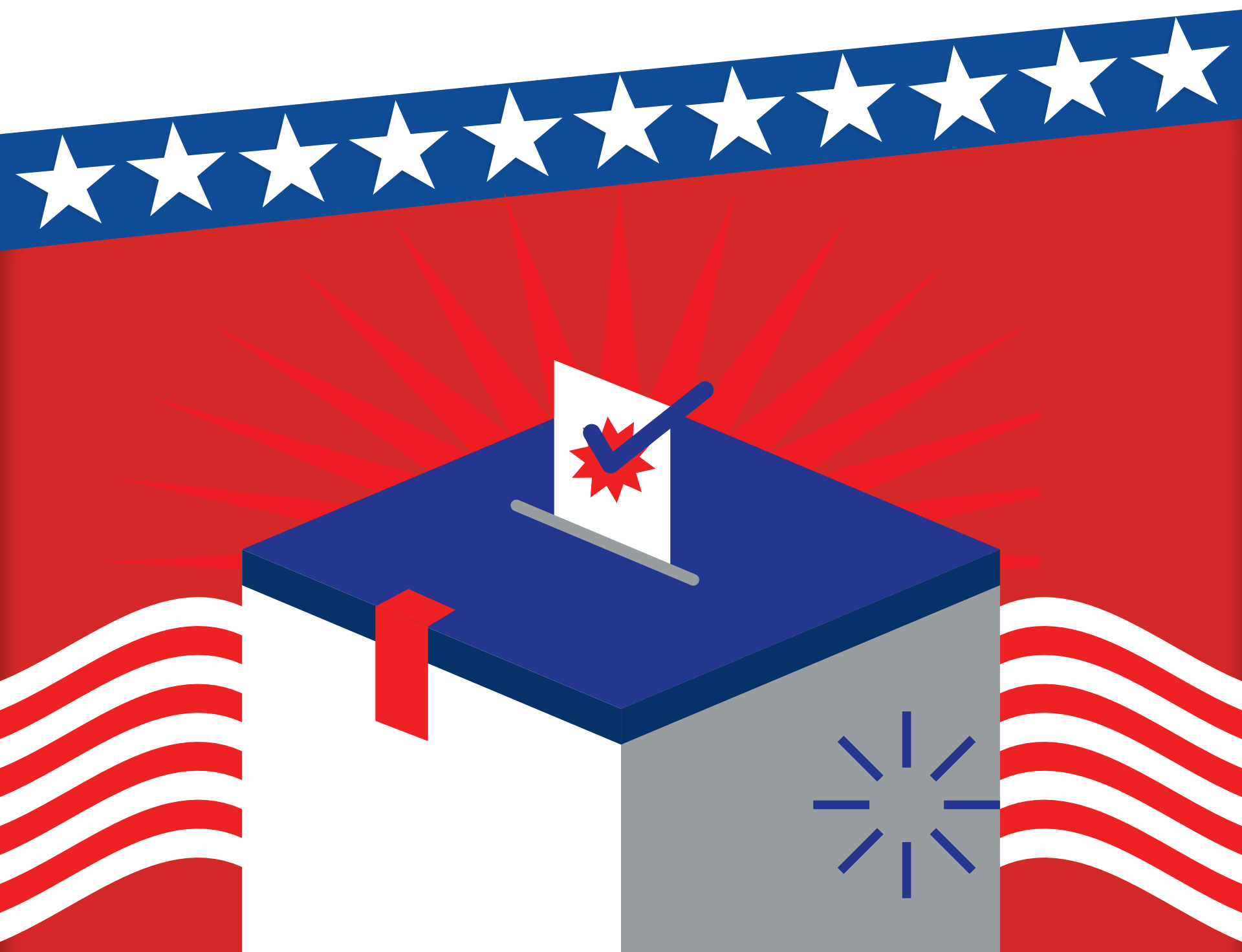


VOTE

2024

YOUR GUIDE TO THE GENERAL ELECTION



INSIDE: Voter precincts,
local and state candidate Q&As
and more information to
help you be an informed voter.

**What to know about
Sumter's Penny for
Progress Initiative**

**VOTER
FAQ**

VOTE

JIMMY DAVIS



FOR CITY COUNCIL WARD 4

WHO IS JIMMY DAVIS?

- A LIFELONG SUMTER NATIVE
- A DEDICATED LOCAL BUSINESS OWNER
- 2023 PHILIP L EDWARDS BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR

WHAT DOES JIMMY DAVIS SUPPORT?

- SUPPORTS PENNY FOR PROGRESS
- ADVOCATE FOR SHAW AFB
- TURNING IDEAS INTO ACTIONS



I'D BE HONORED TO EARN YOUR SUPPORT & VOTE!

jimmydavissc@gmail.com

Vote Jimmy Davis



MIKE JONES



**Businessman
Veteran
Tested Leader**

MIKE JONES

STATE SENATE ★ DISTRICT 35

Representing portions of Richland, Sumter, Kershaw and Lee County

To visit my full platform visit:
senatormikejones.com

VOTE 5th November
7AM-7PM

EARLY VOTING: Monday, Oct. 21st until Saturday, Nov. 2nd
8:30 to 6:00 pm
(Closed Sunday, Oct. 27th)



MIKE JONES

*Leadership You Can Count On
for South Carolina Senate Seat #35*

SenatorMikeJones.com



LEARN MORE ABOUT MIKE JONES



Paid for by Mike Jones



UNOPPOSED CANDIDATES



Here is a list of candidates you may see on your ballot who are not running opposed by someone in another party. Every race has the option for write-in candidates.

STATE
State House 50
 Will Wheeler (D)

State House 51
 David Weeks (D)

State House 67
 Murrell Smith (R)

CLARENDON COUNTY
Clerk of Court
 Shanita Brangman (D)

Coroner
 Jacqueline Blackwell (D)

Sheriff
 Tim Baxley (D)

LEE COUNTY
Clerk of Court
 Teresa Arledge Brown (D)

Coroner
 Larry J. Logan (D)

County Council, District 1
 R. Travis Windham (D)

County Council, District 2
 Ron Fountain (D)

County Council, District 5
 Jacqueline Josey (D)

Probate Judge
 Michael. A Davis (D)

School Board, District 1
 Mattie Moses Mack (D)

School Board, District 2
 Echo F. Belvin (D)

School Board, District 3
 Bernard Simon (D)

School Board, District 7
 Lucretia Mack (D)

Sheriff
 Daniel Simon (D)

SUMTER COUNTY
Auditor
 Lauretha A. McCants (D)

Clerk of Court
 James C. Campbell (D)

Coroner
 Robbie Baker (D)

City Council, Ward 2
 James B. Blassingame (NP)

City Council, Ward 6
 Gifford M. Shaw (NP)

County Council, District 3
 Jimmy Byrd (R)

County Treasurer
 Carolina B. Richardson (D)

School Board, District 7
 Gloria Rose Lee (NP)

Sheriff
 Anthony Dennis (D)

Soil and Water Commission
 Chris Sumpter II (NP)

Town Council, Pinewood
 Imad Musallam (NP)

Town Council, Pinewood
 Betty Spann-Reese (NP)

Penny for Progress capital sales tax

All Sumter County voters will see a referendum question on their ballots asking whether they support a Penny for Progress capital sales tax. If approved, a temporary 1% sales tax would fund 30 projects to support a projected \$124.9 million toward public safety, quality of life, infrastructure and economic development. It was first approved in 2008 and renewed in 2014 before being voted down in 2022.

According to PennyForProgress.com, one in every three people who pay the tax will be a non-resident, meaning visitors to Sumter will pay just as residents, rather than a property tax.

Where else is there a penny tax in South Carolina?
 Of South Carolina's 46 counties, 22 have a Capital Projects Sales Tax.

Why do we need to add another tax to pay for our road improvements? Why can't we use federal funds for these projects?

Federal funds are administered through the S.C. Department of Transportation. Counties only receive a small portion of the federal funds as most of the funds will be used by SCDOT for major interstates and other state-maintained infrastructure projects. In short, federal funds primarily prioritize SCDOT interstates and bridges, not county-maintained roads and other infrastructure.

What purchases are exempt from the penny tax?

Purchases that are exempt include but are not limited to: unprepared foods (such as some groceries), gasoline and prescriptions.

How long will the penny tax last?

If passed, the penny tax will begin on May 1, 2025, and last for no more than 8 years.

What was the total amount collected from the 2008 and 2014 penny tax?

In total, \$164,785,453 was collected from the penny tax within 16 years from 2008-2022. Of that amount, roughly \$54,379,199 came from non-residents traveling through Sumter.

Where can I learn more?
 Go to <https://www.pennyforprogress.com/> to read more about the specific projects proposed in 2024 and past projects completed.

THE BALLOT QUESTION
 Following is how the Penny for Progress ballot question will look on 2024 ballots:

Capital Projects (Penny) Sales Tax Referendum

Must a special One Percent Sales And Use Tax be imposed in Sumter County (the "County") for not more than eight (8) years, to begin May 1, 2025, to raise the amounts specified for the following purposes and in order to pay the costs (including rights-of-way acquisition and architectural, engineering, legal, administrative costs, and related fees) of the projects described below; pending the receipt of such sales and use tax, must the County also be authorized to issue and sell, either as a single issue or as several separate issues, General Obligation Bonds (the "Bonds") of the County in the aggregate principal amount not to exceed \$40,000,000.00 to be paid from the Sales And Use Tax to be received and to pledge The Sales And Use Tax to be received to the payment of the principal of and interest on the Bonds?

\$13,000,000 - Emergency Radios Pagers. New communications technology infrastructure to meet mandated digital radio and pager services, allowing county-coverage, and will replace obsolete radios and pagers.

\$14,000,000 - County Fire Trucks. Replace dated fire trucks throughout the County. Rural fire stations are Cherryvale, Bethel, Graham, Pinewood, Pleasant Grove, Minewood, Dabbs, Byrd's, Wedgefield, Rembert, Beech Creek, Concord, Horatio, Dubose, Oswego, Dalzell and Manning Road.

\$5,000,000 - City Fire Trucks. Purchase fire trucks to service City and local industries.

\$1,500,000 - Stadium Road EMS Station. A new 4,000 sq. ft. satellite facility to include a two-bay truck port. Located on Stadium Road on property behind the Fire Station.

\$1,000,000 - EMS Ambulances. To purchase four (4) new ambulances to replace the aged high mileage fleet for Coun-

ty-wide service area.
 \$2,000,000 - Industrial Infrastructure. To construct a "Pad Ready" industrial site approximately 200,000 sq. ft. with options to expand for industrial recruitment.

\$1,750,000 - Intersection Safety Improvements. Improve safety for all pedestrians at crosswalks/intersections near schools and neighborhoods.

\$2,500,000 - Bobby Richardson Park Improvements. To transform the park into a state-of-the-art Baseball Complex to include a practice facility, increased parking capacity, and two new entrances for better accessibility.

\$2,800,000 - Patriot Park Pickleball Courts. Expand Patriot Park to include fifteen (15) new Pickle Ball Courts along with adjacent parking to support this and other park activities.

\$2,750,000 - Downtown Building Improvements & Acquisitions. Downtown building renovations and purchases to drive economic development initiatives including utility upgrades at the Liberty Center.

\$21,000,000 - County Paving/Resurfacing. New paving road projects on 18.34 miles of dirt roads to ease public travel and emergency vehicle accessibility and to improve maintenance service on other County roads.

PAVING ROADS to include: Ambrose Drive, Bainbridge Road, Bunneau Street, Campbell Court, Coastal Dr., Gaymon Road, Heirs Drive, Hugh Ryan Road, Jaguar Run, James Quincy Court, James Quincy Road, Joe Billy, Loblolly Road, Lynx Lane, Mayrant Court, McLean Street, Millhouse Road, Mundy Street, Munn Street, N. Mayrant Cir., Northridge Drive, Old Stone Road, Ott Street, Pasture Road, Pratt Avenue, Rosehill Road, Rufus Drive, Scotts Branch, S. Mayrant Cir., Sparkleberry Rd., Statesburg Hills, Stukes Road, Tate Street, Teakwood Drive, Walters Avenue, and Woods Street.

Resurfacing road projects for 7.07 miles. RESURFACING ROADS to include: Meadowcroft Dr., Ashlynn Way, Caitlynn Dr., Tamarah Way, Kari Drive, Candlelite Court, Falling-water Lane, Sun Valley Dr., Christopher Ct., Malone Drive, Inabinet Drive, Wind Tree Dr., Steeplechase Drive, Soye Dr., Longbranch Drive, Soye Circle, Bend K Drive, Colts Run Ct., and Cliffwood Court.

\$3,000,000 - Stadium Road Fire Station. Rebuild the Stadium Road Fire Station.

\$1,000,000 - Fire Depart. Training Facility. To purchase and install a "Live Fire" training facility to accomplish general

firefighter training.
 \$6,000,000 - Federal State Road Construction (Hwy 378). Reconnect the communities and services north and south of the US-378 Bypass at Wesmark and Miller Roads to improve safety for drivers and pedestrians and enhance mobility for all travelers. Funds will be used to leverage State and Federal Transportation project.

\$10,000,000 - State Road Resurfacing Match. This project will be used to draw down additional funds from the State Department of Transportation to prioritize and expedite critical state road projects in Sumter County.

\$3,250,000 - Public Services Building. Renovate and expand Public Services Complex including infrastructure needed to aid in disaster response activities.

\$1,500,000 - Industrial Property Acquisition. Purchase additional property for industrial growth and economic development.

\$2,600,000 - Dillon Park Improvements. New restroom facilities to support athletic events including a restroom to support the 1-mile walking track. Replace six (6) outdated ballfields' lighting systems with a brighter, more energy efficient LED system. Renovate Crystal Lakes Golf Course Driving Range to support youth and senior golf participants.

\$4,000,000 - Community Park Playground Improvements. Enhance public parks with infrastructure that adds safety and security, as well as modern playground equipment accessible for all children to include Swan Lake, Birnie Center, Crosswell, Catchall-Shaw, Shiloh, Rafting Creek, and others.

\$1,000,000 - Central Carolina Facility Upgrade. Renovation of the Health Center building into classroom space for additional Health Sciences programs. Create walkways to connect the Health Center, Health Science building, and the Annex.

\$1,500,000 - Mayesville Main Street Revitalization. The commercial mixed-use development will revitalize the economy in Mayesville, create a gathering place with covered seating, eating areas, co-op grocery store, and an upscale farmers market.

\$1,200,000 - Pinewood Road Paving. New road paving on 1.11 miles of dirt roads to ease public travel and emergency vehicle accessibility and to improve maintenance service on other Sumter County roads. Roads to be paved in the downtown area: Railroad Ave., Nelson Street, and McBride Street.

\$9,500,000 - Dugan St. and Downtown Parking Facility. Con-

nect parking and access from Dugan to Bartlette (parallel to South Main Street). Also provide additional parking infrastructure (parking deck) to support downtown development including a downtown hotel and convention facility.

