

2020 GwinnettForum candidate questionnaire

NAME: Keybo Taylor
PARTY: Democratic
SEEKING: Gwinnett County Sheriff

1. Why are you seeking your office?

With a county as diverse as Gwinnett, it is vital that we unify our civilian and corporate citizens by engaging every member, encouraging a healthy exchange of ideas, and creating strong civilian-police relationships. Gwinnett County is evolving, and our leadership structure should evolve, too. If we are to continue to progress as a County, we must adopt a innovative leadership models for law enforcement that acknowledge our growing demographics, are responsive to the day-to-day needs of our citizens, and provide for safety and security for all through real community engagement. Our Sheriff's Department must be citizen focused.

2. What do you expect to accomplish if elected?

Our law enforcement needs an upgrade that reflects extensive academic research on our criminal justice system. We must address the staggering numbers of non-violent offenders incarcerated for mental health and substance abuse. I propose creating immediate linkages to behavioral health services through public-private partnerships in surrounding community programs. I would also like to explore a crisis intervention unit within our department. We must also ensure our law enforcement reflects the communities we serve, by ensuring higher leadership and new recruits reflect our diversity. I will be a good steward of the county tax dollars, committing to reducing costly lawsuit liability.

3. What distinguishes your candidacy?

- Lifelong Gwinnett Resident: Grew up in Lawrenceville and attended Central Gwinnett High
- Extensive Law Enforcement Experience: Retired from the Gwinnett County Police Department after 26 years of service at the rank of Major
- Top Notch Education: Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from Mercer and Master's degree in Public Administration from Columbus State
- Extensive Training: Certified Crisis Intervention Training and graduate of the Georgia Command College
- Strong Community Support: Endorsed by over 20 Gwinnett Pastors and 6 current and former city officials. Also earned the support of former Governor Roy Barnes

- Longtime Football Coach: History (100).

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

I believe we must end the 287(g) program. The 287(g) program authorizes local Sheriff deputies to perform the functions of federal immigration agents. It has lost its focus on detaining violent felons and instead been used to detain non-citizens stopped for minor traffic offenses. The program has created a community culture of mistrust and fear as average Gwinnett residents are targeted. I would end our participation in the program, and I reject the premise that we cannot keep our communities safe from violent offenders without spending millions of dollars on a program that only six out of 159 counties have.

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

I would like to see the government start the conversation of providing more grant money for people to learn technical trades. It is the role of our legislators and Governor to really address the jump-start, and I look to their leadership. My role as Sheriff is to help ensure safety and disorder when that process begins. I therefore am focused on a few key hurdles. First, we must make sure that the virus is under control. Second, we must trust our medical community to ensure that a subsequent wave will not have the same effect on the economy.

6.Please give a 100 word summary on your background

I have left my mark on Gwinnett in my 26-year career in the Gwinnett law enforcement community. My 1995 promotion to the rank of Sergeant made me the first African American to ever be promoted to such a rank in Gwinnett history, and I retired as the highest ranking African American in the history of this department at the rank of Major. I have continued to strive to be a role model and mentor for many young officers of color in Gwinnett. Post-career, I have continued working in our community as a youth coaching football, always looking to give back.

