

2020 GwinnettForum candidate questionnaire

NAME: Matielyn Jones
PARTY: Democratic
SEEKING: House District 45

1. Why are you seeking your office?

I care about how people experience government, and I want to see more compassion in politics. I believe that service is the highest form of leadership and that our elected officials are the primary bridge between community needs and collective resources. It is important me that our leaders are willing to build on common ground and invest in the success of all Georgians, particularly poor, sick, systematically oppressed, and vulnerable populations.

2. What do you expect to accomplish if elected?

I would like to prioritize three policy areas: healthcare, housing, and education. I support expanding Medicaid for the uninsured and a public healthcare option that is free and accessible to all. I would like to implement housing-first solutions with comprehensive support services to facilitate a path to self-sufficiency for the unsheltered, and explore public-private partnerships to address long-term housing affordability across the state. I would like to elevate teacher voice in the development of public policy, offer Georgia Pre-K to all early learners, and provide supports to increase college graduation rates among students of color.

3. What distinguishes your candidacy?

I find the US Constitution intriguing, I've always wanted to run for office, and I hope more people will get involved in politics beyond voting. I've worked in healthcare, housing, education, and ministry throughout my career in people-centered, mission-driven roles where my primary responsibility is to ensure that others are set up for success. I value community organizing, collaboration, thoughtful analysis, and advocacy. I believe there is a heart to this work and as a State Senator, I will engage my constituents proactively, take the time to listen, learn, and work toward the common good.

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

The federal minimum wage is \$7.25 per hour and Georgia is one of the few states where the minimum wage is even lower than the federal minimum. We need to raise minimum wage to immediately, and I propose doing so in an incremental way to allow for businesses to adjust operationally and retain employees. While this does not address the need for a living wage, it would help to ensure that low-wage workers share in the benefits of overall economic growth.

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

The federal and state government can provide economic incentives to encourage spending and hiring, such as waiving or lowering sales and employer taxes for a set period of time.

6. Please give a 100 word summary on your background.

I'm originally from New Orleans, Louisiana and moved to Georgia my freshman year of high school. I graduated from Georgia State University with degrees in Political Science and Education. I taught Social Studies at Norcross High School before becoming a staffer for President Obama's 2008 Campaign in North Carolina. I moved to Virginia, then Ohio, before returning to Georgia a few years ago with my husband, Darryle, and our two sons. I currently work as a Talent and Learning Project Specialist for a global nonprofit. My faith and love for people inspire my service.