\$1,250,000 - Delaine Community Center. Construct a new community center for seniors and youth with approximately 4,000 sq. ft. to replace the current center located near the old Delaine School.

\$3,000,000 - South Sumter Gym. Reconstruction/expansion of the South Sumter Gym.

\$1,500,000 - Harvin Street Redesign and Streetscape. Improve downtown safety and increase on-street parking capacity.

\$300,000 - Pinewood Sidewalks. Expands the community sidewalk network, providing safe walking connections to neighborhoods, schools, parks, and commercial areas.

\$3,500,000 - Community Sidewalks / Activity Paths. Expand Sumter's sidewalks and activity path networks to allow easier access to workplaces, goods, services, and recreation to include Wise Dr., Rast St., Winn St., Mason Rd., South Harvin St., E. Charlotte Ave., Calhoun Dr., Boulevard Rd., S. Sumter St., Miller Rd., Hoyt St., Stadium Rd., N. Lafayette Dr., Fulton St., and connection between Shot Pouch Greenway and Palmetto Park.

\$1,000,000 - Airport Facility Upgrade. Expand portion of terminal, upgrade flooring and other cosmetic improvements. Extend the taxiway on the southwest portion of the tarmac to allow construction of up to four (4) new airplane hangars

\$2,500,000 - Community-wide Acquisition of Distressed Structures. To improve the community by acquiring and removing distressed structures that degrade neighborhoods and major corridors.

[TOTAL COST OF ALL CAPITAL PROJECTS: \$124,900,000.00.]
 The maximum amount of net proceeds of the Sales And Use Tax which may be applied to the payment of the principal of and interest on the County's General Obligation Bonds (the "Bonds") must not exceed \$46,000,000.00 (based upon expected Sales And Use Tax collections of \$124,900,000.00 less administrative expenses of collection). The not-to-exceed \$40,000,000.00 principal amount of Bonds to be issued shall be repaid from the net proceeds of the Sales And Use Tax which shall be pledged for the repayment of the Bonds.

YES []
 NO []



VOTER FAQ

When do I need to register to vote?

The deadline to register to vote in any election in South Carolina is 30 days prior to Election Day.

- The deadline to register to vote online or by fax or email is Sunday, Oct. 6.
- The deadline to register to vote in person is Friday, Oct. 4.
- The deadline to register by mail is Monday, Oct. 7 (must be postmarked by this date).

I've moved since the last time I voted, and I haven't updated my voter registration. Can I still vote?

- If you moved to...
- Another residence within your precinct, you can update your address at your polling place and vote a regular ballot.
 - A different precinct within your county, you are eligible vote failsafe (see below).
 - Another residence in another county within 30 days of the election, you are eligible to vote failsafe (see below).
 - Another residence in another county prior to the Oct. 6 registration deadline, you are not eligible to vote. State law requires you to be registered prior to the deadline to be eligible to vote.
 - South Carolina after the Oct. 6 registration deadline, you are not eligible to vote. State law requires you to be registered prior to the deadline to be eligible to vote.
- Two options for voting failsafe:
1. Vote at the polling place in your previous precinct using a failsafe provisional ballot. A failsafe provisional ballot contains only federal, statewide, countywide and municipality-wide offices.
 2. Go to the voter registration office in the county in which you currently

reside, change your address, and vote a regular ballot there.

Can I take my child with me to vote?

Yes. Minor children (under age 18) of a voter may accompany the voter in the voting booth.

What do I need to take with me to vote?

At your polling place, you will be asked to show one of the following photo IDs:

- Driver's license
- ID card issued by the S.C. Department of Motor Vehicles
- Voter registration card with photo
- Federal military ID
- U.S. passport

What if I don't have one of these photo IDs?

If you do not have one of these photo IDs, you can make your voting experience as fast and easy as possible by getting one before Election Day. If you are already registered to vote, you can go to your county voter registration and elections office, provide your date of birth and the last four digits of your Social Security number, and have your photo taken. You can do this even on Election Day. Free ID cards are also available from the Department of Motor Vehicles.

If you cannot get a photo ID, bring your non-photo voter registration card with you to the polling place. You can contact your county voter registration office if you need to replace your non-photo voter registration card. You may vote a provisional ballot after signing an affidavit stating you have a reasonable impediment to obtaining a photo ID. A reasonable impediment is any valid reason, beyond your control, which created an obstacle obtaining a photo ID. Some examples include: a disability or illness, a conflict with your work schedule, a lack of transportation, a lack of a birth certificate, family

responsibilities, a religious objection to being photographed and any other obstacle you find reasonable. This ballot will count unless someone proves to the county board of voter registration and elections that you are lying about your identity or having the listed impediment.

To vote under the reasonable impediment exception:

- Inform the poll managers that you do not have a photo ID and could not get one.
- Present your current, non-photo registration card.
- Sign the affidavit provided by the poll managers stating why you could not obtain a photo ID.
- Cast a provisional ballot that will be counted unless the county board of voter registration and elections has reason to believe your affidavit is false.

What happens if I forget to bring my photo ID when voting in person?

If you forget to bring your photo ID to your polling place, you may vote a provisional ballot that will count only if you show your photo ID to your county board of voter registration and elections office prior to certification of the election. Results are certified on the Friday after the general election (Nov. 8).

What hours will the polls be open on Election Day?

Polling places are open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Anyone in line at 7 p.m. will be allowed to vote.

Are there any laws about candidates posting their signs along the roadway?

Yes, there are several state laws addressing political signs on roadways, as well as county and municipal ordinances. See S.C. Code of Laws Sections 57-25-10, 57-25-140 and 7-25-210. Ultimately, it is the responsibility

of the entity that maintains the road (state, county or municipality) to enforce applicable sign laws.

Can candidates or their representatives take people to the polls to vote?

Yes. It is permissible for any person, even a candidate, to give a voter a ride as long as it is being done solely to help facilitate voting. However, no one can offer a voter anything of value in exchange for voting.

I saw a candidate/member of candidate's campaign at my polling place talking to voters. Can they do that?

Yes, but there are restrictions: Inside the polling place: No campaigning is allowed. Candidates may be inside the polling place and talk to voters as long as they are not campaigning, intimidating voters or interfering with the election process. Within 500 feet of an entrance to a polling place: Candidates and campaign staff may campaign as long as they are not intimidating voters or interfering with the election process. However, no campaign literature, signs, or posters are allowed. Candidates are allowed to wear a badge no larger than 4.25" x 4.25" featuring only the candidate's name and office sought. Candidates must remove their badge upon entering a polling place.

A candidate is definitely campaigning while in the polling place, or there is campaign literature within 500 feet of the entrance. What can I do?

Inform the poll clerk immediately. If the issue is not resolved, contact the county board of voter registration and elections. The county board will address the complaint.

When I left the polls, I was asked to participate in an "exit poll." Is this legal?

Exit polls are legal and participation is voluntary. They are not conducted by the State Election Commission or the county boards of voter registration and elections. Generally, polls may not be conducted inside the polling place, and we ask that voters not be approached before they have voted. If a voter feels threatened or intimidated by a pollster, it should be reported immediately to the precinct's poll clerk.

Where should I file a complaint about the election?

It's best to report any concerns to a poll manager or notify your county voter registration and elections office as soon as possible. To send a complaint to the SEC, visit the contact page on www.scVOTES.gov. Complaints regarding voting and elections should be addressed to your county board of voter registration and elections.

Source: S.C. Election Commission/SCVotes.gov



OUR VOICES

Matter



26th Amendment

Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States, who are eighteen years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of age.

Section 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.



 **racqdee**

"YOUTH EMPOWERING YOUTH ONE BLUE CARD AT A TIME"



S.C. Youth Voting Ambassador






ABSENTEE VOTING

On May 13, 2022, Gov. Henry McMaster signed into law legislation passed by the General Assembly that establishes early voting and makes significant changes to the absentee voting process. Absentee voting allows qualified voters to cast a ballot by mail prior to Election Day. In-person absentee voting is no longer authorized by law, as voters can now participate in early voting.

Who can vote absentee

- People with employment obligations that prevent them from voting during early voting hours for the duration of the early voting period, and during the hours the polls are open on Election Day.
- People attending a sick or physically disabled person which prevents them from voting during early voting hours for the duration of the early voting period, and during the hours the polls are open on Election Day.
- People confined to a jail or pretrial facility pending disposition of arrest or trial that prevents them from voting during early voting hours for the duration of the early voting period, and during the hours the polls are open on Election Day.
- People who will be absent from their county of residence during early voting hours for the duration of the early voting period,

- and during the hours the polls are open on Election Day.
- People with physical disabilities.
 - People 65 years of age or older.
 - Members of the armed forces and Merchant Marines of the United States, their spouses and dependents living with them
 - Persons admitted to a hospital as an emergency patient on the day of the election or within a four-day period before the election.

How to vote absentee

Voters must apply for an absentee ballot by completing and returning an absentee application to their county voter registration office by 5 p.m. on Oct. 25.

- Step 1:** Get your application
- You can submit your request for an application as early as Jan. 1 of the election year.
 - Call, visit or send your request by U.S. mail to your county voter registration office.
 - You must provide your name, date of birth and last four digits of your Social Security number.
 - You will be mailed an application.
- Step 2:** Complete, sign and return the application
- Return the application by U.S. mail or personal delivery to your county voter registration office as soon as possible.
 - The deadline to return your application is 5 p.m. on the 11th day prior to the election.
- Step 3:** Receive your absentee ballot in the mail
- Voters who have applied early will be mailed their absentee ballot approximately 30 days before the election.
- Step 4:** Vote and return the ballot
- Return your ballot to your county voter registration office or an early voting

- center either by mail or personal delivery.
- Must present photo ID when returning the ballot return envelope.
 - Acceptable photo IDs:
 - o Driver's license issued by a state within the United States
 - o Another form of identification containing a photograph issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles or its equivalent by a state within the United States
 - o Passport
 - o Military identification containing a photograph issued by the federal government
 - o South Carolina voter registration card containing a photograph of the voter.
 - Place the ballot in the "ballot here-in" envelope and place the "ballot here-in" envelope in the return envelope.
 - Be sure to sign the voter's oath and have your signature witnessed. Anyone age 18 or older can witness your signature. A notary is not necessary.
 - Ballots must be received by the county voter registration office by 7 p.m. on Election Day.
 - Ballots returned by mail should be mailed no later than one week prior to Election Day to help ensure timely delivery.

Requesting an application for another voter

Immediate family member

- Includes spouse, parent, child, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchild, mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law.
- May request the voter's application by calling or visiting your county voter registration office or sending the request via the U.S. Postal Service to your county voter registration

- office.
- Must provide the voter's name, date of birth and last four digits of voter's Social Security number.
 - Must provide the requestor's name, address, date of birth and relation to the voter.
 - Requestors are limited to five requests in addition to their own per election.

Authorized representative

- Must sign an oath that he meets the requirements of being an authorized representative by completing the authorized representative form.
- Must request application in person or by mail (may not request by phone).
- Must be a registered voter.
- Must have permission to act on behalf of a voter who is unable to go to the polls because of illness or disability resulting in his confinement in a hospital, sanatorium, nursing home or place of residence, or is unable because of a physical handicap to go to his polling place or because of a handicap is unable to vote at his polling place due to existing architectural barriers that deny him physical access to the polling place, voting booth, or voting apparatus or machinery.
- A candidate, a member of a candidate's paid campaign staff or a campaign volunteer may not serve as an authorized representative unless the person is a member of the voter's immediate family.
- Requestors are limited to five requests in addition to their own per election.

Returning an application for another voter

Immediate family members and authorized representatives must return the voter's application to the voter's county voter registration office in person (mailing NOT allowed).

Returning an absentee ballot for another voter

- Immediate family members and authorized representative**
- Voter and person returning the ballot must complete and sign the authorized returnee form.
 - Must return the ballot return envelope in person at the voter's county voter registration office or an early voting center in the voter's county of residence (mailing is NOT allowed).
 - Must present the authorized returnee form and photo ID when returning the ballot return envelope.
- Authorized representative**
- Acceptable photo IDs:
 - o Driver's license issued by a state within the United States
 - o Another form of identification containing a photograph issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles or its equivalent by a state within the United States
 - o Passport
 - o Military identification containing a photograph issued by the federal government
 - o South Carolina voter registration card containing a photograph of the voter.
 - Returnees are limited to five returns in addition to their own per election.
 - o Returning more than five ballots for other voters is now a felony crime punishable by up to a \$1,000 fine or five years in prison, or both.

Voters admitted to hospital as emergency patient

- Voters admitted to the hospital as an emergency patient on the day of the election or within four days of the election can have an immediate family member apply for and deliver a ballot to them.



- ✓ Emergency Radios / Pagers
- ✓ County Fire Trucks
- ✓ City Fire Trucks
- ✓ Stadium Road EMS Station
- ✓ EMS Ambulances
- ✓ Industrial Infrastructure
- ✓ Intersection Safety Improvements
- ✓ Bobby Richardson Park Improvements
- ✓ Patriot Park Pickleball Courts
- ✓ Downtown Building Improvements & Acquisitions
- ✓ County Paving/Resurfacing
- ✓ Stadium Road Fire Station
- ✓ Fire Depart. Training Facility
- ✓ Federal State Road Construction (Hwy 378)
- ✓ State Road Resurfacing Match
- ✓ Public Services Building
- ✓ Industrial Property Acquisition
- ✓ Dillon Park Improvements
- ✓ Community Park Playground Improvements
- ✓ Central Carolina Facility Upgrade
- ✓ Mayesville Main Street Revitalization
- ✓ Pinewood Road Paving
- ✓ Dugan St. and Downtown Parking Facility
- ✓ Delaine Community Center
- ✓ South Sumter Gym
- ✓ Harvin Street Redesign and Streetscape
- ✓ Pinewood Sidewalks
- ✓ Community Sidewalks / Activity Paths
- ✓ Airport Facility Upgrade
- ✓ Community-wide Acquisition of Distressed Structures



\$36 MILLION
OF THESE PROJECTS ARE ESSENTIAL.
Meaning whether or not the penny sales tax passes, the local government will still have to implement them. The only difference will be how it is paid.

33%
OF THE PENNY TAX IS PAID BY VISITORS TO SUMTER
But Sumter residents pay **100%** of local property tax

PROJECTS ON THIS BALLOT ARE ALREADY LEVERAGING AN ADDITIONAL
\$140 MILLION
from state and federal funds.

ONE-THIRD
of the projects on the 2024 ballot will help keep the cost of property insurance
DOWN

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, DISTRICT 6



JAMES E. (JIM) CLYBURN
DEMOCRAT
INCUMBENT

Tell readers about yourself, including your political experience and how long you've lived in your district.

The importance of public service was instilled in me from an early age. I was born in Sumter to a fundamentalist minister and a cosmetologist mother and have spent my entire life in the 6th Congressional. I am a graduate of South Carolina State College, where I met and married Emily England, to whom I was married for 58 years before she lost her 30-year battle with diabetes in 2019. We became the parents of three daughters and four grandchildren.

