one of those counties in the entire country," said Kasprzyk, who grew up in Baltimore, Md.

He has lived in Putnam County for the past 32 years.

Kasprzyk also works part-time as an IT representative for residents at Reynolds Lake Oconee.

He said one of his main objectives as a member of the Putnam County Board of Commissioners, if elected, will be to try and attract new industry and jobs to the county.

"I realize that it will take a good

six months to get my feet wet, so to speak, to actually learn the system of how things are done, and then is when I plan on getting started trying to get new industry to come to Putnam County and create new high-paying jobs for local residents and others," Kasprzyk said.

He explained that he knows two of the county commissioners on the board already in Bill Sharp and Daniel Brown.

"I know them both pretty well and consider both of them friends, and I think that would help in getting me off on solid ground if the voters see fit to elect me," Kasprzyk said, "Their interests seem to be a lot like that of me, especially Bill because he was a member of the Putnam County Development Authority before he was elected to the county commission."

Kasprzyk said voters are fortunate in that they have two good guys seeking the District 4 county commission seat.

**The Union-Recorder:** What prompted you to want to seek the officer of county commissioner?

**Randy Kasprzyk:** 1. Concern over a particular issue like property tax 2. To be able to make sure our law Enforcement and EMS is being taken Care of. 3. Desire to build a better future for my county

**U-R:** What do you think you can offer the constituents of this district as a member of the Putnam County Commissioners?

**RK:** 1. Passion, Honesty, Integrity. Willing to listen.

2. Owning two computer stores and being in the computer field for almost 20 years, and I also worked for the Putnam County Tax Assessor's office I know how property tax is appraised, and how the Millage rates can affect you.

**U-R:** In your estimation, what are the two biggest problems facing residents today in Putnam County, and if elected, how do you plan to address them?

**RK:** 1. Industry is one, Pay rate. And lack of Industry. I decided to put in job applications around Putnam County. I had some interviews. Hard to do on line. But with the Covet 19 this the only way you can get an application in. The highest paying job I could find was starting out around \$10.00 an hr. There is no competition for a lot of our residents. 2. That being said we have to have a way to introduce or entice more Industry to move to Putnam County, give tax

incentives. Work together with business owners. Ask them for there advise.

**U-R:** What do you hope can be achieved over the next four years under your leadership in county government? Please elaborate.

**RK:** 1. Keeping our property tax down.  
2. Bringing in new business's  
3. Getting our roads repaired and back in good condition with our breaking the bank.

Howell

Continued from page 10

our citizens are being much more than just DOUBLE TAXED. I would vote to pass Medicaid expansion in Georgia and that would stop Atlanta politicians from sending back over 40 Billion of our tax dollars to Washington. This would also extend health coverage to over 470,000 Georgians, generate over 6.5 billion for our economy, and create over 56,000 new jobs.

**U-R:** What, in your opinion, is the single biggest issue facing District 145 and what, as a legislator, are you qualified to do to improve upon this issue?

**QH:** The lack of real job opportunities in our community is a major problem. Over time our 441 corridor has become less than a corridor for industry and more and more of a food court. Our community must have real job opportunities that translate into careers. These careers

should offer a living wage not just a minimum wage, while providing retirement opportunities and health benefits. If this does not happen, sons and daughters, grandchildren and others will continue to leave Milledgeville for more career opportunities. During this pandemic having some foresight and forward thinking on this issue has become paramount. Besides owning one of the largest medical equipment companies in Georgia for over ten years, I have also served on the Milledgeville/Baldwin County Economic Development Authority. I'm the only one to ever serve on the board under republican and democratic administrations, so I understand how to work across political lines to bring industry and real opportunity to Baldwin and Putnam counties.

**U-R:** The global pandemic and remote learning brought greater attention to the need for rural broadband improvements. What do you propose can be done to

improve rural broadband within the local district?

**QH:** Having broadband access in our rural communities has been a question for years. There has also been a need for broadband access for years, but elected leaders have chosen to continually ignore the need for this access, and now the pandemic we are in has caught these same leaders off guard. As a state elected leader I plan on working with the local city and county governments to help provide infrastructure for broadband access to the citizens of our local community. This infrastructure should come from a partnership between the local and state governments, so local taxes are not raised on our citizens. There are also multiple grants that can be applied for from the federal government that would help fund this new broadband infrastructure without having to raise taxes on our hard working citizens of Baldwin and Putnam counties.

**U-R:** What can you as a

legislator do to support rural hospitals such as Navicent Health Baldwin and health care access within the district?

**QH:** In the pass 30 days Ga. has had two hospitals to close its doors, and there are reports that two more Ga. hospitals are about to close very soon. Our state has seen over 60 hospitals close outside Atlanta over the past few years, and our own Navicent (Baldwin County) Hospital has been in bankruptcy with multiple fears of it closing its doors. Our hospital is no different from any other in Georgia, and it must have tax revenue to keep its doors open. But in Baldwin and Putnam County the citizens are being double taxed for the same entity. We fought a war over double taxation and this should not become the new normal. We must have a Representative who understands that Medicaid Expansion is a necessity in Ga. It will not only give our rural hospitals an infusion of millions of dollars; but would also create

over 56,000 jobs throughout our area.

**U-R:** How do you plan to keep the residents of both counties informed, if you are elected to this office? Please be specific.

**QH:** I plan on having quarterly town halls throughout our community to hear concerns and answer questions on my constituents. These town halls also will be used to explain new legislation that is being proposed and gather input from citizens on their positions on current and past issues. I will not limit my communication to only in person town halls, we will use mass email blasts and zoom town halls. Most importantly I will remain very active in our local community. Having a personal connection to the citizens in our community is important to me. I will always have an open door to the citizens here in Baldwin and Putnam counties, and they will have a representative that will be visible throughout the year in their community.

## PUTNAM COUNTY CLERK OF SUPERIOR COURT



Trevor Addison (R)  
Putnam County Clerk of Superior Court

**The Union-Recorder:** What prompted you to want to seek office?

**Trevor Addison:** There has always been a “fire” inside of me to serve my community. In my opinion, Eatonton | Putnam County is a great place to live, work and play. This is where I was raised and where Pelar and I wish to raise our own family - there’s no other place I’d rather be. For those of us who wholeheartedly believe that, we must do our part to preserve it. We must use our skills and abilities to better our community wherever God places us. As most know I was elected in 2016 as Putnam County’s District 4 Commissioner and at 26 years of age – the youngest in the state at that time.

That fire inside of me is not freshly lit and it’s even more prominent today. I seek the Office of Clerk of Superior Court because I know I have the exact skillset required of Putnam County’s next Clerk – a skillset Putnam County citizens deserve to have leading the Clerk’s Office.

**U-R:** What do you think you can offer the constituents of Putnam County as Clerk of Superior Court?

**TA:** The voters of Putnam County deserve a Clerk of Superior Court who has a proven record of executing and getting results. Just as I have conducted myself while Commissioner, Vice Chairman and Deputy Director at a higher education institution - an Addison Administration will be founded on four pillars: A Citizen-Focused Approach to Customer Service, being Transparent to the citizens of this great county, protecting tax payer dollars by operating Efficiently and being Accessible to YOU!

I had the pleasure of serving over 5,000 citizens while District 4 Commissioner, and over 22,000 as Vice Chairman of the Board of Commissioners. I currently serve as the Deputy Director of Financial Aid at a higher education institution where I serve over 16,000 students and 14 college campuses throughout the state. You deserve a Clerk who understands and has executed great customer service!

