

NAME: Shelly Hutchinson
PARTY: Democratic
SEEKING: House, District 106

1. Why are you seeking your office?

I decided to run for this seat in 2018 because my district did not have representation who was in touch with our communities' values. I felt and my community agreed that I shared their more progressive values and represented the diverse minority population that continues to evolve. I continue to run because, in today's societal and political climate, everything is steeped in negativity. As a result, our state and country are regressing. As a business owner, mental health therapist, wife and mom who has launched two children through local public schools, I have to interpersonal skills and experience to continue (100).

2. What do you expect to accomplish if elected? After years of a mean spirited, hostile workplace, I expect to accomplish some degree of healing in the general assembly. If we can address what has happened to erode our citizenry's trust in government, we will be able to move forward as a state. If we can improve the working conditions in the capital, I am confident we will be able to enhance functioning and efficiency and make progress in education, environment, working conditions and pay, healthcare and crime reduction around the state.

3. What distinguishes your candidacy?

I am a clinical social worker who has provided in-home mental health services in the district for over 20 years. My business has grown. We have more than 60 employees, are financially solid, and continue to provide in-home services in HD 106.

I am active in the district AND in the capital. As a result, I've made critical relationships on both sides of the aisle. I am seen as welcoming to work with, and frequently sought-after for partnerships in bipartisan efforts. My relationships locally and statewide, subject matter expertise and experience distinguishes my candidacy over candidates in the race.

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

Mental Health is my passion and career, but Georgia is ranked close to last in the country in the quality of care we offer our citizens. I have introduced legislation to make meaningful changes in our mental health system. My status as "being on the wrong side of the aisle" stifles even the most brilliant bills. As time passes and relationships evolve, I have been able to pass bills with bipartisan effort. With additional time in office and developing more meaningful connections, I will be able to exact the change I have fought for during the last four years.

5. What are your ideas on curbing all the many area-wide shooting ?

As a clinical social worker, I know that people generally do not commit gun violence because they enjoy it but out of desperation. We are adjusting to a "new normal" as we continue to battle the

COVID pandemic, and everyone adjusts differently. The long-term solution is to address the causes of despair in communities.

For immediate improvements, recruiting law enforcement to take and keep jobs in their home communities, addressing safety conditions such as poor lighting, lack of surveillance equipment, and improving Georgia's failing penal system would promote safety. Including community members in planning will be vital to the process.

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

I was born in New Orleans, La. and moved to Gwinnett after receiving my bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from LSU. My first job was with Fulton County DFCS where my career in social services began.

I met my husband and we married in 1996. In 2000, I graduated from UGA with a master's in social work. In 2002, I founded The Social Empowerment Center, a mental health treatment center based in Lawrenceville.

I chaired Local Interagency Planning Teams for the Department of Behavioral Health. My children graduated from Brookwood H.S. and we remain proud residents of HD106.