My journey has been shaped by a unique set of personal and professional blessings that inform my service. I entitled my memoirs "Blessed Experiences: Genitively Southern, Proudly Black." In the introduction, I wrote: "All of my experiences have not been pleasant, but I have considered all of them to be blessings."

I have authored, helped pass and secured funds for a plethora of critical legislative initiatives, including Sumter's North Main Street/Morris College and the "Overhead Bridge/Manning Avenue projects," the Wateree Regional Transportation system, the Matthew Perry Jr. United States Courthouse, the Affordable Care Act, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Inflation Reduction Act, the Safer Communities Act and the PACT Act for veterans.

I've secured hundreds of millions of dollars in funding for projects throughout the Sixth District that have begun to rebuild our outdated roads and bridges, connect rural communities to health care, bring clean drinking water to homes along the I-95 corridor and so much more.

Thanks to my "Affordable, Accessible Broadband for All" legislation, South Carolina will be able to build out faster, affordable, high-speed broadband for every household in the state.

What personal or professional experiences have best prepared you for a role in the U.S. House of Representatives?

I began my professional career as a public school teacher in Charleston. In 1971, I joined the administration of Gov. John C. West, becoming the first minority advisor to a South Carolina governor in our state's history. I subsequently served as South Carolina Human Affairs commissioner under four governors: two Democrats and

two Republicans. I was elected to Congress in 1992 and have served as co-president of my freshman class, chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, vice chair and chair of the Democratic Caucus and twice as majority whip and assistant Democratic leader.

My experiences teaching history in segregated schools taught me the importance of students learning about Lewis Latimer as well as Thomas Edison. I staunchly supported the \$35 per month insulin cap included in the Inflation Reduction Act because I saw the outrageous insulin bills of my late wife, a four-shot-a-day diabetic. I fought so hard for broadband funding to be included in the bi-infrastructure bill because I consulted with teachers throughout the district whose students were forced to do their homework in fast food parking lots. As chair of the COVID-19 Select Committee, I learned of the plight of rural residents who couldn't access telehealth because they lacked access to affordable broadband internet. I continue to fight to bring good-paying jobs to the district because I know what it means to work to provide for my family and loved ones.

What are your top three policy priorities if elected, and how do you plan to achieve them?

1. Closing the Charleston Loophole: Next year will mark 10 years since the heartbreaking tragedy at Mother Emanuel A.M.E. Church in Charleston. It's long past time we close the deadly loophole that allowed the white supremacist shooter to buy a gun when he never should have been allowed to do so. I will not give up on my bill to close the loophole.

2. Restoring the Affordable Connectivity Program: In today's connected world, broadband access is essential for work, school, health care and so much more. The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) lowered internet costs for eligible households, and at the time of the program's expiration, more than 23 million subscribers – one in six households – were enrolled. If reelected, I'll continue to work in Congress to restore this life-changing benefit to the more than 415,600 households in South Carolina who relied on it.

3. Addressing systemic poverty: I will continue my push to significantly expand my 10-20-30 funding formula that is currently in 19 sections of the federal budget. When we were crafting the 2009 Recovery Act, I created a plan that would direct at least 10% of appropriated funds to projects in counties where at least 20% of the population has lived beneath the federal poverty line for at least 30 years. As of today, it has been applied to 19 federal accounts. It requires no additional spending

from the federal government because the plan directs already-promised funding to the communities that need it most.

How do you propose to tackle income inequality and support economic growth in your district?

I will work to make childcare more available by expanding and making permanent the Child Tax Credit. I am an advocate of the affordable housing program that is being proposed by Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris. That program will make first-time homeownership more affordable and certainly more accessible. I will be sponsoring legislation to create such a program even if the vice president is not successful in her presidential bid. I will seek to expand the Rural Energy Savings Program and the 10-20-30 funding formula for persistent poverty communities.

We are only as strong as our weakest link, and we must ensure every community is included in our economic recovery. Enacting my 10-20-30 plan across the board will dismantle poverty at its root and help lift up the communities in SC-06 that are in greatest need. Thanks to investments made by the Biden-Harris Administration, in partnership with a Democratic Congress, we are starting to see some progress. Scout Motors in the Midlands will create 4,000 jobs and invest \$2 billion in South Carolina. This win is directly connected to the Biden-Harris Inflation Reduction Act.

What committees or areas of policy would you be particularly interested in working on if elected?

Since 2006, and until three months ago, I have been serving in leadership positions and, in keeping with tradition, on leave from the Appropriation Committee. I plan to return to the committee in the next Congress.

In addition to the priorities mentioned above, I will continue my efforts to lower costs, improve communities and make neighborhoods safer. I am supporting expanding the \$35 per month cap on insulin, now limited to seniors, to all insulin dependents. I also wish to expand coverage of the Affordable Care Act.

What strategies will you use to stay connected with the local community and

gather feedback from your constituents?

My constituents are at the heart of everything I do, and I meet with them and their advocates almost daily and occasionally hold town hall meetings. Their feedback is invaluable and central to my policy-making decisions and efforts. For example: The governor and I recently announced a \$175 million update to the I-95 bridge over Lake Marion in Santee.

When the State Department of Transportation requested my assistance in making the case for a federal grant, I had been made aware that the little town of Summerton had recently experienced a total failure of their water system. I requested that the bridge be designed to accommodate pipes that could carry water from Santee in Orangeburg County to Summerton. That made the project about more than asphalt and steel; it was also about safe drinking water and economic development.

Additionally, I'm proud of the work my office does to resolve constituent issues efficiently and effectively. From securing student loan debt relief to connecting South Carolinians with lifesaving health care to fighting on behalf of our local veterans, my primary focus is, and will always be, on serving my constituents who have entrusted me with this great responsibility.

Can you describe a time when you had to compromise on an issue to reach a solution? What was the outcome?

I'm a firm believer in finding common ground to move this country forward and view compromise as an essential element. I helped secure the votes for the \$1.2 trillion Bipartisan Infrastructure Law when I was house majority whip in 2021, personally making calls to lawmakers to negotiate the bill and earn their support. This was because I knew how the bill could transform the often-overlooked communities like those I represent. I was the lead sponsor of the "Accessible, Affordable Broadband for All" bill, which carried a price tag of \$95 billion.

Sen. Amy Klobuchar was carrying a similar bill in the Senate. The negotiating and compromising began. We ended up with only \$65 billion but, because of language in the "American Rescue Plan,"

cities and states can use that law to do as we have done in South Carolina to maximize their broadband efforts.

In South Carolina, we needed \$650 million to connect every residence and every business to the internet. We are planning to achieve that by the end of 2025 because we are getting "\$400 million from the Rescue Plan."

In the last three years, more than \$5 billion has been allocated to South Carolina to improve our drinking water, repair our roads and bridges, expand access to broadband and so much more. South Carolina had been trying to replace the Lake Marion bridges for years. Thanks to the Infrastructure Law, we are finally getting it done. That's what bipartisanship, compromise and prioritizing the American people can do.

Where do you see the country heading in the next decade, and how would your policies help shape that future?

After noting what he called a certain magic about America, Alexis de Tocqueville noted that, "The greatness of America lies not in being more enlightened than any other nation, but rather in her ability to repair her faults." America is a great country, in no need of being made great. Our challenge is to work - in unity - to make our greatness accessible and affordable for all our citizens. We can do that by repairing the faults that continue to plague our society. The policies I've advocated for and supported in Congress are contributing to that goal, and if given another term, I promise to continue delivering progress on behalf of the people of SC-06.

There is another quote attributed to de Tocqueville that some historians dispute that he ever said. Irrespective of whether he said it or not, I do believe that "America is great because its people are good, and if the people of America ever cease to be good, America will cease to be great."

I believe that is about where we are today as a nation, losing our basic goodness toward each other. And as a result, under threat of maintaining our greatness as a nation. Hopefully, e pluribus Unum will prevail, and our "pursuit of a more perfect Union" will continue.

SEE U.S. HOUSE, DISTRICT 6, PAGE D8

THE SUMTER ITEM STORE

Functional meets fabulous with these Sumter Item gift ideas.



ESSENTIALLY LOCAL. AUTHENTICALLY SUMTER.
www.TheItem.com/store



VOTE to Re-Elect Dwight Stewart

CHAIRMAN OF COUNTY COUNCIL



I am the current Chairman of County Council and have served since 2001.

Our County is poised for growth over the next 4 years and I ask our voters to help continue the progress.

VOTE NOVEMBER 5TH

U.S. HOUSE, DISTRICT 6 FROM PAGE D7



GREGG MARCEL DIXON
UNITED CITIZENS

Tell readers about yourself, including your political experience and how long you've lived in your district.

I am a public school teacher of 20 years. I have lived in the South Carolina Lowcountry, in Ridgeland, South Carolina, in Jasper County for my entire life. I have been in my current district since the beginning.

What personal or professional experiences have best prepared you for a role in the U.S. House of Representatives?

Teaching is an extremely difficult job. One of the reasons why it is so difficult is because teachers are expected to solve the issues that society has yet to solve. We have to deal with all of the social, political, economic and health issues that exist in society with nonexistent authority. In spite of those challenges, I have been able to have consistent, documented success with my students, the majority of whom hail from homes that have been impoverished for generations. However, those successes have been short lived because the same problems they encountered before coming to my door often waited for them outside my door once they left my class. It is having this front-row seat to society's ills and the impact they have on people that have given me an insight on what needs to be done to cure these ills.

What are your top three policy priorities if elected, and how do you plan to achieve them?

1.) Justice for groups historically wronged by the federal government - this nation spends trillions caring for illegal immigrants, on corporate bailouts, on the inflated military budget, on foreign aid and more. My plan is to divert those

funds to direct cash payments to people of the qualifying status such as Freedmen (the descendants of those emancipated by the American government); the people of East Palestine in Ohio; and more.

2.) Stopping mass immigration is another one of my policy priorities. At a minimum, the federal government spends \$451 billion a year on illegal immigration alone. That number quickly adds up to trillions of dollars throughout the years. While illegal immigrants get trillions of dollars from America, they send a minimum of \$30 billion back to their homelands! Illegal immigrants who accept jobs for lower pay results in the pay of all Americans being lowered. Illegal immigrants who rent or purchase available homes causes the price of the remaining homes to skyrocket. There has been a push by some Democrats to give illegal immigrants the right to vote even though they are not American citizens. Even out-of-control legal immigration poses similar issues. I plan to stop this by hiring more ICE agents to quickly apprehend and deport those in the nation illegally. These agents will also help with apprehending those who knowingly hire illegal immigrants and to help hold the politicians who incentivize illegal immigration. I will make it a requirement that anyone wanting to rent or own a home must show that they are in the nation legally. I will hire more immigration judges and public defenders so that immigration hearings can be quickly heard, and deportations can take place immediately. Lastly, I will push to withdraw America out of the United Nations Refugee Treaty Act that allows millions of foreigners to show up at America's borders and falsely claim to be seeking asylum. This allows them to enter our nation, and many never show up for their hearing. They simply remain in our nation. I will push to bring an end to this.

How do you propose to tackle income inequality and support economic growth in your district?

that would translate outside of the military in civilian pay structures? I would support economic growth by working to get rid of barriers to entry for those wanting to better themselves.

What committees or areas of policy would you be particularly interested in working on if elected?

Any that I may be entrusted with.

What strategies will you use to stay connected with the local community and gather feedback from your constituents?

My desire is to remain transparent with all people. I would work to have regular communications with the counties and cities and townships in S.C. District 6.

Can you describe a time when you had to compromise on an issue to reach a solution? What was the outcome?

As a father of four, I have to compromise on a daily basis. What I have learned is that we work best not through control but through agreement. When we have an agreement, there is much less arguing.

Where do you see the country heading in the next decade, and how would your policies help shape that future?

I see the people, waking up to what our country is, and arising to meet its challenges. My policies would make every effort to give back to the people what is already ours: our lives, our liberties and our property.

Duke Buckner (Republican) and Joseph Oddo (Alliance) did not submit responses.

The first thing I will do to tackle income inequality is to make vocational education free of charge. While many people pursue four-year degrees, there are many well-paying vocational jobs that go unfulfilled every single year. Helping more people enter those job markets and land those well-paying jobs will greatly help close the income inequality gap. Another approach is to tackle the issue of heirs property. Land owned by Freedmen, Black Americans who are the descendants of those emancipated by the American government, is most likely to be heirs property. This means that the land has no definite owner, and they are not able to gain equity from the land. Home ownership and land ownership are two of the primary ways that Americans began to acquire wealth. I will help families gain equity from their land.

Lastly, I will move to abolish the wage tax and the Social Security tax. Even though many people find this hard to believe, the truth of the matter is that the federal government does not rely on our tax dollars for spending. They can generate as much money as they need as long as they account for inflation. Money does not have to be printed but can be used as a digital asset. Debt is used to raise money, and it can be, and is, erased at any given moment as we have seen with trillions in the PPP Loans. Hence, Americans will immediately see \$600 to thousands of dollars more, per paycheck, once the federal wage tax and the Social Security tax are canceled. This will immediately bolster the financial standing of many in my district,

which has among the highest percentage of minimum wage earners in America. Lastly, I will embark on mass deportations that will also include holding the corporations that hire illegal immigrants accountable and the politicians that incentivize illegal immigration. This will free up a large swath of homes that are currently being rented or otherwise occupied by illegal immigrants. This will increase the number of available homes, and it will bring down the prices of homes due to increased competition. This will force corporations to pay Americans a fair wage.

What committees or areas of policy would you be particularly interested in working on if elected?

I would like to work on the Ways and Means Committee, Education and the Workforce, and Rules.

What strategies will you use to stay connected with the local community and gather feedback from your constituents?

I will host a number of town halls in person. However, I do believe there is value in social media and in virtual teleconferencing. Hence, I will host listening sessions on Twitter via Twitter Spaces and host virtual town halls via Zoom and other platforms. I will also use more traditional methods such as making my office number available and email.

Can you describe a time when you had to compromise on an issue to reach a solution? What was the outcome?

My original slogan was "Repair Black America To Fix America." I felt it would show that we are all Americans, and if there is even one group of America that is not doing well, then that means none of us were doing well. However, that caused some people to feel that my policies were only for Black Americans (Freedmen). However, I wanted to show Black Americans (Freedmen), who have long been neglected by the Democrats for over 60 years, that they would be heard by me. It soon became clear, though, that I had to come up with a slogan that would make it clear that my platform would be beneficial for all people. Hence, I changed my platform's slogan to "Justice For All Or Justice For None." This conveyed the same message. If any of us are not being treated fairly, then none of us are being treated fairly. As a result, many, many more people became receptive to my message.

Where do you see the country heading in the next decade, and how would your policies help shape that future?