To be a successful leader, one must earn respect and trust – this fosters productivity. The only way to earn respect and trust is by being honest and transparent.

## Addison seeks to become new Superior Court clerk

By **BILLY W. HOBBS**  
bhobbs@unionrecorder.com

EATONTON, Ga. – Trevor Addison is seeking to become the new clerk of Putnam County Superior Court. The 30-year-old Addison, who became the youngest elected county commissioner in Georgia when he was elected in 2016 to the Putnam County Board of Commissioners at age 26, is now seeking the job that Shelia H. Perry has held for many years. She is retiring at the end of this year. He later went on to be elected by fellow commissioners as vice chairman under Putnam County Commission Chairman Billy Webster.

“I was very honored to have served as a county commissioner,” Addison said in a recent interview. Addison, who describes himself as a conservative republican, served for almost four years on the county commission before he resigned his District 4 seat to become a candidate for clerk of Putnam County Superior Court. He works as deputy director of finance aide at Georgia Military College in Milledgeville, which has more than 16,000 students and 14 campuses across Georgia. Addison has worked there for a little more than seven years.

“I’ve always wanted to make a difference, and Putnam County is my home and it’s where I want to live forever,” Addison said. “I feel like for those of us who have that in our hearts to truly mean that have to preserve it in some way and the only way I know how to preserve it is by using the skill-set that God gave me to be the best of my

advantage.”

Originally, it was serving as a county commissioner. But then he learned that Perry was retiring and he opted to resign from his seat on the county commission.

“I feel like I have the same exact skill-set needed and required of the next Superior Court clerk,” Addison said.

One of those skill-sets involves customer service.

“And that’s what I do right here,” Addison said. “You have to know how to be transparent. Well, that’s all I do right here and all I did as a county commissioner. You have to be efficient and assessable and I feel like those are the things that the next clerk of Superior Court has to have.”

Before he resigning from the county commission, Addison said he thought long and hard about it, prayed about it and talked the idea over with family and close friends.

He said he eventually concluded that at that moment in time that his skill-set best fit his seeking the office of the clerk of Superior Court.

“I look forward to serving as clerk of Superior Court,” Addison said. “I feel that’s exactly where I’m supposed to be.” Asked why he felt that way, Addison quickly replied.

“Because I know I have the exact skill-set needed for that office,” Addison said. “I’ve run my campaign on this. I will continue doing this from day one. Four things: customer service, transparency, efficiency and accessibility. Those are the four pillars that I think the next clerk must have and continue

to possess.”

Addison said holding onto those valued concepts is a reflection of the legacy that Perry is leaving behind after serving for so many years as clerk.

Asked what he might do differently, if elected, Addison said he will continue offering the great imaging services that the clerk’s staff has offered for some time now.

“We want to definitely continue that and set the record and set the tone for Georgia and all the counties that Putnam County will be the leader in that kind of transparency,” Addison said.

When it comes to a specific change, Addison said he will discontinue purchasing paper deed books because of the costs.

“They cost the county about \$9,000 to \$10,000 a year, and they aren’t used that much,” Addison said.

Another change he plans to look into the possibility of the clerk’s office offering passports.

“I’m not saying the clerk’s office will do that but I want to look into that,” Addison said. He was the first candidate to qualify for an elected office in Putnam County on March 6. Addison said he was running for the office of clerk because he had given it a lot of consideration.

“This was well thought out, and well-planned,” he said. Addison is a 2008 graduate of Putnam County High School. He later went to Georgia Military College where he earned his two-year degree and eventually enrolled at Liberty University where he earned his economics degree and returned to GMC where he now works.

I have published dozens of newsletters to Putnam County Citizens, written white papers on complex county topics to ensure my constituents understood what their county was doing, initiated the upgrade of Putnam County’s website to make it more user friendly, tasked county administration to implement the now popular county wide newsletter, and introduced the need for a Public Information Officer in order to get information out to citizens expeditiously. You deserve a Clerk who has Transparency instilled within their very soul!

The next Clerk must be a prudent manager of taxpayer dollars, have the ability to execute a multitude of tasks simultaneously and operate efficiently. The responsibilities of Clerk’s Office are far and wide. Not only do I stand ready to provide quality services to our courts (Juvenile, State, Superior and Jury System), an Addison Administration will efficiently perform the vast array of tasks the Clerks Office holds which are outside of the court room. This includes real estate filings -

Trevor Addison for Putnam  
P.O. Box 3393  
Eatonton, GA 31024  
(706) 473-5404 | trevor@trevoraddison.com | www.trevoraddison.com | @TrevorAddisonForClerk

deeds and plats, trade names, notaries, and presiding over the Board of Equalization, just to name a few. I have devoted my time to protecting tax payer dollars, operating efficiently and streamlining processes. As Vice Chairman and Commissioner, I worked tirelessly to balance our county’s budget for the first time in several years. As Clerk I will bring with me my experience from the other side of the table and will constantly seek innovative ways to enhance and improve our services, while having the taxpayer’s interest in the forefront. You deserve a Clerk who is able to perform multiple responsibilities and who is committed to operating efficiently.

Over the past several years I have met with hundreds of citizens to listen to their ideas and concerns. We used this collaboration to make positive changes for our community. As Clerk, my job is to provide quality services to you and our courts. To do this, the next Clerk must be present, must know when to listen and when to act. You deserve a Clerk who is accessible to you!

**U-R:** What do you hope can be achieved over the next four years under your leadership in county

See **ADDISON**, page 13

## Hill seeks to become new clerk of Superior Court



Denise Hill (D)  
Putnam County Clerk of Superior Court

Denise Hill did not  
respond to our Q&A request.

By **BILLY W. HOBBS**  
bhobbs@unionrecorder.com

EATONTON, Ga. – Denise L. Hill is a political newcomer and seeking the office of clerk of Putnam County Superior

Court.

Hill, a democrat, is being opposed by Trevor Addison, a former commissioner in Putnam County, who is seeking the office as a republican.

The winner of the race will take over in January to replace Shelia H. Perry, who is retiring after serving as clerk of Putnam County Superior Court for many years.

Hill is a native of Putnam County. She said her family and their roots are all embedded there.

The 45-year-old Hill is a 1993 graduate of Putnam County High School.

She said her parents and grandparents were instrumental in her upbringing.

“My grandfather was actually an evangelist and worked at the U.S. Post Office for many years in Eatonton,” Hill said of her grandfather, whose name was Oris Farley.

Her father, meanwhile, Antony Farley Sr., is a retired employee of Georgia Power Company and her mother, Dorothy Farley, is retired from the Rock Eagle 4-H Center, but now works as the dietician at Putnam General Hospital in Eatonton.

For the past 15 years, Hill worked as a victim assistance advocate with the Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit District Attorney’s Office.

Hill, who has a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Georgia College in Milledgeville, said she had no idea she would work as a victim’s assistance advocate.

“Just to be honest, it was never on my radar,” Hill said. “This was not something that I had set out to do.”

Hill said in looking back at what happened, she credits God. “He (God) sends us where we can help people,” Hill said. “I am honored to have had the privilege of actually working with the people of Putnam County and just being able to impact their lives in a positive way.”

She said Bright told her since she had done such a good job working in his office as an intern that he wanted to offer her a job serving as a victim assistance advocate in Putnam, Greene and Morgan counties.

