NAME: **Nikki Merritt**
PARTY: **Democratic**
SEEKING: **Senate District 9**

1.Why are you seeking your office?

I have spent my career serving the public, professionally as retired telecommunications union worker, and personally registering hundreds of voters in my community, building partnerships for voter education and outreach. My family has deep roots in the South, disenfranchised from voting, living through the terror and indignities of racial injustice. While much has changed in my lifetime, I want to make sure we live in a state with polices that reflect our diverse communities and protects the right of our most vulnerable. We need responsive state legislators who care about protecting working families, I am ready to deliver.

2. What do you expect to accomplish if elected?

My priorities are: Invest in quality affordable healthcare including full Medicaid expansion, fully funding public education giving teachers and students the resources for success, plus solutions for affordable post -secondary education, investing in statewide transportation fixes so families spend more time at home than on the road, bolster our economy to support small business and wage growth for working families, expand workers' rights, protect voting rights for fair elections, fight for reproductive freedom ensuring women control their own bodies, and nurturing a clean energy economy.

3. What distinguishes your candidacy?

I am not a career politician; state legislative seats are not lifetime appointments. As diversity and social perspectives evolve in our communities so should our legislature. Currently only 15 of the 56 state senate seats are held by women. Objective debate starts with a balanced legislative body. We need unique perspectives and new ideas. I am the relatable leadership, everyday working Mom, someone who understands pro worker policies, the value of investing in public schools, and social welfare. I am that candidate. I am someone who rarely gets a seat at the table, but I plan to legislate responsibility, with (100)….

4. Pick any one issue. Expand on how you will address it.

Expand workers rights and support working families by:
Setting minimum wages and other working standards above federal minimums.
Support a multiemployer wage board of workers, businesses and government, to

address working standards, and socio-economic shifts to bargain for a fair wage increase. Support living wage laws for government funded jobs, offering incentives for companies to use in state contracts and workers. Partner with worker organizations to reduce wage theft and support high quality training programs with worker organizations.

5. Suggest ways to jump-start the economy after COVID-19.

We need strong coordination from local, state, and federal government and private sector partners to ensure that relief and support is available now and for the entire duration of the crisis. I suggest the Government look at relief that can be used to help businesses and waive certain fees; for example, some communities are looking at waiving alcohol licensing fees for this year. Provide government incentives (taxes and credits) to ensure that employers rehire workers and reduce high unemployment. Stimulus investments such as infrastructure projects and supporting our healthcare infrastructure should we see a second or third wave of COVID-19.

6. Please give a 100 word summary on your background

I am a Georgia native, grew up in Austell GA, studied at the University of Georgia. I am an 18-year Gwinnett resident currently living in Grayson with my husband and three teens. I worked in telecommunications for 23 years proudly serving in labor Union CWA 3204 fighting for workers' rights and fair working conditions. Before deciding to run for office I volunteered for the nonprofit C.A.N.I, and the Gwinnett Democratic Party to personally register over hundreds of voters in my district 2018. Now as a C.A.N.I board member I help coordinate events for community engagement and empowerment throughout our community.