I see the country headed to one where groups that have historically been denied justice finally get that justice since Americans at large will see how one group being treated unfairly hurts all of us. My policies will help to shape that future since they clearly highlight the neglect that particular groups of Americans have faced, they show how it has hurt us all, and they lay out policies to address the historical neglect.



MICHAEL SIMPSON
LIBERTARIAN

Tell readers about yourself, including your political experience and how long you've lived in your district.

I was born and raised in rural Illinois, earning a BS in Business and Accounting from Illinois College in 1993. In 1997, I joined the Navy, and moving was my new life: Florida 1997, Virginia 1999, Japan 2000, Virginia 2003, California 2008, Virginia 2011, Japan 2014, Portugal 2016, Germany 2019 and retiring to South Carolina in 2022.

What personal or professional experiences have best prepared you for a role in the U.S. House of Representatives?

Does anything really prepare anyone for a role in the U.S. House of Representatives? The only real answer I have is my life has prepared me for it.

What are your top three policy priorities if elected, and how do you plan to achieve them?

My top three policy priorities are 1.) consumer health, 2.) a declaration of peace, and 3.) fighting against legal plunder. Even if I am not elected, these are three areas in my life I will still work toward achieving. My plan is to work on abolishing the federal income tax.

How do you propose to tackle income inequality and support economic growth in your district?

From being in the Navy, or even the military in general, income inequality is not something I am familiar with because we had income equality. But I don't know how

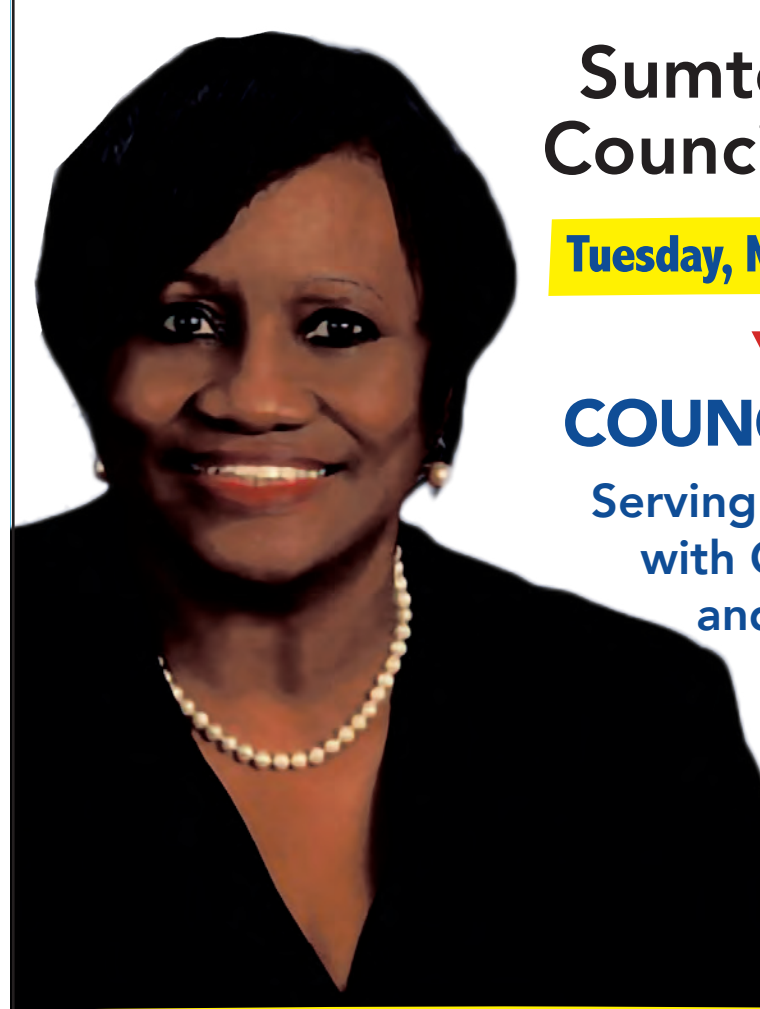
SUMTER SCHOOL BOARD
Area 9
your **VOTE** counts
11-05-2024



Re-Elect **Bonnie Disney**

KEEP* BONNIE DISNEY
*** Knowledgeable Experienced Enthusiastic Professional**
Paid for by Campaign for Bonnie Disney

RE-ELECT Vivian Fleming-McGhaney



Sumter County Council District 5

Tuesday, November 5, 2024

YOUR COUNCILWOMAN
Serving **ALL** of Sumter with **Commitment and Integrity**

Paid for by campaign of Vivian Fleming-McGhaney

Ready for More Progress Together!

"Coming together is the beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success."
—Henry Ford

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, DISTRICT 5



RALPH NORMAN
REPUBLICAN
INCUMBENT

Tell readers about yourself, including your political experience and how long you've lived in your district.

I'm a life-long resident of South Carolina. After graduating from Presbyterian College in 1975, I spent my private-sector career in real estate and construction. Later as a public servant, I spent a total of 11 years in the South Carolina Statehouse before being elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 2017. In both Columbia and Washington, I've earned a reputation as a strong, pro-family conservative who values fiscal responsibility and individual liberty.

I've been happily married to my wife, Elaine, for over 45 years. Together, we have four married adult children and 17 grandchildren.

What personal or professional experiences have best prepared you for a role in the U.S. House of Representatives? ?

I have served South Carolina's 5th congressional district in the U.S. House of Representatives since 2017. Before then, I served in the South Carolina House of Representatives for approximately 11 years, from 2004 until 2006

and again from 2008 until being elected to the U.S. Congress in 2017.

With respect to my professional experience, I spent over 40 years running and growing a small real estate business. My private-sector expertise is in residential construction, commercial development, brokerage, infrastructure and finance.

What are your top three policy priorities if elected, and how do you plan to achieve them?

Let's keep in mind I'm running for federal office, so these are federal priorities. Too many citizens turn to Washington for help that's best provided closer to home. There are a significant number of important issues which are not within the purview of the federal government, but instead are the exclusive responsibility of our state and local lawmakers.

First on the federal level, we must significantly reduce runaway, out-of-control federal spending in order to balance the budget and pay down our crippling federal debt. This is not a problem we can tax our way out of, and it is not hyperbole to say our nation is heading for financial ruin without drastic spending reductions.

Second, but equally important, secure the border. We can start by undoing all of Joe Biden's executive actions on the border which encouraged and facilitated this massive influx of illegal immigrants into our country over the last four years. As a first order of business, for example, we ought to simply restart new border wall

construction which the Biden/Harris administration halted the day they took office.

And third, our foreign policy is now a train wreck. Under this administration, we've witnessed Joe Biden's horribly botched withdrawal from Afghanistan, Russia has invaded Ukraine, and China is now preparing to advance on Taiwan. Our closest and most important ally in the Middle East, Israel, was viciously attacked last year, and now we're hearing Kamala Harris sending mixed signals on what should be our unwavering support. While I'm strongly opposed to being involved in endless wars that don't affect our people, there's no question the world is a more peaceful place when America is strong on the international stage. Sadly, we have fallen off that stage under the Biden/Harris administration.

How do you propose to tackle income inequality and support economic growth in your district?

Let me be clear: It is not the government's job to "rob Peter to pay Paul." Income redistribution is an immoral way to deal with income inequality. Sadly, far too many people on the other side of the aisle don't understand this. That includes my opponent who, on her website, is in favor of things like reparations for slavery and transferring of student loan debt to taxpayers. I believe ideas like this are divisive and intellectually bankrupt.

Instead, the federal government

can help income inequality by simply promoting policies that help businesses and the economy grow; things like lower taxes, eliminating needless regulations, getting our federal spending under control and rolling back Biden-era legislation that has fueled rampant inflation over the last four years. When the economy does well, able-bodied Americans who are willing to work also do well.

What committees or areas of policy would you be particularly interested in working on if elected?

Budget and infrastructure, which are my areas of professional and political expertise.

What strategies will you use to stay connected with the local community and gather feedback from your constituents?

I'll use strategies similar to those I've used since first being elected to Congress in 2017. This includes countless face-to-face meetings with constituent groups, individual citizens and businesses across the congressional district. Not to mention a highly active communications and correspondence effort from my congressional office. To look at my calendar is to see wall-to-wall interaction with the local community, and that will not change if I'm reelected.

Can you describe a time when you had to compromise on an issue to reach a solution? What was the outcome?

Too often in Washington,

D.C., the word "compromise" means giving away the farm with nothing in return, but only if you're a Republican. I reject that wholeheartedly. Compromise is a give and take.

As many will remember, I made national headlines by being only one of a handful of Republicans who initially opposed Kevin McCarthy as Speaker of the House in 2022 because I was unconvinced he was willing to take the necessary steps to stop dangerous liberal efforts in Congress. I was ultimately willing to compromise and offer McCarthy my vote, but only after gaining firm guarantees from him that conservatives would have strong positions in the House's legislative process.

Where do you see the country heading in the next decade, and how would your policies help shape that future?

This depends entirely on how the American public votes in this election. We have a choice to vote Republican and support law and order, fiscal responsibility, border security and pro-growth policies that can strengthen our nation for generations to come. Or we can choose to follow Kamala Harris, whose party and policies have led to rampant inflation, massive levels of illegal immigration, horrible foreign policy blunders and a host of other problems. The choice ought to be clear this November.

Evangeline Hundley (Democrat) did not submit responses.

STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, DISTRICT 64



FAWN PEDALINO
REPUBLICAN
INCUMBENT

Tell readers about yourself, including your political experience and how long you've lived in your district.

I have lived in District 64 since 2010, deeply rooting myself in our community both personally and professionally. During this first term as District 64's representative, I focused on learning as much as I could from my respected colleagues in the House and listening closely to the needs and desires of my constituents. I made it a priority to address your requests and concerns, ensuring that your voices were heard and reflected in the legislative process. As I move forward, I remain committed to working diligently for our district, drawing on my diverse experiences and deep-rooted connection to our community to advocate for meaningful and effective solutions.

What personal or professional experiences have best prepared you for a role in the South Carolina Legislature?

Before entering the Legislature, I worked as an EMT in the 911 system. This role honed my skills in quick decision-making, crisis management and empathetic communication — skills that are invaluable in legislative work. My time as an EMT taught me the importance of serving others and responding effectively under pressure, which I now apply to my role as a representative. In addition to my emergency medical background, I have been actively involved in the local community as a small business owner in Manning and Sumter, as well as a Realtor.

These experiences have provided me with a practical understanding of economic and community issues, from the challenges faced by small businesses to the needs of home buyers and sellers. This insight helps me advocate more effectively for our district. As a mother of two girls, I am deeply motivated by a desire to create a better future for our families and children. Balancing the demands of motherhood with my professional responsibilities has strengthened my ability to manage multiple priorities and remain focused on what truly matters for our community.

What are your top three policy priorities if elected, and how do you plan to achieve them?

During my first term, I tackled several critical issues, notably securing our school district's financial stability through a comprehensive audit by the Inspector General. This audit exposed issues such as inadequate coach training, financial discrepancies and improper payments by school board members. The findings prompted necessary corrective actions, including financial restitution and enhanced oversight. Additionally, I collaborated with fellow legislators to advance bills aimed at protecting our children from online predators and implementing security measures for inappropriate websites and social media platforms. I also supported teacher and bus driver pay increases as well as law enforcement raises.

For my next term, my priorities include:

Enhancing education and school safety: Building on the progress from my first term, I am dedicated to further improving education and ensuring the safety of our students. Key initiatives will focus on bolstering school safety measures and creating secure, supportive learning environments. I am committed to increasing support for teachers and ensuring that all school staff are well-prepared to provide high-quality education.

Plan to achieve: I will advocate for increased funding for school safety programs and teacher pay, continuing the efforts from the past two years. I will work with education experts and stakeholders to craft comprehensive policies addressing both safety and educational needs. Moreover, I will ensure that audit findings, like those from the recent Inspector General review, are addressed promptly and that preventative measures are put in place.

Economic development and support for small businesses: As a small business owner, I understand the challenges local businesses face. Supporting economic development and providing resources for small business growth are top priorities.

Plan to achieve: I will pursue legislation offering tax incentives, reducing regulatory burdens and improving access to capital. I will also support programs that provide training and resources to help small businesses overcome challenges and expand their operations.

Lowering taxes and addressing inflation: With inflation affecting many South Carolinians, it's crucial to alleviate financial pressures

through tax relief.

Plan to achieve: I will advocate for tax relief measures to ease the burden on individuals and businesses, including reductions in personal income and property taxes. I will work to identify and cut unnecessary government expenditures to ensure that tax reductions are both sustainable and effective, helping to support economic stability across the state.

How would you approach the state's health care challenges, particularly in relation to rural health services?

Optimizing rural health services: Enhancing health care access in rural areas like Clarendon and Sumter counties is essential due to challenges such as limited facilities and provider shortages. Recently, we removed the Certificate of Need (CON) requirement to increase flexibility in establishing and expanding health care services. While healthy competition among providers can reduce costs and improve quality, it's crucial to ensure that rural areas are adequately served. To address this, we have created a committee dedicated to evaluating the impact on rural communities, monitoring access and ensuring service quality. I will advocate for targeted investments in rural health care infrastructure and support initiatives to attract and retain health care professionals in these areas.

Expanding telehealth and broadband access: Telehealth is a crucial tool for improving health care access, particularly for those in rural areas who have difficulty physically reaching a doctor's office. The effectiveness of telehealth, however, depends on reliable broadband access. This year, we passed legislation to enhance telehealth accessibility, allowing residents to receive treatments, consultations and prescription refills from home. To support this, we have also focused on expanding broadband access in rural communities to ensure connectivity for effective telehealth use. Our goal is to make broadband affordable and widely available, enhancing telehealth services for all residents. I will continue to push for further investments in telehealth technology and broadband infrastructure.

My approach includes optimizing rural health services through policy changes, promoting competition and expanding telehealth and broadband access. By focusing on these areas, we aim to improve health care delivery and accessibility for all South Carolinians, especially those in underserved rural areas.

What is your stance on education funding and reform in South Carolina, and how do you propose to improve the state's education system?

I believe education funding must be efficient, effective and focused on delivering high-quality outcomes for students. It is crucial that taxpayer dollars are spent wisely, with educational reforms fostering accountability, local control and prioritizing the needs of students and families.

Prioritize efficient use of funding:

Ensuring every dollar allocated to education improves student outcomes is essential. We must scrutinize spending and focus on high-return investments.

Plan to achieve: I will advocate for a comprehensive review of education spending to identify areas for increased efficiency. This includes reducing administrative overhead and directing resources toward classroom instruction and student support. I will also support performance-based funding models that reward schools and teachers for achieving measurable improvements in student performance.

Promote school choice and parental involvement:

School choice empowers parents and fosters competition, which can drive quality improvements.

Plan to achieve: I will support policies that expand school choice, such as charter schools, private school vouchers and education savings accounts. By increasing options for parents, we create a competitive educational landscape that encourages innovation. I will also advocate for greater parental involvement, recognizing that parents are crucial to their children's academic success.