“He (Bright) was a wonderful man and he used to call me, Miss Putnam County,” said Hill, fondly.

Hill said that was how she became an employee with the

district attorney’s office.

During her 15 years with the D.A.’s office – a job she resigned from several months ago after becoming a minister, she estimated that she had helped hundreds of crime victims.

“Those people were the most vulnerable and they were looking for someone they could trust, and confide in,” Hill said.

Hill said she decided she wanted to follow in the steps of her grandfather and preach.

She is a licensed minister and preaches at New Beginning Worship Center in Milledgeville.

Hill said working in the district attorney’s office for 15 years had helped prepare her for the challenges that await her if elected to serve as the new clerk of Putnam County Superior Court.

“That is how I learned so much about the judicial system,” Hill said.

She said she learned that Perry was retiring from some of her friends in the community and they came to her and asked if she would consider becoming a candidate for that office.

“Again, let me please say louder than anything that I am not a politician,” Hill said. “I’m not political at all. And so, that was one of the drawbacks.”

Hill said she told the group that she first had to pray about the decision and talk it over with her pastor and with her family and close friends.

“I know that politics can be a nasty game and I don’t like nasty,” Hill said.

Hill said even though she never worked under Perry that she had watched her do her job over the years.

She said she and Perry formed a working relationship over the years.

“Pretty much hand-in-hand that I did in that job (as a victim’s advocate) I will be doing as the clerk,” Hill said. “So, I’ve actually had some experience.”

She also noted that she knows everyone in the courthouse, including those who work in the clerk’s office. She said she also personally knows all of the judges, members of the D.A.’s office and defense attorneys.

She believes that gives her a big advantage.

## Seat

Continued from page 4

a subject that she wasn’t talking about just Black families, but all races of people with families in the state. “We need to become advocates for Georgia

families and that’s what I will become if I’m elected to the state Senate,” Brinson said. “I want to focus on strengthening Georgia families, socially, educationally, and economically. And I think in order to do that we’ve got to support small businesses in our

communities so that we can create better-paying jobs that help strengthen those families.” Brinson also supports affordable health care for all Georgians. She said she is willing to go across political aisles to compromise with Republicans on certain issues, and

that she hopes that her colleagues do the same thing. Brinson said her campaign has been waged on a grassroots level.

“I have had to run my campaign on that level because I haven’t had big fundraising events because of COVID-19,” Brinson

said. “I have depended on a lot of smaller financial contributions to see me through this campaign.”

During this campaign, Brinson said she has not been intimidated by the big fundraising events that her opponent had managed to arrange.

Asked what the difference was between her and Jones, Brinson said she thinks she is more committed to the people who live in the district on a grassroots level.

She described those people, “everyday, average folks.”

US SENATE CANDIDATE Q&A



Loeffler works to reintroduce herself to Georgia

By RILEY BUNCH  
CNHI State Reporter



Kelly Loeffler (R)  
US Senate

**The Union-Recorder:** Do you support President Trump's nominee to the US Supreme Court to replace Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and if not, why? Please elaborate.

**Kelly Loeffler:** Absolutely. Amy Coney Barrett is a supremely qualified jurist with an unparalleled legal mind, incredible personal integrity, and a strong commitment to the Constitution. After meeting with Judge Barrett, I believe her to be an originalist who will defend our Constitution, fight to protect the right to life, defend the right to bear arms, and ensure our right to worship. I strongly look forward to confirming her in the Senate – and to watching her career on the Court.

See **LOEFFLER**, page 15

ATLANTA — The second woman in Georgia history to be sworn into the U.S. Senate, Kelly Loeffler hopes to defend her seat in the special election in November. After being appointed last year to fill former U.S. Sen. Johnny Isakson's seat — left vacant after he announced his retirement — Loeffler found herself an immediate target of both Democrats and Republicans. Loeffler was raised on a farm in Illinois but grew to be a powerful financial executive and married Intercontinental Exchange CEO Jeff Sprecher.

Now, navigating a crowded race, Loeffler faces the biggest threats from Doug Collins who — has carried favor with many prominent GOP members — and Democrats Matt Lieberman and Atlanta pastor Raphael Warnock.

Loeffler, a successful businesswoman, has pledged millions of her own money to win the reelection, but her campaign faces challenges that money cannot buy: winning over Peach State voters.

While most candidates get the chance to brand themselves throughout an election, Gov. Brian Kemp's appointment sent her straight to Washington, D.C. The pick initially received backlash from prominent conservatives — including the President.

After a 14-county tour of the state, Loeffler said she hopes having face-to-face interactions with Georgians

was enough to amass more support. Loeffler has established herself as a steadfast Republican who is "pro-Second Amendment, pro-military, pro-wall and pro-Trump" and labels herself as the "true conservative" in the race.

"I'm a political outsider, I'm not a career politician," she told CNHI during a candidate interview. "I came out of the private sector after nearly three decades. I'm most in touch with the experiences and needs of folks across the state."

But Loeffler's short time serving in Washington has not been without controversy. The senator was subject to an ethics investigation after allegations of insider trading during the pandemic. The ethics probe was dismissed after the Senate Ethics Committee "did not find evidence" of wrongdoing.

Loeffler told CNHI it was proven to be a "political witch hunt."

"It never distracted me from getting work done," she said. "You either have to stand up to it or it'll dominate you and I refuse to be intimidated by (the attacks)."

The senator said she is "standing up against cancel culture" and for Georgians who do not speak their opinions out of fear.

"Sadly, at this moment in our country's history — amid all the challenges — people feel like they can't speak out," Loeffler said.

The campaign against "cancel culture" comes after the senator clashed with the WNBA over the league's support of the Black Lives Matter

movement. Loeffler is a co-owner of the Atlanta Dream franchise.

Loeffler's refusal to be "intimidated" was a key talking point during her tour throughout Georgia.

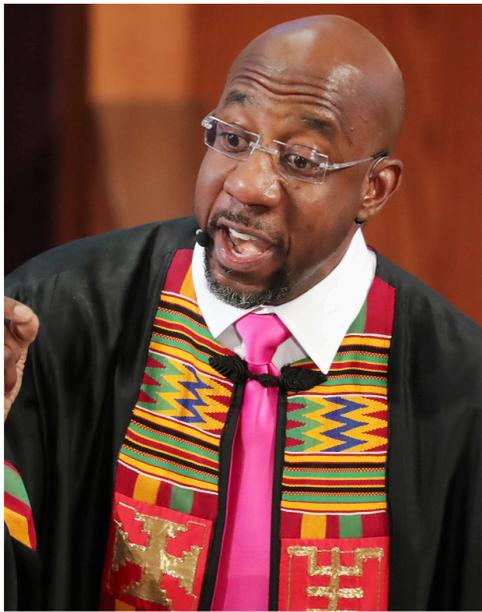
"(Georgians) want someone that will come in, shake up the status quo, and not be intimidated by the swamp and the fake news," she said. "They want someone that is only up there working for their interests and because of that message I've been able to get grassroots support in all 159 counties in Georgia."

Although her toughest GOP opponent has garnered large support from some party members, Loeffler still has the backing of high-ranking state officials — the governor, Lt. Gov. Geoff Duncan and Attorney General Chris Carr.

As the calendar gets closer to the November elections, Georgia Democrats have been vocal about their intention to capitalize on both Senate seats at play, which Loeffler said, she will do all she can to prevent.