Support local control and accountability:

Local control allows communities to tailor education policies to their needs, and accountability is vital for maintaining high standards.

Plan to achieve: I will work to ensure local school boards have decision-making authority while supporting transparency and accountability measures. This includes clear standards for assessing school performance and consequences for underperformance.

Encourage reforms:

Education reform should emphasize traditional academic standards and reduce bureaucracy.

Plan to achieve: I will advocate for reforms that focus on core academic subjects and traditional values, minimizing unnecessary regulations. This includes supporting initiatives that reinforce

reading, writing and math and promoting character education.

In summary, my approach to education reform emphasizes efficient use of funds, expanding school choice, supporting local control and upholding traditional academic values to benefit all students in South Carolina.

What committees or areas of policy would you be particularly interested in working on if elected?

As your current representative, I have served on the 3M Committee, focusing on military, municipal and medical issues. It has been a pleasure working on this committee, and I am committed to continuing to advocate for policies that support our military personnel, enhance municipal governance and improve medical services in South Carolina. My time on the 3M Committee has allowed me to tackle critical issues affecting our military, local governments and health care systems. I am dedicated to ensuring that our military members receive the necessary support, municipalities have the resources to effectively address community needs and our medical field remains robust and responsive to evolving challenges. I have also been selected to serve on the Child Death Advisory Committee. My work on that committee has been both challenging and rewarding. Focusing on child safety and preventing child deaths is a critical priority for me. I am committed to continuing this important work to protect and improve the lives of children across South Carolina. I am enthusiastic about leveraging my experience from these committees to advance policies that benefit our military, municipalities, medical field and child safety, while also being open to new opportunities if reelected to serve on different boards in the House.

What strategies will you use to stay connected with the local community and gather feedback from your constituents?

I ensure that my contact information is readily available to all constituents. My phone number, email address and website are prominently listed on official communications, my campaign materials and online platforms. This makes it easy for people to reach out to me with their concerns, ideas or feedback. Over my first term as District 64's representative, I regularly engaged with the community

STATE HOUSE, DISTRICT 64 FROM PAGE D9

through various channels, including newsletters, social media updates, public town halls and the newspaper. This helps keep constituents informed about ongoing legislative activities and provides them with opportunities to voice their opinions. I take pride in following up with constituents who reach out to me. Even if I am unable to address their issue directly through state resources, I ensure they receive a response and am transparent about the limitations. I believe that maintaining open lines of communication and providing updates on their inquiries fosters trust and demonstrates my commitment to their concerns.

Can you describe a time when you had to compromise on an issue to reach a solution? What was the outcome?

During my first term as a

state House representative, one of the significant challenges I encountered was trying to reach a compromise with District 36's senator regarding the school district lines. Despite having different views on the proposed maps, I recognized the importance of finding a solution that would best serve the needs of our community. Understanding that this issue was critical for the future governance of our school districts, I was committed to working collaboratively to achieve a resolution. The successful compromise allowed us to finalize the district lines in time for the upcoming elections. As a result, our community will transition from an appointed to an elected school board, enhancing local representation and accountability in our educational system.

Where do you see the country heading in the next decade, and how would your policies help shape that future?

While I may have limited influence over the broader trajectory of the nation, as I am running for reelection of a Statehouse seat, I am committed to ensuring that South Carolina remains resilient and well-positioned for the future. The direction of our country over the next decade will likely be shaped by complex challenges, including economic fluctuations, shifts in federal policies and evolving social dynamics. My role is to safeguard our state's interests and advocate for policies that will strengthen South Carolina's position.

One key area where I can make an impact is by pushing back against federal overreach that may not align with our state's needs or values. I will work to protect South

Carolina from federal policies that could undermine our local priorities or economic stability. This includes advocating for state sovereignty and ensuring that federal regulations do not impose undue burdens on our residents or businesses.

How my policies will help shape our state's future:

Economic development: My focus on supporting local businesses, fostering economic development and advocating for tax relief will help create a thriving business environment. By reducing regulatory burdens and encouraging innovation, we can ensure that South Carolina remains competitive and economically robust, regardless of national trends.

Education and school safety: Investing in education and enhancing school safety are crucial for preparing future generations

to thrive. By prioritizing efficient use of education funds, promoting school choice and improving safety measures, we are equipping our students to succeed and ensuring that they are prepared for the challenges ahead.

Health care access: Expanding access to health care, particularly in rural areas, and improving telehealth services will enhance our state's health care system, ensuring that all South Carolinians receive the care they need, irrespective of broader national issues.

In summary, while national trends will shape the future, my policies are designed to fortify South Carolina's economic stability, educational excellence and health care accessibility. By focusing on these areas, I aim to ensure that our state not only adapts to future challenges, but also thrives in an evolving landscape.



QUADRI BELL
DEMOCRAT

provides me with the opportunity to help college students achieve the dream of attending college. I have federal, state and local government experience.

What are your top three policy priorities if elected, and how do you plan to achieve them?

My top three policy priorities are health care access, educational opportunities and jobs. I plan to sponsor or co-sponsor legislation to expand Medicaid in South Carolina. This legislation would make our state healthier and give our economy a boost. South Carolina is one of the few states left that has not approved the expansion. I plan to be a staunch advocate for this if elected.

My next policy priority will be education. My education agenda stems from my experience as a S.C. House Education Advisory Committee member back in 2016. This committee was designed to help propose changes to improve the public education system in South Carolina. We found that the educational issues were centered on funding for rural schools, teacher pay, large class sizes and student performance. There is no easy fix to our education system. However, the state Legislature must make tackling the problems plaguing our public education system a top priority. My third policy priority will be jobs. Creating good-paying jobs has to be a top priority for any legislator. In order to attract jobs and development to our rural communities, we have to continue to improve our infrastructure and invest in our

education system to produce a workforce ready for the jobs of the future. To achieve these goals, I will work with my colleagues to sponsor or co-sponsor legislation in relation to these three areas.

How would you approach the state's health care challenges, particularly in relation to rural health services?

There are several health care challenges facing rural communities. Some of the challenges are as follows: access and affordability, the closure of rural hospitals across our state in the last 10 to 15 years, and too many are still uninsured. Expanding Medicaid is the first step our state can take to begin the process of fixing some of the problems that exist in health care.

What is your stance on education funding and reform in South Carolina, and how do you propose to improve the state's education system?

As a former member of the 2016 Education Reform Advisory Committee, I worked tirelessly with fellow members on the issue of state education funding and ways to improve the state's education system. A quality education can open doors to new opportunities and experiences not previously afforded. Parents should be able to decide where they send their children to school, but public dollars should not go toward funding private institutions, neglecting our public school systems. The most important aspect of creating a better, more

equitable and more prosperous South Carolina is the state Legislature properly investing in our public education system, particularly in rural areas like some of the communities in District 64. If elected, I will advocate for more investments in public education and training.

What committees or areas of policy would you be particularly interested in working on if elected?

I would love to serve on the Education Committee. As a product of the Clarendon School system, a former school board member and the son of two educators, education is a lifelong passion of mine. Every student deserves to be taught by a world-class educator, and every student deserves to receive a quality education. I would love to help improve our education system as a member of the Education Committee.

What strategies will you use to stay connected with the local community and gather feedback from your constituents?

Social media is a great way to communicate. I will regularly update my social media accounts with information related to legislative business and provide important updates. In addition, I will hold town halls in the district to answer questions and listen to the thoughts of my constituents. It will be a priority of mine to make myself accessible to the people by regularly attending community-wide events. My phone number

will be available to all to call me when I can be of assistance.

Can you describe a time when you had to compromise on an issue to reach a solution? What was the outcome?

Whether it is at work or on a leader on a board or committee, I have had to compromise on a regular basis. Compromise is important in leadership. As a former school board member, I took compromise to approve policy and to come to agreements on important personnel matters. If elected, as a member of the minority party, I know compromise will be crucial to advancing the causes I care so deeply about.

Where do you see the country heading in the next decade, and how would your policies help shape that future?

I have an optimistic view of the future of the country over the next decade. I believe our nation will continue to prosper and be the place other nations look to lead the world. America will lead the way in technological innovation, science, manufacturing and health care. The United States will also likely continue to invest in clean energy sources, which will diversify our energy sector and add more economic growth. In addition, artificial intelligence will be on the rise. We must be ready for the changes it presents. The policies I will advocate for from education to health care will help our state and nation prosper for years to come.

EARLY VOTING

How and where can I vote early in person?
Visit an early voting center in your county during the early voting period and vote in person like you would at your polling place on Election Day. Remember to bring your photo ID when checking in to vote.

Early voting period for the statewide general election:

- Monday, Oct. 21 – Saturday, Nov. 2 (closed Sunday, Oct. 27).
- 8:30 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Early voting period for any necessary runoffs:

- Wednesday, six days prior to election day, through Friday, four days prior to election day.
- 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
- Closed on state holidays.

Where to early vote in Clarendon County:

- Clarendon County Board of Voter Registration and Elections, 3 S. Church St., Manning, SC 29102

Where to early vote in Lee County:

- Lee County Board of Voter Registration and Elections, 101 Gregg St., Bishopville, SC 29010
- Lynchburg Old Police Station, 106 Main St., Lynchburg, SC 29080

Where to early vote in Sumter County:

- Sumter County Voter Registration Office, 141 N. Main St., Sumter, SC 29150
- FJ DeLaine Elementary School: 5355 Cane Savannah Road, Wedgefield, 29168

GENE WESTON

★★★★★
For City Council Ward 4

- NEW SOLUTIONS FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY
- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE
- 30 YEARS IN THE HISTORIC DISTRICT
- SUPPORTS FAMILY VALUES
- PROVEN LEADERSHIP

“SERVING TEAM SUMTER!”

Paid for by Campaign for Gene Weston

STATE SENATE, DISTRICT 35



JEFFREY R. GRAHAM
DEMOCRAT

Tell readers about yourself, including your political experience and how long you've lived in your district.

My family has always been deeply involved in our community. Having grown up in Senate District 35, I have spent my entire life in Kershaw, Sumter, Lee and Richland counties, and I recognize that we are a rural area with growing parts, proud people and vibrant small towns. Upon graduating from Camden High school in 2001, I continued my education at Presbyterian College, graduating with a degree in business administration. Small businesses are the backbone of our communities, which is why I came home to work in our family's small real estate company, Graham Realty Inc. My wife, Sara, and I are the proud parents of a son, Edwards, and daughter, Bailey. We made the decision to raise our children in the same communities that have blessed our family with so much. We are engaged members of Lyttleton Street United Methodist Church.

What personal or professional experiences have best prepared you for a role in the South Carolina Legislature?

As mayor and a member of the city council in Camden, my priorities have included economic development, infrastructure,

strategic planning, education and tourism. Senate District 35's extensive and varied geography will create opportunities to take the lessons learned and successes created in Camden and implement those ideas on a regional level. I plan to work with the citizens, leaders and the elected officials in all of these counties to ensure the longevity of our diverse communities and to find local and regional solutions to the issues facing rural S.C. My work with the Santee Lynches Regional Council of Governments has given me an insight into this district. The work, the focus and the relationships have shaped who I am and strengthened my belief in our communities and what we can achieve - together.

What are your top three policy priorities if elected, and how do you plan to achieve them?

As the former mayor of a small town, I recognize that infrastructure and economic development must be priorities for Sumter, Lee, Richland and Kershaw counties. The addition of advanced manufacturing and other industrial jobs that require a skilled workforce keeps our overall tax base low and provides essential opportunities for young adults to return to or stay in our communities and reduces the need to commute long distances. None of it works, however, if our roads, bridges and public utilities are in disrepair. We must quit approaching our problems through a singular lens - infrastructure, quality education, access to water help bring economic opportunities and good-paying jobs to our communities. They are

all interconnected. We must make sure that our community remains hospitable to our military installations.

How would you approach the state's health care challenges, particularly in

relation to rural health services?

Ronald Reagan's health care mandate requires hospitals to treat patients in need of emergency care regardless of their ability to pay. Along with the state's aging population, this adds additional stress to rural health care systems. South Carolina's health care system is at an inflection point. We must expand Medicaid to help alleviate and relieve this stress. Protecting the medical freedom of women in South Carolina is fundamental to a healthy state. This includes advocating for comprehensive health care access, enforcing equal pay and supporting policies that prevent gender-based violence and discrimination. We must make sure that the S.C. Department of Mental Health and DAODAS provide access to quality services to fight drug abuse and mental illness. Too many times these needs are unchecked in the rural South. We must constantly evaluate the reimbursement ratio, negotiation of drug prices and procedures to make sure that doctors are paid what they deserve without bankrupting families. If everyone sits at the proverbial family table to talk about these issues - we can find a resolution.

What is your stance on education funding and reform in South Carolina, and how do you

propose to improve the state's education system?

Improving education in South Carolina is crucial. By enhancing our curriculum to include more career and technical education, fostering partnerships with local businesses for internships and apprenticeships and providing access to advanced technology and resources, we can equip students with skills and knowledge needed for today's job market. Investing in teacher training and support will also ensure that educators can deliver high-quality instruction that meets the demands of modern industries. By prioritizing these improvements, we can create a robust educational system that boosts student achievement and drives economic growth and prosperity across the state. Most important, we can't increase economic opportunities or high-paying jobs without an educated workforce. Our state must constantly review the method by which we fund our education system and once and for all pay teachers what they deserve.

What committees or areas of policy would you be particularly interested in working on if elected?

As a South Carolinian who loves the outdoors and runs a small business, my interests and areas of policy are many. However, I would be honored to serve on Transportation, State Infrastructure Bank, Natural Resources, Family and Veterans Services, Finance, Environmental and Rural Health just to name a few.

What strategies will you use to stay connected with the local

community and gather feedback from your constituents?

Too often, elected officials forget about citizens or the people they represent. Today, it is political malpractice to not have a constant stream of communication. My plan is to utilize every tool at my disposal to create an open line of communication with the people of Senate District 35. I would also create a plan to have quarterly district meetings.

Can you describe a time when you had to compromise on an issue to reach a solution? What was the outcome?

Politics is the art of compromise without sacrificing one's core beliefs or the beliefs of a district's core constituency. Often in my work with Santee Lynches Regional Council of Governments we have to work together for the good of the region. This means that we don't pit one county against another. This is how we survive, make progress and prosper.

Where do you see the country heading in the next decade, and how would your policies help shape that future?

South Carolina is growing at a rapid pace. We must develop comprehensive, long-term plans regarding infrastructure, water, energy, health care and housing to accommodate the constant influx of people moving into our state. To maintain our quality of life and to create a better quality of life, we must do this, and the priorities I have presented will help us achieve these goals.



MIKE JONES
REPUBLICAN

Tell readers about yourself, including your political experience and how long you've lived in your district.

I was born in Sumter, raised in Kershaw and live in Camden. I'm currently the vice chair of the Kershaw County Sheriff's Citizen Advisory Board, and I serve as treasurer and executive board member of the Mid-Carolina Credit Union. I am also the president-elect of the South Carolina National Guard Association.