"We won't take anything for granted," Loeffler said. "Because what's at stake in November is the presidency and it's the Senate. I'm working every minute to make sure that we reelect President Trump and keep the Senate in Republican hands."

The senator has a little more than \$7 million cash on hand going into the third quarter of campaigning, according to finance reports released in July. Loeffler has loaned her campaign \$15 million of her own money.



Rev. Raphael G. Warnock (D)  
US Senate

**The Union-Recorder:** Do you support President Trump's nominee to the US Supreme Court to replace Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and if not, why? Please elaborate.

**Raphael Warnock:** Reverend Warnock has stated that he believes we should follow the standard Senator Mitch McConnell set in 2016 and that means allowing Americans to vote for the president of their choosing to fill the seat after the general election. He supports holding on preceding on any Supreme Court vacancy nomination until the next President is seated. While Judge Amy Coney Barrett's nomination is rushed through the U.S. Senate less than 30 days before Election Day, that same body has slow-walked providing additional relief to millions of people in the midst of a pandemic and Republican Senators, including in our home state, have supported getting rid of the Affordable Care Act. The stakes of this vacancy concerning the future of pre-existing protections for 1.8 million Georgians covered by the Affordable Care Act is too important to rush.

Second part to that question: And do you think Ginsburg's vacancy should be filled before or after the election? Again, please elaborate. As was Senator Mitch McConnell and the majority of the GOP caucus in 2016, Reverend Warnock believes voters deserve a say in the confirmation of our next Supreme Court justice. The President is elected by the American people to uphold their values and interests, including through their appointment of Supreme Court justices.

We hold elections every four years to allow the American people to assess - and in this case, reassess - who should nominate our next justice, especially when Americans' fundamental rights are at stake. He believes only after that

Warnock: 'The Senate could use a pastor'

By RILEY BUNCH  
CNHI State Reporter

ATLANTA — A famed Atlanta pastor is considered a Democratic frontrunner for a Georgia seat in the U.S. Senate.

The Rev. Raphael Warnock is a 14-year senior pastor of the historic Ebenezer Baptist Church. He entered the race earlier this year.

In a candidate interview with CNHI, he said he has always believed his service "doesn't end at the church door."

"It is a bit unusual for a pastor to seek high political office," he said. "But it's not unheard of."

Warnock is one of the Democrats challenging freshman U.S. Sen. Kelly Loeffler for her Senate seat in a special election in November. Warnock out-raised both his top GOP opponents — Loeffler and U.S. Rep. Doug Collins — in both the first and second quarters.

Since entering the contest, the pastor has clinched high-profile Democrat endorsements such as 2018 gubernatorial candidate Stacey Abrams and five senators who ran in the 2020 Democratic presidential primary including Elizabeth Warren and Kamala Harris.

Warnock said his childhood growing up in subsidized housing in Savannah shaped his political agenda — expanded health care coverage and voting rights are among his top issues.

"Washington has a lot of professional politicians who do what politicians do," he said. "They're so focused on the next election that they're not thinking enough about the next generation."

Warnock pointed to his long-time advocacy for health care. In 2014, he was arrested during a demonstration calling for Medicaid expansion at the Georgia State Capitol, as a moment of "good trouble" — a coin termed by the late Lewis.

"I've always been engaged, for years, in this fight for health care that is affordable, accessible and of great quality," he told CNHI. "That we don't allow politicians who are in the pockets of big business to steal the promise of decent and affordable health care to ordinary people."

Warnock has entered arguably one of the most competitive races in the country and coupled with the other Georgia Senate seat up for grabs, Democrats are pouring themselves into flipping the state in both the Georgia Capitol and U.S. Capitol.

At the same time, Warnock said, protesters across the country are calling for the status quo to change.

"It won't change unless we elect leaders who are focused on fighting for Georgians, not fighting for their corporate interests or their political party," Warnock said. "And I believe change is possible. Anytime you have NASCAR saying 'we don't want the Confederate flag' and you have Mitt Romney saying, 'Black Lives Matter,' things are changing."

The pastor said the pandemic has highlighted the need for congressional members who are more representative of the people and not "moving from boardrooms to Washington back rooms."

Both Georgia Senators came under fire for alleged insider trading of stocks after a closed-door coronavirus brief. Loeffler, his primary opponent, was cleared by an ethics panel after they found no wrongdoing.

"What (Georgians) deserve is a senator who is focused on people right now and who was sheltering-in-place rather than focused on sheltering their own investment portfolio," he said. "That's the kind of thing that's ... turning people off from politics and, in the long run, it hurts our democracy."

confirmation of faith should the elected President appoint a nominee. There should be no confirmation before the inauguration.

**U-R:** What are two of the biggest problems confronting Americans today and how do you plan to address them?

**RW:** As Senator, Reverend Warnock will work to expand access to quality, affordable healthcare by improving the Affordable Care Act and defend protections for people with pre-existing conditions. He is committed to working across the aisle to lower the cost of prescription drugs through price negotiations, push for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid to be empowered to negotiate lower drug pricing (as was advocated for in the ACA) and advocate for greater coordination with our partner countries, like Canada, to bring in prescriptions to market at lower cost but the same level of quality and safety. At the federal level, he will push for Congress to roll back the power of big Pharmaceutical companies and special interests by imposing caps on the maximum price that can be charged for life-saving drugs like insulin and limiting the excessive use of patents to encourage market competition. Also, securing access to the ballot box for every eligible voter is another priority of Reverend Warnock's. As he's said "our

votes are sacred" and protect all other rights. To ensure free, fair, secure and accurate elections, he will focus on protecting and expanding voting rights for all eligible people by re-authorizing the Voting Rights Act/the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, making Election Day a federal holiday and fighting back against voter suppression efforts. In the midst of a pandemic when Americans are being forced to choose between their health and their constitutional right to vote, Reverend Warnock's commitment to voting rights also extends to increasing access to Vote By Mail and Early Vote options to protect Georgians as they cast their ballots.

**U-R:** Do you agree with the way President Trump has handled the COVID-19 pandemic or disagree? Please elaborate either way.

**RW:** Reverend Warnock does not agree with the handling of the Coronavirus pandemic by our

leaders in Washington, including President Trump and politicians like Senator Loeffler and Congressman Collins. The United States has more confirmed deaths from

See **WARNOCK**, page 15

Williams

Continued from page 8 supporting them.

"I want to do whatever

I can do to get those in law enforcement, ambulance personnel and firefighters better pay," Williams said.

He said he also plans to continue working across

the aisles at the state capitol to ensure that he is doing everything possible to work with everybody — republicans and democrats, alike.

"They all know that and

they rely on it," Williams said. "We've worked on numerous projects together. And at the end of the day, what it comes down to is who is effective."

Williams contends that he can be effective because he has the time, energy and capability to commit himself 100 percent to the job of representing the people

of the 145th District. "That's what I've done and I will continue to do that the next two years," Williams said. "I ask for everyone's vote and support."

Addison

Continued from page 12

government? Please elaborate.

**TA:** There are many projects I will take on as Clerk, for example:

We will continue the great record retention

the current Clerk Team has accomplished, having deeds and plats scanned electronically all the way back to the early 1900's (deeds to 1910 and plats to 1919). We will work to continue this effort as document preservation is very important.

We will discontinue the purchasing of paper deed

books. This is an expense which costs the taxpayers \$9,000 each year and will fully utilize an online service for deed retention.

We will conduct a feasibility test on whether the Clerk's Office should provide Passport services.

We will execute daily the the four pillars of my administration; a

citizen-focused approach to customer service, upholding transparency, operating efficiently and being accessible to you!

I'm honored to have earned the support of the elected officials you have already placed your trust in. I have the endorsement of our Current Clerk, Sheila Perry,

whom you have trusted as Clerk for over 23 years. I have the endorsement of Sheriff Howard Sills, Governor Brian Kemp, Congressman Jody Hice, Senator Burt Jones, Representatives Rick Williams, Representative Trey Rhodes, every Putnam County Commissioner and President

Trump's Campaign Team. I'm honored to have their support and certainly yours. I humbly ask you to vote for the candidate who has a concrete record and a solid reputation. Vote for Trevor Addison as Putnam County's next Clerk of Superior Court on November 3rd!

# Collins boasts conservative track record in Senate race



Doug Collins (R)  
US Senate

By RILEY BUNCH  
CNHI State Reporter

ATLANTA — U.S. Senate hopeful Doug Collins has leaned on his conservative track record despite initial criticism from some in his own party.

Collins decided to try his luck at a spot across the hall and announced his candidacy in the special election to fill former U.S. Sen. Johnny Isakson's vacant seat after

backlash to Gov. Brian Kemp's choice — Sen. Kelly Loeffler.

His candidacy has set up a GOP battle and forced many to pick sides, but the U.S. representative said the idea the party rift would push voters away is fabricated.

"That's a falsehood put out by the governor's office and others who wanted me out of this race," he told CNHI.

Born in Gainesville, the representative was a pastor at a church in his hometown for 11 years before enlisting in the U.S. Air Force Reserves as a chaplain. In 2013, he was elected as a U.S. representative after serving as a state lawmaker.

Collins saw a rise to national fame during the impeachment of President Donald Trump and as a top Republican on the House Judiciary Committee. Since, he has labeled himself "Trump's strongest defender."

In a contrasting campaign, Loeffler — Collins' top Republican opponent — is working to prove her conservative values to Georgians, while Collins said the Peach State is already familiar with his platform.

"People know who we are. They know us, we're tested, we're proven," he said during a candidate interview with CNHI. "They don't have to wonder about our ideas and what we're going to fight for. We're not learning on the job, we've actually been doing this and they know that they can trust us to follow through on our conservative ideals."

Candidates across the country have found themselves campaigning on the issue of police brutality after social unrest and protests sparked by the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

Collins pointed to his support of law enforcement, which he said, he has proven through actions and not

just words.

The U.S. representative has called for a federal investigation into Fulton County District Attorney Paul Howard, for quickly announcing charges against police officers after the killing of Rayshard Brooks.

"It's more than just saying you support the police — as a trooper's kid — it's about actually standing up with them and being with them when they're being persecuted like they are," he said.

Collins is confident his conservative track record in Georgia will stand out.

"Our views on conservatism are not, you know, dreamed up," he said. "And they're not just dolled up to win votes."

But he is just one among a crowded field of candidates. The race has more than 20 contenders — including high-profile Atlanta pastor Rev. Raphael Warnock. With two Senate seats in play, Georgia Democrats have looked to capitalize on the internal battle in the other party.

Collins' reliance on his image in Washington, D.C., has spurred an ethics complaint from Georgia Democrats accusing him of violating congressional rules of using footage from the U.S. House floor for political advertisements.

Dan McLagan, Collins' campaign spokesman, told the Atlanta Journal-Constitution that Democrats want to "censor" clips of Collins "demolishing the left."

Collins said he will fight against "liberal mobs" who are turning the country toward what he calls a "socialist" system.

"This election is about the future," he said. "This is about taking a conservative message and promoting it in all areas of the state."

# Perdue talks protecting Republican values



David Perdue (R)  
US Senate

By RILEY BUNCH  
CNHI State Reporter

ATLANTA — When U.S. Sen. David Perdue first ran for Congress in 2014, it was on a platform of being a "political outsider."

Now, his 2020 campaign features a similar rebrand: "the original outsider."

The Republican incumbent faces a well-known Democratic challenger but maintains that Republican leadership has put the U.S. in the best economic spot it has been for years.

"I first ran because Washington was broken. I'd said if we wanted different results, we had to send a different kind of person," he said during a candidate interview with CNHI. "We've been getting those results for Georgia."

Born in Macon, Perdue rose to become an influential figure in the private sector as a former Fortune 500 chief executive. In 2014, he won the election for U.S. Senate with no experience in public office — although his family has strong political ties. Perdue touts himself as one of the earliest supporters of Donald Trump's presidential campaign in 2016.

Perdue has collected more than \$11 million in contributions for his reelection bid and is reporting nearly \$10.7 million cash on hand in the most recent campaign finance reports released this month.

Perdue echoed a widespread Republican platform of "exposing this liberal, socialist agenda" of Democrats.

"There are a group of people on the left in the Democratic

party who believe in anarchy right now because they want that kind of radical change," Perdue said. "They want to defund the police, they want to get rid of ICE, they want sanctuary cities to prevail, they don't want a controlled border."

The contrast between Perdue and his Democratic opponent — Jon Ossoff — could not be more clear, he said.

But the November election changed drastically when the pandemic and then widespread social unrest upended the county. Now, the incumbent has found himself running on new policy issues from reopening schools safely to police reform.

Perdue said he supported "reasonable police reform" before a bill was introduced in the Senate. In his first round of general election ads, the senator highlighted his policy ideas but is adamantly against defunding law enforcement.

"Public safety needs to be maintained," he said.

In response to the pandemic, Perdue has jumped on efforts to plan for reopening schools safely. His new legislation — which he said was inspired by his parents' careers as school teachers — would create funds for schools to build reopening plans and purchase PPE and connects health care professionals to the education system to help develop safety protocols.

"There is a lot of angst about how do we reopen our schools," he said. "I believe that the best decision for our



Jon Ossoff (D)  
US Senate

**The Union-Recorder:** Do you support President Trump's nominee to the US Supreme Court to replace Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and if not, why? Please elaborate. Second part to that question: And do you think Ginsburg's vacancy should be filled before or after the election? Again, please elaborate.

**John Ossoff:** Every judicial nominee deserves a fair hearing, and I'll reserve judgment on Judge Barrett's nomination until the Senate does its due diligence. Justice Ginsburg was a brilliant jurist and her life's work made America truer to our founding principle of universal human rights.

The country has lost a great judge, and now the Senate's job is to ensure she is replaced by a judge who will uphold the rule of law and defend the public interest. Much is at stake: the protections of the Affordable Care Act, the privacy of women's health care and Roe v. Wade, voting rights, and civil rights. Within hours of her nomination, my opponent endorsed Judge Barrett for the Supreme Court — before even hearing from her under oath. He should have withheld judgment until the Senate completed its due diligence.

Georgia needs an independent-minded Senator who will consider a judicial nominee's testimony under oath before making a judgment on their qualifications for the court. In the Senate, I'll support the thorough, deliberative, and full vetting of any Supreme Court nominee — no matter whether a President from my own party or the other nominates them — because that's the obligation of a U.S. Senator.