What personal or professional experiences have best prepared you for a role in the South Carolina Legislature?

I've served in the military for 36 years and made it to the rank of

lieutenant colonel as an officer. I served as a battalion commander of a military police battalion that worked with local sheriff's departments throughout the state. Throughout my experience in the military, I learned a great deal about leadership and how to work with people from all walks of life.

What are your top three policy priorities if elected, and how do you plan to achieve them?

- 1) Infrastructure: I want to work to improve roads, bridges and basic infrastructure like sewers and drainage systems.
- 2) Education: I want to make sure parents have a voice in the classroom, our schools have the resources they need to succeed, and we meet children's educational needs.
- 3) Law and order: I want to work to make sure we provide all the resources possible to law enforcement and our solicitors' offices to ensure they can best do their job and have the resources necessary.

How would you approach the state's health care challenges, particularly in relation to rural health services?

We are at a point in our state where we have seen rapid growth, and the health care industry has struggled to meet the needs of the growing population. In our rural communities, we must figure out a better way so folks don't have to drive to a major city to get basic care. As a veteran and leader in the military, another issue I will emphasize in the Senate is mental health. I think we must have a broader conversation on this issue in our state and our country and come to some real solutions.

What is your stance on education funding and reform in South Carolina, and how do you propose to improve the state's education system?

I am a believer that each student's educational path is different. We need to create tracks and options that best meet the needs of each student with the parents' input. Overall, I believe we as a state are going to face a

teacher shortage if we don't take care of our educators better. I'll advocate on day one for a teacher pay raise to make sure those who help educate our students can take care of their own families.

What committees or areas of policy would you be particularly interested in working on if elected?

Family and Veterans' Services I think would make sense based on my background. I also have a real estate license and own an insurance agency and would have interest in the banking and insurance committee as well based on my prior experience.

What strategies will you use to stay connected with the local community and gather feedback from your constituents?

I plan on holding morning coffees and monthly listening posts to stay connected. Additionally, I will be reachable by phone and email.

Can you describe a time when you had to compromise on an issue to reach a solution? What was the outcome?

In the military, as a leader, you often must find ways to reach a solution. In Iraq, we had to work with the local population, who wanted to do one thing and we needed to get something done another way. Ultimately, I had to work to find a solution that met our priorities while working with the local citizens and keeping the enemy at bay. If I can find solutions in Iraq, surely, we can find solutions in the South Carolina State Senate.

Where do you see the country heading in the next decade, and how would your policies help shape that future?

I think education, safety and supply chain needs to be the focus of today, and they will shape our future. America is going to have to make sure we can produce our own food, goods and energy to ensure we are protected from foreign interference.

STATE SENATE, DISTRICT 36



JEFF ZELL
REPUBLICAN

Tell readers about yourself, including your political experience and how long you've lived in your district.

I am a Christian, father of one, husband and retired master sergeant with 20 years of service in the USAF. My family and I have been based in Sumter since 2017, when we were reassigned to Shaw Air Force Base. I officially retired in 2022.

What personal or professional experiences have best prepared you for a role in the South Carolina Legislature?

I grew up in poverty in the Ohio rustbelt, providing me with a deep understanding of its impact on families and government dependency. My siblings and I were in foster care and dealt with neglect, among other hardships still plaguing our communities. During my service in the Air

Force, I dedicated my time and energy to fostering positive change. I strongly believe in the significance of continual personal and professional growth. I was honored with the early promotion of Senior Airman Below the Zone and excelled in Airman Leadership School, where I received the William H. Pitsenbarger Award for Leadership. I also ranked in the top 10% of my class in the Non-Commissioned Officers (NCO) School for academics and was recognized as the Lt General Leo Marquez Maintenance NCO of the Year in 2014. Additionally, I was named NCO of the Year for my squadron in 2015. Furthermore, I have also completed the level 2 SC School Boards Association Boardmanship Training program and my Bachelor's Degree in Political Science in 2024.

After leaving the Air Force, I became a Sumter school board trustee, working to improve our public school system. I hope to use this experience to help enhance public school systems across all Senate districts and the state. We've made great strides in key areas in a very short period. That was done by focused efforts and working together across political aisles and differing perspectives to

get it done. I'm proud of our work on the Sumter school board.

How would you approach the state's healthcare challenges, particularly about rural health services?

The closure of rural hospitals, unaffordable prescription drugs and the financial burdens caused by medical bills require our immediate attention. To alleviate the financial strain on our citizens, we can focus on supporting rural hospitals and emergency centers, ensuring everyone has access to medical services. We can make a meaningful impact by prioritizing funding for patients and considering the removal of tax burdens on medical expenses.

Promoting patient and doctor relationships through direct primary care, expanding telehealth programs to include preventative health care and behavioral health services and requiring transparency in medical billing can all contribute to better care at a better price. Broadening the scope of practice, easing license requirements and fostering partnerships with local, state, public and private entities will also play crucial roles in finding effective solutions. We should build on partnerships, as we see

with Sumter schools and Tandem Health, such as establishing on-site clinics in rural schools and forming alliances to expand quality health care access to those who need it.

Mental health is another critical area that demands attention, particularly because of our high rates of poverty and our military veteran populations, which are some of the highest in the state. We should integrate mental health services into primary health care systems. This is especially important in our public schools, where prioritizing mental health can significantly impact students' well-being and academic success. As the great American Frederick Douglass stated, "It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men."

What is your stance on education funding and reform in South Carolina, and how do you propose to improve the state's education system?

We need a strong and accountable public education system that emphasizes results and produces graduates prepared to thrive in today's society and economy. Unfortunately, the public education systems in the 36th Senate district and state are not

achieving this; they are some of the lowest-performing districts in the state. We should revamp traditional K-12 education to focus on trades, skills and industry.

Competition drives innovation, and without it, our public education system, particularly in South Carolina, has become stagnant. We have evidence from various states showing that programs such as Educational Savings Accounts and similar systems work. We should expand policies for intra-district open enrollment and establish a salary band for teachers to prioritize performance and growth while honoring their time in service. Merit-based rewards promote competition and innovation, leading to better educational outcomes.

To strengthen transparency, all school boards should be required to livestream their meetings and limit discussions of executive sessions. We should emphasize competency-based instruction and value student achievement growth, not just end-of-course testing. Finally, we must raise teacher pay to a level commensurate with the

STATE SENATE, DISTRICT 36 FROM PAGE D11

criticality of their vital work.

Our focus should be on funding children, not systems. The South Carolina Legislature has set the stage for open and competitive education, and we should build upon that. However, we must remember that many families depend on public education, and as long as they do, we must make it the best we can. We owe it to them.

What committees or areas of policy would you be particularly interested in working on if elected?

With a strong military background and a deep commitment to supporting veterans, I'd be honored to represent our wonderful veterans on the Family and Veterans Services Committee. My hands-on experience in public education has fueled my passion to make a meaningful contribution to education, so I believe the Education Committee would be a good fit. Finally, my love for the great outdoors and my desire to work in forest and land management motivates me to embrace the opportunity to serve on the Fish, Game and Forestry committee and contribute to preserving our natural resources.

What strategies will you use to stay connected with the local

community and gather feedback from your constituents?

As a member of the Sumter school board, I have become known for my commitment to transparency, etiquette and discipline in all my endeavors. In continuing this legacy, I aim to organize regular town hall-style meetings where community members can engage with me and share their concerns, ideas and feedback. Additionally, I plan to create and distribute quarterly newsletters to keep everyone informed about the office's activities, decisions and future. These initiatives will help ensure the community remains informed and involved in the vital work and discussions I'll be having as your next senator.

I highly favor small group meetings with a wide array of community organizations, as they are more intimate and usually end with much greater and deeper respect and understanding of the needs, hopes and challenges our neighbors are facing. I am willing to work with anyone to make the whole district and its citizens a better place to live, work and raise a family. The people of the Midlands and the 36th Senate District are some of the best folks you'll meet; it's long past due to make this a place they are proud to call home and extending the opportunity to pursue the

American dream to where it hasn't been very accessible in the past.

Upon winning the seat, I will immediately establish a leadership team of trusted and respected individuals from across the community to ensure all voices are heard and accounted for. We must put aside partisanship to get things done.

Can you describe a time when you had to compromise on an issue to reach a solution? What was the outcome?

When the SSD board considered the revised student code of conduct, there was a disagreement about including Saturday School and after-school detention. Despite my support for these measures, they were not added to the final code. Although the current code has had positive results, I still believe that adding these tools could discourage bad behavior. Still, it's important to recognize and celebrate the success of the current code.

On a separate occasion, I could not compromise the recent prohibition of the district's 50% grading floor. Proponents of the grading floor asserted that it was beneficial for supporting struggling students, a notion I wholeheartedly empathize with. However, the proponents could not furnish any verifiable data or evidence to substantiate the

claimed benefits of the rule. Conversely, I firmly believe that granting students unmerited credit can have detrimental long-term ramifications, a position supported by a wealth of empirical data. The rule ultimately permitted unprepared students to progress through grade levels, exacerbating the knowledge and proficiency gaps year over year.

We have rescinded the grading rule while urging our educators and administrators to provide meaningful assistance to those students who need additional support; we can't just take things away and expect things to improve. We must support our students and hold them to the standard simultaneously. This initiative is expected to enhance the observed disparities between in-district grades and state MAP (measure of academic progress) test results.

Where do you see the country heading in the next decade, and how would your policies help shape that future?

In the next decade, if we continue our current path, it will result in the tragic loss of hundreds of lives in our community due to violence and condemn yet another generation of children to inadequate education, leaving them unable to compete economically. This will lead to

increased hopelessness, despair and mental illness, plunging us deeper into this tragic situation we've been stuck in.

We need to focus on local issues, where we can help the most people. The 36th Senate District faces high crime rates, underperforming schools and a lack of economic investment. We must take a different approach: elect disciplined, honorable and honest citizens to these high offices and hold them accountable. We cannot have integrity in our institutions if we have no integrity in our elected offices.

My approach, focused on transparency, accountability and serving the community's needs, will improve education, reduce crime, boost economic opportunities and create a safer environment for everyone, not just those lucky enough to be friends with the right politicians and those who benefit from being on the inside of the "good ol' boy" club. If that is what "experienced leadership" means, I'll tell you right now: We need much less of it.

Our citizens and their children deserve safe streets and schools where they can grow and thrive. Our families deserve to be proud of their community. Our new vision, focus and energy will greatly benefit our citizens; I am very confident in this.



KEVIN L. JOHNSON
DEMOCRAT
INCUMBENT

Tell readers about yourself, including your political experience and how long you've lived in your district.

I am a lifelong resident of Senate District 36. While my father was in the military, there was a time when we moved from state to state, but Manning has always been our home.

What personal or professional experiences have best prepared you for a role in the South Carolina Legislature?

I have been a public official practically all of my adult life. My public service began when I was appointed to serve on a number of boards throughout our county, region and state, including the Harvin Clarendon County Library Board, the Clarendon County Chamber of Commerce Board and as a long-time member and former chairman of the board for Black River Healthcare, which is now HopeHealth. I also served for 12 years as a board member and former chairman of the Clarendon 2 schools. I served on Manning City Council for six years

before being elected as mayor of Manning and serving for 11 years, after which I was elected to the S.C. House of Representatives. All of this and other experiences more than adequately prepared me for my role as a South Carolina senator, a position that I was first elected to in 2012.

What are your top three policy priorities if elected, and how do you plan to achieve them?

My top three priorities remain a strong and equitable public education system, a high-quality and affordable health care system, which includes expansion of Medicaid, and economic development that includes jobs that pay good wages and offers good benefits to their employees. There are others, but these have consistently been my top three.

How would you approach the state's health care challenges, particularly in relation to rural health services?

We have to make sure that broadband accessibility is available throughout all of our communities so that we can take advantage of initiatives such as telehealth and telemedicine. This is particularly vital in rural communities where some do not have transportation to their primary care physicians and some can't afford to pay even if they can somehow make it to their doctors. That is why it is so important that South Carolina

does like the vast majority of the other states in our nation and expand Medicaid.

What is your stance on education funding and reform in South Carolina, and how do you propose to improve the state's education system?

Education funding should be more equitable. It makes no sense that in too many cases, the quality of a child's education is in direct correlation to their zip codes. Public education in S.C. consists of the haves and the have nots. More state resources should go to the have nots, the communities that don't have as much tax base as others. To help improve the education system, we need to value teachers and other school district employees more. There is a teacher shortage across the nation, and we need to do all we can to alleviate that as well as shortages in school nurses, social workers, bus drivers, and the list goes on. Another thing that is very detrimental to our public education system is that too many school officials, elected officials and other leaders of our communities are the biggest critics of our school system, especially when the criticism is not constructive and when they never accentuate the good things that go on within our schools.

What committees or areas of policy would you be particularly interested in working on if elected?

Because of my seniority in the S.C. Senate, I feel that I already serve in the most important standing committees, and serving on these committees put me in a better position to serve the citizens of District 36 and the citizens of the state of S.C. I serve on the following committees: Finance, Education, Medical Affairs, Labor, Commerce and Industry, and I am the highest-ranking Democrat on the Family and Veterans Services Committee. Again, I am a member of these very important committees because of my seniority in the Senate, where practically everything is based on seniority. Also, because of the respect that the Senate leadership has for me and my abilities, I have been appointed to serve on a number of very important special committees. I have also been a member of the S.C. Education Oversight Committee for many years.

What strategies will you use to stay connected with the local community and gather feedback from your constituents?

I regularly attend several meetings that are held each month throughout Senate District 36 to include the new portion of the district. I have been an invited guest speaker at several events,

and when my schedule allows, I attend as many events as I can. I also send out legislative updates.

Can you describe a time when you had to compromise on an issue to reach a solution? What was the outcome?

As a member of the S.C. Senate, and especially as a member of the minority party (the party that is not in control), the art of compromise is a necessity. We always work hard to find the middle ground and to gain consensus, especially on major issues.

Where do you see the country heading in the next decade, and how would your policies help shape that future?

Hopefully, there will be a major shift in the direction of our country. My hope is that things will be less partisan and that political party affiliation will be less prevalent. Despite all that is going on, we live in the best and the most prosperous country. We need to stop the nonsense of fighting against each other because that only plays into the hands of our real enemies, such as Russia, China, Iran, etc. We need to be more harmonious and learn how to disagree in an agreeable manner. As it was once said, a house divided against itself cannot stand. Therefore, for the good of our country, we need to get our house in order.

STATE SENATE, DISTRICT 29 This race features incumbent Gerald Malloy (Democrat) and challenger JD Chaplin (Republican). Neither candidate submitted responses.