## Ossoff confident anti-corruption campaign will hit home with voters

By RILEY BUNCH  
CNHI State Reporter

ATLANTA — A key player in Democrats efforts to turn Georgia blue, U.S. Senate hopeful Jon Ossoff boasts his campaign as an "all-out attack on corruption" in Congress. The 33-year-old media executive and investigative journalist has sworn off corporate PAC donations and called for a crackdown on corporate influence in Washington, D.C. In a candidate interview with CNHI, Ossoff condemned extremism — in both parties.

"This country needs healing — the last four years have been so divisive. I think that most Georgians recognize that there's too much corruption and there's too much extremism in both political parties," he said. "Most Americans — most Georgians — see eye to eye on most issues. It's not like it's a mystery what problems need solving."

This is not the first high-profile race for Ossoff, who narrowly lost a 2017 special election run for Georgia's 6th Congressional District. Both stabs at office garnered national media attention as well as words from President Donald Trump. Since announcing his candidacy, Ossoff has won endorsements of prominent

Democrats including 2018 gubernatorial candidate Stacey Abrams and a handful of senators who ran in the 2020 Democratic presidential primary such as Kamala Harris and Cory Booker. The young candidate said he vows to be a senator who in three words is, "accountable, accessible and honest."

"I may not vote the way everyone wants me to every time," he told CNHI. "But rest assured, I will be in your city and in your town to account for myself, to answer for my votes. I will listen to everyone in the state."

A metro Atlanta native, Ossoff worked as a national security aide for Congressman Hank Johnson before he left to pursue a career in investigative journalism — a career path that spurred his image as a politician critical of politics. Ossoff said Congress' poor response to the pandemic only exposes health care inequalities that already existed. The candidate said lawmakers need to put a stop to price gouging by insurance and drug companies and build new medical facilities — especially in rural Georgia.

"We don't have enough health care workers and we don't have enough clinics and hospitals in Georgia," he said. "These are actually easy problems to solve, if

we can heal our divisions, come together and solve them." Ossoff is taking on incumbent Sen. David Perdue who, he said, has not put Georgians first with his choices. While Perdue is campaigning to expose what he calls the "liberal, socialist agenda" of Democrats, Ossoff said politicians need to stray from being so divisive. "Who's going to try to heal these terrible divisions that have been inflicted on the American people?" he asked. "That's a message that I think resonates everywhere in Georgia." Ossoff out-raised his Republican opponent in the last quarter, according to campaign finance reports, and his campaign is reporting about \$2.5 million cash-on-hand. After a problem-riddled primary election, Ossoff said he is "very concerned" about ballot access and will be watching the November election "very closely."

"Whether or not you intend to vote for me, I'm going to do everything in my power to protect your voting rights," he said. "We need to pass a new voting rights act in memory of Congressman John Lewis to ensure that no American has to face six-hour lines to vote, no American is wrongly purged from the rolls and no American's ballot is thrown out unjustly."

**U-R:** What are two of the biggest problems confronting Americans today and how do you plan to address them?

**JO:** First, we need to listen to medical experts to control this virus, shore up our economy with stronger support for small businesses and tax relief for working families, and unite behind an ambitious infrastructure program to jumpstart the economy and create jobs. And in an emergency like this, we need leaders who are honest with us about threats to our health.

While he was receiving private briefings on the true scope of the threat from COVID-19, Senator Perdue misled us and downplayed the threat, contradicting doctors and scientists. He told us this virus posed a "low" risk to our health and told us the impact on economic growth would be "little." Now over 200,000 Americans are dead and millions lost their jobs.

I will listen to scientists and medical experts and level with the American people about threats to our

health and our prosperity. Second, the outrageous cost of health insurance and medicine is a scandal. Few plans are available. Premiums are extremely expensive. And dealing with insurance companies is a nightmare.

I'll work to make quality health care a simple, affordable, and reassuring reality for all of us by cracking down on price gouging by drug and insurance companies, supporting Medicaid expansion, expanding the U.S. Public Health Service to hire more nurses and doctors, and investing in rural hospitals and health clinics.

**UR:** Do you agree with the way President Trump has handled the COVID-19 pandemic or disagree? Please elaborate either way.

**JO:** The federal government's response to this pandemic has been a catastrophic failure.

While they received private briefings in



Richard Dien Winfield (D)  
US Senate

**The Union-Recorder:** Do you support President Trump's nominee to the US Supreme Court to replace Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and if not, why? Please elaborate.

**Richard Dien Winfield:** I oppose the appointment of Amy Comey Barrett to the US Supreme Court for two reasons. On the one hand, there is reason to doubt her commitment to uphold the equal rights of women in general and LGBTQ individuals in particular, or to recognize how the Federal Government has a duty to enforce the social rights to a decent livelihood, to decent housing, to healthcare, to education at all levels, to balance work and family, to level the playing field between employees and employers, and to provide equal legal representation in both civil and criminal representation. On the other hand, there is reason to suspect that she upholds the false judicial approach of "originalism", which fails to properly understand how the constitution should be interpreted to most coherently uphold the realization of freedoms to which it is devoted.

**U-R:** Do you think Ginsburg's vacancy should be filled before or after the election?

**RDW:** The President and the Senate have the right to consider her appointment to the very last day of their term. Nonetheless, we must reform the US Supreme Court and all Federal courts so that no administration can have a lock on their direction that will persist for decades to come. We need to have limited terms for all Federal judges and staggered appointments so that our Federal Courts do not reflect the views of just one party at one moment in our history.

**U-R:** What are two of the biggest problems confronting Americans today and how do you plan to address them?

**RDW:** The two biggest problems confronting Americans are the continuing blockages of opportunity shackling our democracy and the climate change catastrophe that is advancing towards us. To overcome the persisting blockages of opportunities we must enact a Job Guarantee Social Rights agenda that involves: 1) a Federal Job Guarantee wiping out unemployment and poverty income by offering the jobless work serving our community at a fair wage starting at \$20/hr and keeping pace with inflation and national productivity gains, and extending equal income (\$41,600 per year) to those who are disabled or retired, 2) Medicare For All, which unlike Obamacare offers complete coverage to everyone of all physical, mental, dental, and long-term medical care, with complete freedom to use any health care provider, while cutting health-care costs in half by eliminating the bloated overhead of for profit health insurance and negotiating in strength with drug companies and health care providers, 3) leveling the playing field between employee and employer with automatic union elections in every enterprise with multiple employees and by filling half the seats of corporate boards with employees elected by their peers, 4) balancing work and family with paid parental leave, free public child and elder care, and \$900 monthly child allowances covering the costs of child rearing, 5) guaranteed decent housing with broadband, protected by a ban on evictions, foreclosures, and utility cutoffs and mandatory rescheduling of housing payments, 6) genuine reproductive freedom with abortions and contraception covered by Medicare for All and the economic security to have the children a parent wants thanks to guaranteed jobs at fair wages and the measures balancing work and family, 7) comprehensive immigration reform which jeopardizes no one's livelihood thanks to the Federal Job Guarantee and employee empowerment, and 8) Legal Care for All, which covers all personal legal expenses in civil and criminal matters. To mitigate the catastrophic damage of climate heating, we must enact a Green New Deal achieving 100% clean energy in the US by 2030, with guaranteed jobs for anyone in the fossil fuel industry that must be shut down, and push international efforts to achieve global 100% clean energy ASAP.