SCOTT BURKETT
SUMTER CITY COUNCIL

I would be honored to serve the Sumter community as your representative on City Council

Moving Sumter Forward Together



PLATFORM:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use Tax money more wisely No raise in city taxes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cleaning up our historic district Shrubbery Overhanging Trees Bad Sidewalks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued Community Involvement Created Sumter Litter Alliance Current Vice-Chair of Sumter Litter Advisory Board Member of the Church of the Holy Comforter 	<p>I have deep roots in Sumter, and I am proud to call it my hometown. Growing up in the historic district, I was surrounded by the city's rich history and charming architecture. My mother still lives in the same house where I spent my childhood, and it holds a special place in my heart. After graduating from Sumter High, I pursued my education at the College of Charleston. Upon receiving my business degree, I made the decision to return to my hometown and contribute to its growth and development as a business owner and Realtor.</p>
---	--	---	--

Paid for by Scott Burkett for City Council

SUMTER MAYOR



DAVID MERCHANT
NONPARTISAN
INCUMBENT

Tell us about yourself, including any political experience and how long you've lived in your district.

Mayor David Merchant, Married to Laurie Noonan Merchant.

We have four children. Hannah 21, Pate 18, Sam 15, Connor 13.

I have lived in my district (Ward 6) since I moved to Sumter in 1998 except for the year 2000 when we moved to Georgia with work.

I served on city council for eight years before being elected mayor in 2020. Prior to being elected to city council, I served on various church, civic boards and commissions.

I started Merchant Iron Works Inc. in 2001 fabricating ornamental iron work and miscellaneous steel. The business has since grown to 105 employees and now provides heavy structural steel for the commercial and industrial sectors

Laurie and I were taught early in life to serve and help people. We strive to make an impact in people's lives through the mayor's office, volunteering at school, church, and through our business by supporting schools, youth programs, non-profits, and other local initiatives.

How would you describe the responsibilities of Sumter mayor?

I see the mayor's role as "team captain" for Sumter. Advocating for our city and citizens to make Sumter a great place to live, work and raise a family. I work with city council to cast a vision, plan and budget on ideas we feel are important to the lives and long-term success of Sumter then hand it off to staff to implement the plan while providing oversight and guidance.

If reelected, what specific goals do you have for the city over the next term and how do you plan to achieve them?

The North Main Street and Manning Avenue corridor projects, along with the Manning Avenue Bridge replacements have been a frustration of mine and our citizens for years. It was the very first meeting I called in February of 2021 after being elected to the mayor's office. I met with some of our legislative delegation, County Council Chairman Jim McCain and SCDOT officials on getting this project moving. After three years of regular meetings, government bureaucracy, design issues and additional right-of-way purchases, the project is moving forward. The construction contract should be awarded in the first quarter of 2025. My goal is to continue to push this project and move it forward through completion, improving two major corridors through our city.

Work to raise the per capita income for all of Sumter's citizens. Over the last four years, I have been working with the Sumter Economic Development Board on recruitment, retention and growth of business in Sumter. I will continue to work on creating an environment of opportunity for our citizens through the creation of new high paying jobs.

Growth of Shaw AFB. Shaw is not only a \$2+ billion economic engine for our area, but it also brings great people to Sumter. Over the last four years, I have had multiple meetings with base, congressional and Senate leaders on the mission of Shaw and how we as a community can help support potential growth. I will continue to work and advocate for protecting and growing Shaw AFB.

What do you consider your most significant achievement as mayor since you assumed the role? How has it benefited the city?

We have had a lot great things happen over the last four years. But one of the most

significant achievements we accomplished in my first term was the stewardship of the American Rescue Act funds (ARPA) that came down from Washington D.C. In 2021, the federal government gave the City of Sumter right at \$ 3 million with certain requirements on how it could be spent. I recognized that this is a very unusual "gift" from Washington and wanted to use it to make a lasting impact for years to come. We wanted to be able to look back 20 years from now and know that the money was thoughtfully spent. Clean water and a properly operating sewer system is a fundamental core function of local government. It affects every citizen equally and is often taken for granted until it doesn't work. I was able to work with council and use the \$3 million in ARPA funding and leverage it as a local match to access the South Carolina Infrastructure Investment Program. Our \$3 million became \$25 million to invest in Sumter's water and sewer infrastructure. This significant investment in upgrading our water and sewer systems allows for future city and industrial growth and to be proactive in replacing very old water and sewer lines all around the city. I was very proud work with council to make this significant investment for our future.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

Crime - Our city has been deeply affected by recent acts of violence that have taken too many lives. We have young people in our community who are resorting to gun violence to solve disagreements and conflict. These tragedies are unacceptable and preventable. I am committed to continuing to ensure prosecution of these senseless acts and working with our police department to supply them with the tools they need to make our community safe. I will also continue to work with

our community and faith leaders, nonprofits and family groups to work toward solutions to reach the young people before they turn to a life of crime and violence.

Education – While the mayor and city council do not have any authority over our educational system in Sumter, I recognize that our school district is a vital member of "Team Sumter." I have been and will continue to be committed to building bridges and relationships with our superintendent, board members, principals, teachers and coaches. I have made a point to be seen in our schools and offer to help in whatever capacity the mayor's office can provide. We need our educational system to be one of the best in the state to ensure that our existing families, Shaw families and potential economic development prospects are comfortable living and educating their children in Sumter.

What successes have you seen in Sumter City Council that you want to build on?

There have been many groundbreaking and exciting projects I have been involved with over the last four years. But to answer the question on successes seen in Sumter City Council; it is city council itself. I am very proud and honored to serve with our city council. The men I serve with are very professional and respectful of each other. Even when we differ on a matter, it is handled with civility and respect. I see this a major success because all too often we see government arguing and fighting, ultimately getting nothing accomplished. As leaders, we must lead by example and be a model of respect and civility that we ask of our community. I have learned over my 12 years involved in city council and the mayor's office that our city government does not operate like most. We strive to be accessible, professional representatives who genuinely care about and work hard for the citizens in our ward. Ultimately,

our constituents know where we live and know how to find us if they are having a problem. I am excited to build on this and keep moving Sumter forward with a great team of leaders.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

Yes, the mayor's job keeps me very busy out and about all over our community.

For example, regular meetings with Shaw AFB, economic development prospects, community groups, schools, churches, nonprofits, veteran's groups, etc.

I also have a seventh-grader and a 10th-grader at home and two older kids in college. It seems we are always at a school function or a ball game.

Is there anything else you want to add about yourself?

I truly feel that Sumter's best days are ahead of us. We have had some great successes over the last four years. One special success I would like to mention is when we were able to get Chris Singleton to Sumter. Chris tragically lost his mother in the Charleston 9 shooting and brought his message of choosing love and unity instead of hate after that tragedy. Many of our residents and students were able to hear his message. It is relevant now, and in the future, as we face unknown situations and challenges. In closing, there are so many more opportunities, projects and plans upcoming that I want to help push over the finish line. I am not naïve; we have some challenges like every family, business or city does. But if we choose unity as we work to fix those problems, I am sure we will succeed in making Sumter a great place to live, work and raise a family. I will never keep my eye off the long-term goal and city's mission of providing our citizens an environment of opportunity and excellent public services.



FOXY RAE CAMPBELL
NONPARTISAN

Tell us about yourself, including any political experience and how long you've lived in your district.

I am a Sumter native and current a broker in charge of the BrownstoneHunt Real Estate Firm. I've lived in my district since 2008. I am an alumni of the University of South Carolina and Western Governors University. My leadership and business development derived from my tenure at Fortune 500, 250 and 100 companies. As a certified project manager, I have enhanced

my skills in planning, procurement and the execution of ideas. I ran in the 2020 mayoral race, and it was a great experience with having an in-depth look within the community that I market and sell every day.

How would you describe the responsibilities of Sumter Mayor?

The responsibility of the mayor is to project the interest of the people and to develop policies that benefit the city. The mayor presides over the council, acts as a ceremonial leader, signs official documents, creates agendas, collaborates on budget proposals and, along with the council, appoints people to commissions and boards, approves budgets and represents the city.

What do you consider your most significant achievement as mayor since you assumed the role? How has it benefited the city?

The goals I have for next term are the following five items, and they will be done through collaboration and strategic planning:

1. Develop a plan to decrease the response time with emergency first responders.
2. Expand public transportation system and hours.
3. Improve lighting within the city.
4. Work on policies and procedures to decrease crime within the city limits.
5. Develop a system to promote talent retention.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter (up to 3), and

how do you intend to improve them?

The policy for felons not being able to obtain a business license: I would develop a second chance policy that would give felons the ability to become an asset to the community.

Talking time of the citizens at the council meetings: I would ensure each person with concerns or compliments have an ample amount of time to speak.

Funding for free medical clinics and other beneficial programs within the city: I would have a session for small businesses and nonprofits in each industry to present RFP's for their projects.

What successes have you seen in Sumter City Council that you want to build on?

The success of city council that

I would want to build upon:

- Support for small business expansion and growth.
- Building upgrades.
- Infrastructure repairs.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

Yes, I am involved with the community. I help Dream Academy with the youth and supporting other nonprofits, and I SHOP LOCAL!

Is there anything else you want to add about yourself?

I grew up and have lived in Sumter for over 45 years. I would like to see Sumter grow and operate at its true potential. With my leadership I know we can make it happen.



REGINALD EVANS
NONPARTISAN

Tell us about yourself, including any political experience and how long you have lived in the city of Sumter.

I was born in Sumter in 1963, attended Willow Drive Elementary School, Alice Drive Middle School and graduated from Sumter High School in the class of 1981. I then joined the United States Marine Corps two days after graduating from high school. I then moved over to the Reserve and graduated from Clafin University in 1987 and earned an MBA from Webster University in 2007. My family owned and operated a Shell Gasoline Station on North Main Street and Dubose Street in 1975. I worked at the station pumping gasoline, starting at the age of 12 and teenager, then worked at the Winn Dixie while in high school as stocker and meat cutter. In 1990, I opened and operated Ben's Meat Market on Broad Street next to the first Walmart and Kroger in Sumter. When

Walmart built their Superstore, I went into the consulting business. I was never elected to public office. Over the years, I worked have with a number of community groups and organizations. I was one of the founders of Northside Neighborhood Association and a group called Men N Deed, to name a few.

How would you describe the responsibilities of Sumter Mayor?

The mayor of Sumter has a number of great responsibilities, especially today when we are seeing so many problems with violence and other crimes happening in our city. It is the mayor's responsibility to bring the citizens together as a community and make them whole again and to feel safe. Not only does the mayor oversee the financial perspectives and political aspects, but the mayor needs to be available for all the people.

The mayor is responsible for taking care of this beautiful city as a whole, making sure those who are in charge of public areas are doing their best to upkeep those areas.

If elected, what specific goals do you have for the city over the

next term and how do you plan to achieve them?

My ultimate goal, as I addressed in the previous paragraph, is getting this city into a better, more wholesome environment where our seniors, disabled and children of all races, financial status and religious beliefs will have the same opportunity to receive the best education possible, not only from the regular scheduled school days but to establish mentorship from volunteers who are already eager to help the youth to do better in their schooling.

I would work closely with the education systems, the parents and those who would be involved in supporting the youth programs so there will be a mutual understanding and development between all parties, so there will be a team established between those who oversee the youth, for the youth.

Our youth need a place to learn and grow academically and vocationally, and I will focus on supporting the nonprofit organizations that are working hard to establish this to give the opportunities to these children, so they have the chance at a productive future, leading them away from the path of crime.

As far as the current, unequal economic position of Sumter, my plan would be to even the scale. I plan to make the current businesses in Sumter stronger. I would bring in more businesses along with technology industries and support those who want to start new businesses. As mayor, I will strongly provide a set-aside program for minorities and women's small business. I plan to educate anyone who already has a business or is interested in business so that they understand what they are doing and are prepared for success. My intentions would be to significantly reduce our unemployment rates so our people can live their dream, reduce the needs for government support and are no longer living in poverty the way they are being forced to right now. This will reduce the rate of crime and result in better economic health in Sumter.

My plan would be to oversee the city's budget and fairly allocate the funds appropriately, not to favor any political side, race, gender, particular side of town, economic status, religious belief, educational status, etc. I would intend to use the budget to improve Sumter as a whole, to put us in a better financial position

throughout the entire city.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

1. Violence and crime is my greatest concern. I will work with the government officials, police, educators, volunteers in the community, concerned citizens, and nonprofit organizations that have been established specifically for these issues to support them in their mission to make the community safe again.

We will do more to clean up the streets, provide safer alternatives for the children who are in unfortunate situations, likely headed toward the wrong path. I will see about raising or denying bail for violent crimes and holding those who are found guilty to a harsher punishment.

2. Education is the key to Sumter's future development. As stated previously, the mayor should be concerned with the education of all children in Sumter. As mayor, I will work with our public, charter and private schools in the city and county. An educated population will reduce crime, attract high

SUMTER MAYOR FROM PAGE D13

paying jobs and create an environment that we can be proud of as residents of Sumter.

3. As mayor, I will always be concerned about the health care of each and every resident of Sumter. We should work hard to improve services for the mental wellbeing of our residents. As mayor, it would be hard for me to sleep at night knowing that citizens of Sumter are sleeping outside under a bridge. Sumter health care is our No. 3 employer in the city. The Sumter government should work with health care providers to make sure all Sumter's citizens have access and can afford medical treatment.

What successes have you seen in A Sumter City Council that you want to build on?

Sumter City Council has done a great job developing the west side of Sumter's infrastructure

and recreational areas on the west side. As mayor, I will work with both the city and county to provide more inside recreational facilities especially for our seniors and disabled residents in Sumter.

As your next mayor, I will work hard with county officials to develop Sumter's county and city infrastructure. We should work together to ensure that we have safe drinking water. A great wastewater system. We should have a master plan to pave roads and place utility lines underground. We should make Sumter's 2040 Comprehensive Plan a working document that all residents have agreed and accepted as a great plan.

I believe that it is time that Sumter moves away from a city council/city manager form of government. As Sumter grows, we should have a full-time mayor that is accessible to the people and

willing to be held responsible and accountable to what is going on in our city.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

I was blessed growing up to have a great family and community support network. I had great mentors who helped me become a good United Methodist man. I was part of a lodge on Broad Street and later became a Shriner. I am a part of the American Legion, the VFW and the Marine Corps League. I coached little league basketball and baseball. I also help coach Legion Baseball.

The past three years, I have been working on establishing an All-Boys Charter School in Sumter, called Grace Young Men Academy. Although we have been faced with opposition, our group feels there is a real need

for a school that focuses on the special needs of our young men in Sumter. It is our hope that we can help stop the senseless killing in Sumter over the past years. Our vision for the school is to lead young men away from crime and give the opportunity to become productive citizens, fathers and husbands.

Is there anything else you want to add about yourself?

I believe good leaders work to find consensus among the people. I understand that the majority rules in this country, but we should never abuse the minority. As your next mayor, I will also reach out to the people. As mayor, it will be my goal to have a town hall every month.

I truly believe that South Carolina should expand Medicaid. This would save the seniors living in our city and state some \$2,000-

\$10,000 every year, money that your parents and seniors in your family can spend on things other than medical expenses. As your mayor, I will work with our state's Speaker of the House, other mayors and community groups to expand Medicaid in South Carolina.