**U-R:** Do you agree with the way President Trump has handled the COVID-19 pandemic or disagree?

**RDW:** Trump is criminally negligent for completely mishandling the pandemic and leaving the US number one in pandemic infections, deaths, and economic distress. He failed to mobilize our federal resources to ramp up testing, PPE production, contact tracing, and monitored quarantining, while failing to keep all Americans solvent, with enough income to feed themselves, maintain a roof over their heads, have affordable child and elder care, have broadband to work and study remotely, and have access to the medical care they need now more

than ever. Other countries have successfully contained the pandemic by doing all the above and are now returning to a high degree of normalcy, while we face a contagion with no end in sight and mounting death tolls and widening destitution. Trump has been the worst personal example of responsible pandemic behavior and bears partial responsibility for the failure of much of our public to take necessary pandemic precautions.

**U-R:** Should Americans receive another stimulus check to help them through the current health crisis still ongoing in America?

**RDW:** We need more than another stimulus check. Instead, our government must guarantee every resident fair income equivalent to \$20/hr for as long as needed. Medicare should cover all uninsured health care expenses until we can enact Medicare for All as a permanent fixture of a just society that enforces the right to health care. Our government must end homelessness with FEMA supplying decent housing with broadband to every homeless person while we enforce a ban on evictions, foreclosures, and utility cutoffs. We must also institute free public child and elder care so that families can go back to work and know that their children and elders are properly cared for. These emergency measures should all be made permanent.

**U-R:** How do you feel about racial tensions and situations in our country today and what do you think needs to be done to make things better going forward?

**RDW:** Despite the true victories of the Civil Rights movement, which ended legal discrimination, racial disadvantage remains entrenched because we have failed to enforce our social rights and achieve the economic emancipation that ends the racial gap in income and wealth. We need to nullify that gap by eliminating unemployment and poverty income with a Federal Job Guarantee and fair wages and replacement income for the disabled and retirees, and then ensure access to decent housing, education at all levels, and legal representation in both civil and criminal cases no matter how much wealth an individual has. Police must be made fully accountable, with independent investigations of all police violence and complete transparency on police conduct records. We must stop allowing money to determine how one fares in our justice system. This requires Legal Care for All, and ending cash bail, plea bargaining, for profit prisons and probation services, and the proliferation of fees and fines that make our justice system one big toll road preying on the poor and making them and their families every more impoverished and disempowered. We must end the war on drugs by legalizing all personal use of drugs and giving an immediate amnesty to everyone serving time for drug possession. And the Federal Government must actively combat our number one domestic terrorist threat: white supremacist fascist groups. With these measures, we can tackle the unfinished business of the Civil Rights movement and overcome systemic racism once and for all.

## Warnock

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COVID-19 than any other country in the world. The Trump administration's handling of the pandemic has only served to exacerbate our slow recovery, the most critical failure being his refusal to listen to the medical experts and follow the science. Republican

officials have turned life saving preventative measures, such as wearing masks and social distancing, into partisan issues and failed American families. Rather than protecting the health of the American people, he has taken efforts to repeal ACA protections and stalled relief aid, at a time when people desperately needs these protections, as a matter of life and death.

**U-R:** Should Americans receive another stimulus check to help them through the current health crisis still ongoing in America? Please elaborate.

**RW:** Reverend Warnock supports additional relief support and funding for Americans. He believes that Congress' failure to pass another COVID-19 relief package before the election left millions of Americans out in the cold.

Georgia's workers are still facing high rates of unemployment, potential loss of healthcare as a result of unemployment, and evictions during a severe loss of income. He has also stated that forcing Georgians to choose between their health and safety, their right to vote, and the economy is a false choice. The people are the economy, and if we want to have a healthy economy the

people must be safe and healthy.

**U-R:** How do you feel about racial tensions and situations in our country today and what do you think needs to be done to make things better going forward?

**RW:** Reverend Warnock believes that people of color in this country have been struggling under a system of systemic racism for too long but is

hopeful that following the peaceful demonstrations across our country the American people are united to heal.

He proposes addressing inequality by reforming our criminal justice, health care and education systems, and building an economy that focuses on providing opportunities to Black Americans, people of color and other marginalized communities.

## Loeffler

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Second part to that question: And do you think Ginsburg's vacancy should be filled before or after the election? Again, please elaborate.

I was the first Senator in the nation to call for President Trump to fill the Supreme Court seat before the election, because it is his Constitutional right to do so. Now that Judge Barrett has been appointed, I look forward to voting for her confirmation.

**U-R:** What are two of the biggest problems confronting Americans today and how do you plan to address them?

**KL:** Our economy, law and order, and the

coronavirus pandemic are the top issues facing America. Every day our economy remains closed – even partially – we lose jobs, shutter businesses, and destroy entire communities. That's why we need to re-open our economy, get rid of disincentives that are keeping workers at home, and encourage new investment in our businesses and communities.

We've also got to address the lawlessness that has overtaken America's streets. Our businesses are being looted. Our communities are being destroyed. Innocent families and police officers are being targeted for violence. And Democrat mayors in these cities refuse to take decisive action to restore law and order or ensure public

safety.

Finally, we must continue to monitor the coronavirus pandemic and ensure the physical and financial health of every Georgia citizen – while remaining fiscally conscious. As a political outsider and conservative businesswoman, I am the only candidate in this race who has delivered results on each of these issues.

**U-R:** Do you agree with the way President Trump has handled the COVID-19 pandemic or disagree? Please elaborate either way.

**KL:** President Trump has struck a careful balance between protecting our public safety and preserving our rights as individuals, instead of enacting far-reaching mask

mandates. He also deserves tremendous credit for identifying China as the biggest threat to this nation's health - and acting immediately to close down our borders to the Chinese Communist Party.

**U-R:** Should Americans receive another stimulus check to help them through the current health crisis still ongoing in America? Please elaborate.

**KL:** Americans in need should receive assistance, but I'll never support Nancy Pelosi's \$3 trillion blue state bailout – which would funnel millions into poorly-run Democrat states and liberal pet projects while putting hardworking Georgians on the hook. Instead, I'm going to continue to advocate strongly for a relief bill that is targeted to

help those who need it the most.

**U-R:** How do you feel about racial tensions and situations in our country today and what do you think needs to be done to make things better going forward?

**KL:** Any time there is a loss of life, it's tragic—and each situation is unique.

I have been outspoken about the fact that the life of every African-American matters, and where racism exists—we must be aggressive and united in our efforts to root it out.

But the radical 'defund the police' movement that has swept the country—and the riots that have destroyed businesses and communities – are despicable. Because of this radical movement, officers

across this state are afraid to go to work. Businesses have been burned, and communities have turned into outright warzones.

Enough is enough—and that's why I spoke out so early on about The Black Lives Matter political organization, which wants to defund the police, abolish the nuclear family, and promote violence in our communities. It's also why I have worked so hard against this movement in the Senate – sponsoring legislation to defund cities that defund the police, crack down on violent rioters, and restore law and order to our communities.

I'll never stop fighting for our men and women in law enforcement – or against the Democrat-endorsed anarchy in our streets.

## Ossoff

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Washington on the true nature of this virus, President Trump and Senator Perdue lied to us about the real threat posed by COVID-19, downplayed it, and undermined doctors and scientists. Senator Perdue said the health risk was low and the impact on economic growth would be little. Meanwhile he was trading medical stocks and dumping his casino shares.

Now over 200,000 Americans have died and millions have lost

their jobs. This is one of the most disgraceful failures of government in American history.

**UR:** Should Americans receive another stimulus check to help them through the current health crisis still ongoing in America? Please elaborate.

**JO:** Yes.

The U.S. Senate must quickly pass another round of COVID-19 relief with stronger support for small businesses and tax relief for working families.

Then the Senate should begin work on a historic infrastructure and clean energy program to jumpstart

the economy, create good-paying jobs, and lay the groundwork for economic recovery.

Small businesses are struggling. Millions are out of work. Speed matters.

Fast additional relief must prioritize families and small businesses – instead of big banks and major corporations, who already get massive continuous support from the Federal Reserve.

Instead, with millions out of work, Senator Perdue fought against \$1,200 stimulus checks for workers and led the charge to cut unemployment insurance in the

middle of the pandemic.

Then he took an inexplicable month-long summer vacation – even though PPP small business loans expired, emergency unemployment insurance ran out, and schools were forced to re-open without critical federal help.

If the stock valuations of major investment banks had plummeted, Perdue would have jetted back to Washington overnight.

But when it's small businesses and ordinary families on the brink, he stays on vacation.

**UR:** How do you feel about racial tensions and situations in our

country today and what do you think needs to be done to make things better going forward?

**JO:** These cases of brutality targeting Black Americans are not "isolated incidents" like my opponent David Perdue says.

In the United States today, the fact is deep race and class disparities persist in policing, prosecution, and sentencing.

Racial profiling, arbitrary detention, brutality, and abuse in detention and incarceration are widespread. We need leaders willing to acknowledge and address that head-on.

We must strengthen due process, civil rights and civil liberties, and enforce the U.S. Constitution's 14th amendment guarantee of equal protection under the law for all – regardless of race or class.

That's why I will champion a new Civil Rights Act in the United States Senate.

The answer is reform, not defunding the police.

There must be accountability for brutality, racial profiling, race or class bias.

That's how we will rebuild trust between communities and law enforcement.

# GA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES DISTRICT 44 CANDIDATE Q&A



Republican candidate Danny Mathis did not respond to our Q&A request.



Mary Whipple-Lue (D)  
Ga. House of Representatives District 44

**The Union-Recorder:** What are two of the biggest problems confronting Americans today and how do you plan to address them?

**Mary Whipple-Lue:** The two biggest problems confronting Americans today are:

a) Racial Injustice/Education - There is inequality in America with all Races due to insensitivity We should focus on what unites us, not what divides us. Acknowledge and accept differences. Only through living, working and being educated together and setting common goals through community dialogue will this prejudice subside.

b) Healthcare - First and foremost is affordability - Experimental Evidence on the importance of healthcare show that Americans without health insurance are at a greater risk for a variety of illnesses and life threatening conditions and their lack of insurance has deadly consequences because they are less likely to receive preventive care for various conditions and illnesses such as cancer screenings, mental health, drug addictions etc.

**U-R:** Do you agree with the way President Trump has handled the COVID-19 pandemic or disagree?

**MWL:** I strongly disagree. At the onset of this Pandemic and because this is new, we were not given the information. Instead of the President giving his opinion of how we should handle the COVID-19 (Pandemic), he should have left in the hands of the doctors and scientists to give us the guidelines to follow. This virus continues to spread and at this time there is not a known cure. If so, it is not affordable. There needs to be a plan in place as we practice wearing the masks, sanitizing/washing our hands and social distancing.

**U-R:** Should Americans receive another stimulus check to help them through the current health crisis

still ongoing in America?

**MWL:** Yes. Because of the COVID-19 (Pandemic), Relief should be sent to all affected specifically, to those who have lost jobs or wages and because of this, so many lives and livelihoods have been lost due to no fault of their own, Big businesses, as well as, small businesses have gone under and will probably never recover.

**U-R:** How do you feel about racial tensions and situations in our country today and what do you think needs to be done to make things better going forward?

**MWL:** Racial tensions and situations in our country today are totally, out of control. More than 150 years after the 13th Amendment abolished slavery in the United States, most U.S. adults say the legacy of slavery continues to have an impact on the position of black people in American society today. Research show that most Americans say it's now more common for people to express racists or racially insensitive views. We need representation from the Head down to the community advocating for racial justice and teach about diversity and sensitivity at an early age. Let the dialogue begin, it has to start somewhere. Society should know that when God created the human race, he created All in His image and when mankind bleeds, the color of blood is one color Red; not Black or White and there is no Superior race. Therefore, positive action is required to respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity, and acknowledge that minorities enrich society though this diversity

## US REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT 10



# Hice, Johnson-Green face off in Georgia's 10th District race

From staff reports

Incumbent Jody Hice of Greensboro is vying for another term in the 10th U.S. Congressional seat. Hice has held the seat since 2014.

The 10th District of Georgia is located in the northeastern part of the state. The district includes the Baldwin, Barrow, Butts, Glascock, Greene, Hancock, Jasper, Jefferson, Johnson, Lincoln, McDuffie, Morgan, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Putnam, Taliaferro, Walton, Warren, Washington, and Wilkes counties. It also includes portions of Clarke, Columbia, Gwinnett, Henry, and Newton counties.

Prior to his election, Hice served as a pastor for 25 years, earning degrees from Asbury

College, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Luther Rice University and Seminary. He also worked as a radio host.

During his tenure in office, he has served on the Committee on Armed Services, the Committee on Natural Resources, and the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

Hice was born in Atlanta but grew up in Tucker, Ga. He graduated from Asbury College and holds a master's degree in ministry. He also previously worked as a conservative talk radio show host.

He is pro-life and a supporter of agricultural issues and an advocate for military veterans, particularly with regard to their health care and the transition back to civilian life.

"One of the most important services we must provide for our nation's veterans is access to quality care from the facilities built to serve them. The veterans in Georgia's 10th Congressional District have access to the VA Medical Centers in Dublin, Augusta, and Atlanta. Unfortunately, the VA has lost sight of its true mission - helping veterans - at facilities across the country,"

He also includes jobs and economic growth as primary agenda items, particularly job creation in Georgia, according to his website.

"We must pursue policies that will bring the American free enterprise system into the 21st century. Unfortunately, too often, burdensome federal regulations - from the EPA, the

Internal Revenue Service, or the Department of Labor - prevent the very economic growth that we hope to achieve," according to Hice's website.

Hice's challenger, Tabitha Johnson-Green, a democrat, also challenged Hice in the 10th District Congressional race in 2018. She is a nurse who hails from Washington County.

She holds a bachelor's degree from Georgia Southern University as well as degrees in nursing. She is a registered nurse and business owner.

According to her campaign website, Green is considers herself a longtime activist.

"I am a longtime activist and community leader in my home, Washington County, where I have been fighting to secure the rights and liberties that our

government has failed to protect. I am a nurse and business owner who has worked tirelessly to ensure that everyone in my community receives the health care they need and deserve. I am an advocate for our community and against injustice from the local to the federal level."

She lists increasing costs of health care, housing and education, as well as mass incarceration as focal issues of campaign.

"Without the fundamental tools for success, our neighbors, friends, and family slip through the cracks, falling into a cycle of poverty, crime, violence, physical and mental illness, and dependency."

Attempts to reach both Hice and Johnson-Green for interviews and Q&A responses were not returned.

**YOU DECIDE**  
**VOTE**  
**ON YOUR**  
**ELECTION**  
**DAY!**

Below the text are two circular icons: a blue donkey (Democratic Party) and a red elephant (Republican Party).