It appears that the current leaders in the city and county have failed to obtain a consensus on the Penny Sale Tax. I watched a number of signs all over the county about projects paid for by the last Sale Tax. I saw very little to no signs in the poor community. This is why I believe residents in Sumter should vote no and oppose the question. I believe we should redo the project list with more community involvement and place it on the 2026 ballot.

Lastly, I would ask that everyone go out to vote.



TRAVON FRANK ADAMS II
NONPARTISAN

Tell us about yourself, including any political experience and how long you have lived in the city of Sumter.

My name is Travon Frank Adams II, and I am 33 years of age, a native of Sumter, a combat veteran and a college graduate of USC Columbia. Regarding my political experience, I have a B.A. in political science with a minor in philosophy. While in college, I interned for Attorney General Alan Wilson's 2016 reelection campaign, and then over the summer of 2019 I was a policy fellow for Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin of Columbia. After successfully interning at Mayor Benjamin's office at City Hall of Columbia, I was due to graduate in the summer of 2019. Before graduating, I was recruited to join Bernie Sander's 2020 presidential campaign as the college outreach director for South Carolina. After Sanders' campaign, I worked for Council Woman-At-Large Tameika Isaac Devine for a mayor's race; she is now a senator in Columbia. Soon thereafter, I began to do social work for unions to help them bargain for contract negotiations with the hospital systems of Los Angeles California with SEIU Local 7-2-1. I then worked in the Community with NCYEI (North Columbia Youth Empowerment Initiative) working

with at-risk youth, violence and bringing the gap in resources for the community, while taking part in several campaigns in California. I have lived in and around Sumter much of my life, but I returned home after college in 2022 to help care for my ailing grandfather.

How would you describe the responsibilities of Sumter Mayor?

The responsibility of the mayor of Sumter is multifaceted. The responsibility of the mayor is to manage the city economically and socially and to represent every resident of Sumter, no matter race, religion or sex. His responsibility is to be accountable to the public, usher in the will of the people and oversee progress and the public health and safety of the residents of Sumter. A proper mayor, in my opinion, takes matters of the public with the utmost attentiveness and channels the people's desires and wants into something people can feel and touch on a day-to-day basis. I also believe that the mayor's job is to lead the council on a vision that represents all council districts, but it is the mayor's job to guide that vision; especially since we are the first in the country to have a weak mayor (having the same weighted vote as the council). Although that is true it doesn't prevent a mayor from being strong in character and merit and this regard, I feel that I am the best candidate to be your next mayor, God-willing.

If elected, what specific goals do you have for the city over the next term and how do you plan to achieve them?

was elected as the executive committeeman for the Sumter County Republican Party, a position that I still hold today.

How would you describe the responsibilities of the Ward 4 representative?

Police, fire, EMS, water, sewer, historical preservation, downtown revitalization.

If elected, what specific goals do you have for city council over the next term, and how do you plan to achieve them?

- Focus on Community Development. Quality of life starts with safety in our community. I want to back our law enforcement to stem the spike in crime in Sumter. I also believe our city can sound the alarm to bring pressure on our solicitor's office to prosecute crimes in Sumter — not just violent crimes, but property and other crimes as well.
- Once our citizens feel like they are in a safe community, we can focus on enhancing parks, sidewalks, city services, beautification of corridors and events that bring a community together. Improved community development leads to private investment that leads to economic growth and development.
- Increase access and openness in city departments and management. I believe Sumter can do a better job of responding to the needs and concerns of our citizens, especially in matters of law enforcement and city services like the water department.
- Improve transparency in city government. Many have questioned where and why the city has spent resources on things not available to all citizens, and

I plan to focus on violent crime prevention with a proven policing plan modeled after Dallas's Spotlight Program; an effective, long-term solution for violent crime prevention (paid with grant money). I plan to bring relief to renters with an adequate housing policy, bringing down out-of-pocket cost of living expenses by adjusting to the taxable rate of apartment and utilizing grants and private partnerships. The plan ensures that we remove violent repeat offenders from the streets and that we at the same time offer vocational, GED and mental health care to those who want to reform and recidivism. I also plan to attract more manufacturing that is taxed too high to attract business in competition with Columbia, Charlotte, Charleston and Atlanta. I plan to do this by reducing the tax rate that businesses have to pay because they are higher than the national average.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

Housing crisis, violent crime prevention and a stronger economy. I plan to improve these issues by implementing proven policies that have data to back them up. I will partner with community leaders, business owners and academics to provide proven solutions. When it comes to my housing plan, I plan to build housing units that are rent-subsidized, income stratified and prioritize ADA access for seniors. That means rent will be much cheaper than it currently is. I plan

to have these housing units, multi-family homes and duplexes in conveniently located areas. I want an emphasis on higher population density. I want to rebuild the community within the city limits by encouraging residents to move closer. These subsidized units will also prioritize teachers, police officers, firefighters, social workers and city workers to give them a fringe benefit that brings cheaper living costs to them to subsidize their income. If we value these folks, then we need to invest in them for the future of our city. This also has the added benefit of rebuilding the community with members who have resources and training that benefit the community. I also want the housing to replace all the dilapidated ruined housing around Sumter.

What successes have you seen in Sumter City Council that you want to build on?

I have seen progress with the Penny tax, and that is something that I would like to improve upon. In general, I will build upon all successful programs, and for those that are ineffective, we will reengineer them to be effective. I will also build on the 2040 Comprehensive Plan for the city. My plan ensures that this plan can become a reality and that it impacts the lives of the residents who need relief from rising costs in inflation. People can barely afford to live; violence is out of control. Something needs to be done.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

apartment complexes and industrial developments in the past five years. It is likely that the military presence from Shaw AFB in Sumter will grow in the near future as well. Real population growth stresses all systems and services provided by the city.

A near-term solution is to leverage our local spending capacity by approving the upcoming Penny for Progress. In so doing, the city and county can fund up to \$125 million in projects ranging from infrastructure, recreation, first responders and economic development while relying on about 35% of the new tax to be generated by non-Sumter County residents. These funds can be match funded at the state and local level to significantly expand their impact for Sumter.

The city should return its focus to the best elements of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and the Downtown Sumter Master Plan. Both of these prepare for the prospect of growth while looking at ways to utilize existing properties, especially urban blight, to add usable real estate in areas already served by city utilities and services.

- City services maintenance and growth. The city is responsible for water, sewer, police, fire and EMS in city limits. This point is somewhat redundant with the point above, but I believe thought and consideration should be given to continued investment in these areas. Not only should the city be prepared for growth, but it should also be able to maintain excellent quality in each of these areas to existing Sumterites. If these services are stretched too thin, they begin to experience breakdown, leading to diminished service and/or increased costs to maintain services

Yes, I work with the community often to get the vote on the state-wide level, which includes work in Sumter as well. I've worked with both Republicans and Democrats, as stated above in my experience. I am a community organizer by trade and profession. Studying both philosophy and political science, I'm transitioning to become a public representative so that I can deliver benefits to the residents of Sumter; my hometown. The people in it matter to me, and that's why, although at times I've had to leave home, I have always been close by and in Columbia doing social work in and around the state and in Sumter.

Is there anything else you want to add about yourself?

I plan to usher in a new age of accountability and transparency for the residents of Sumter, and I promise I will never enrich myself while in the office or undermine the will of the people of Sumter. I love my city and our rich history; my community's wellbeing is my life's goal. So, I plan to make sure that we have a hometown that raises its youth as a community and retains residents with good housing, jobs and social services. Something I failed to mention is that I plan to target childcare costs, nightlife and safety while supporting our local entrepreneurs and existing local businesses and shops. Let's get ready to have hope for a brighter future. Vote T. Frank Adams II for mayor. My website is travonfadams.com. Go check out the plan as it's updated periodically.

SUMTER CITY COUNCIL, WARD 4



GENE WESTON
NONPARTISAN

Tell us about yourself, including any political experience and how long you've lived in your district.

After growing up in Sumter and graduating Sumter High in 1985, I attended Clemson University and graduated with a degree in financial management in 1989. I moved to Orlando, Florida, and worked for SunBank, N.A., as a commercial banker. While in Orlando, I earned an MBA from the Roy E. Crummer Graduate School of Business at Rollins College. I returned to Sumter in June 1994 to work in our family business, Burgess-Brogdon Building Supply Inc. I bought my present home in July of 1994 and have lived there since November 1994. I married Susan Brewer Weston in 1996, and we had two daughters, Amelia (1999) and Isabelle (2002).

My first political experience was helping with signs and door knocking for Ramon Schwartz when I was in high school. I did the same for the Bill McCollum campaign in Central Florida. After moving back to Sumter, I ran for city council in 2000 and lost to incumbent Sonny Newman. I began to be active in the Sumter County Republican Party in 2002 but became inactive after a couple of years. I stepped back in helping to run the local campaign for Mick Mulvaney in 2010 and assisting with the Tony Barwick campaign in 2012.

I became active in the GOP again in 2016. In 2020, I

was elected as the executive committeeman for the Sumter County Republican Party, a position that I still hold today.

How would you describe the responsibilities of the Ward 4 representative?

Police, fire, EMS, water, sewer, historical preservation, downtown revitalization.

If elected, what specific goals do you have for city council over the next term, and how do you plan to achieve them?

- Focus on Community Development. Quality of life starts with safety in our community. I want to back our law enforcement to stem the spike in crime in Sumter. I also believe our city can sound the alarm to bring pressure on our solicitor's office to prosecute crimes in Sumter — not just violent crimes, but property and other crimes as well.
- Once our citizens feel like they are in a safe community, we can focus on enhancing parks, sidewalks, city services, beautification of corridors and events that bring a community together. Improved community development leads to private investment that leads to economic growth and development.
- Increase access and openness in city departments and management. I believe Sumter can do a better job of responding to the needs and concerns of our citizens, especially in matters of law enforcement and city services like the water department.
- Improve transparency in city government. Many have questioned where and why the city has spent resources on things not available to all citizens, and

I believe these issues need a complete and clear explanation to maintain trust in local government.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

- Crime. The citizens of Sumter do not feel safe, often even in their own homes. Violent crime grabs most headlines, but property crimes from burglary to vandalism to auto theft are rampant in our community. The occurrence of crime pushes up insurance costs, lowers property values, overfills our judicial system and overworks our law enforcement.
- One solution is to bring positive pressure from the city on our local solicitor's office to adjudicate the arrests in a timelier fashion. This would encourage law enforcement by positively reinforcing their activity, while likewise reducing the incentive to commit crime as potential criminals observe the consequences of others committing crime.
- The city can also work with the police department to identify areas with high, repetitive rates of crime. The police can increase their presence there, encourage neighborhood watch groups and even be a part of initiating such groups in neighborhoods where the crime problem looms large but leadership is weak or non-existent. The city should enforce the policies of the police department and ensure that the chief is meeting or exceeding key performance indicators annually, as lack of action historically has damaged morale in the department.
- Growth Management. Sumter has experienced growth in residential neighborhoods,

apartment complexes and industrial developments in the past five years. It is likely that the military presence from Shaw AFB in Sumter will grow in the near future as well. Real population growth stresses all systems and services provided by the city.

A near-term solution is to leverage our local spending capacity by approving the upcoming Penny for Progress. In so doing, the city and county can fund up to \$125 million in projects ranging from infrastructure, recreation, first responders and economic development while relying on about 35% of the new tax to be generated by non-Sumter County residents. These funds can be match funded at the state and local level to significantly expand their impact for Sumter.

The city should return its focus to the best elements of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and the Downtown Sumter Master Plan. Both of these prepare for the prospect of growth while looking at ways to utilize existing properties, especially urban blight, to add usable real estate in areas already served by city utilities and services.

- City services maintenance and growth. The city is responsible for water, sewer, police, fire and EMS in city limits. This point is somewhat redundant with the point above, but I believe thought and consideration should be given to continued investment in these areas. Not only should the city be prepared for growth, but it should also be able to maintain excellent quality in each of these areas to existing Sumterites. If these services are stretched too thin, they begin to experience breakdown, leading to diminished service and/or increased costs to maintain services

at a given level.

What successes have you seen in Sumter City Council that you want to build on?

One of the largest overall successes I have observed in Sumter City Council is the harmony with which the council works with one another. I would strive to work with my fellow council members to maintain this positive working environment while tackling the important issues before council.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

I have been active in the Sumter community since returning here in 1994. Some of my involvement includes:

- Derthick Education Foundation Board
- Sumter Habitat for Humanity Board
- Past President Sumter Rotary Club
- Tuomey Foundation Board of Governors
- Acting Chairman, Sumter Cemetery Association
- Sumter Edge Investor Oversight Board
- Past Chairman Sumter Gallery of Art
- Sumter County Clemson Club
- Elder, Deacon – First Presbyterian Church
- Deacon – First Baptist Church
- Shaw Sumter Community Relations Council
- Heart of Sumter Neighborhood Association
- Running an 80-year-old family business for the past 24 years.

SUMTER CITY COUNCIL, WARD 4 FROM PAGE D14

Is there anything else you want to add about yourself?

I love my city. I want it to be

better, and I want to be one who helps make it better.



JIMMY DAVIS
NONPARTISAN

Tell us about yourself, including any political experience and how long you have lived in the city of Sumter.

I'm proud to call Sumter my home. My grandparents, parents, uncle and myself spent many valuable years growing up right here in Ward 4. As this area has shaped my life, I proudly returned to Ward 4 in 2020 with my wife and two children. My lifelong connection to Sumter has shaped my commitment to this community. From being raised in Sumter and a proud graduate of Sumter High School, I have devoted over 20 years to building and nurturing a local business, employing over 30 Sumter residents and understanding firsthand the needs and aspirations of our community. In 2023, I was recognized as the Philip L. Edwards Business Person of the Year.

In addition to my professional journey, I prioritize my roles as husband and father. These roles are those that inspire my

dedication to ensuring a thriving future for our families. My commitment to Sumter extends beyond my business; I have also served as the former chair of the Greater Sumter Chamber of Commerce. This role allowed me to advocate for local businesses, foster economic growth and engage with community leaders to drive positive change.

Running for city council in Ward 4 is a natural extension of my desire to contribute to Sumter's growth and prosperity. I am eager to use my experience and deep-rooted connection to this city to work toward practical solutions and advocate for the interests of our community.

How would you describe the responsibilities of the Ward 4 representative?

As a city council representative, the primary responsibilities include being an advocate for the interests and concerns of constituents within their ward while ensuring their needs and preferences are voiced in council discussions and decisions. It is also very important to me to assist residents with issues related to city services, such as public safety, sanitation and infrastructure. With community engagement and collaboration with other council members and city officials, it is my hope to

address broader city issues and develop effective solutions.

If elected, what specific goals do you have for the city over the next term, and how do you plan to achieve them?

If elected, during the term I would work toward making Sumter a safer, more vibrant, attractive and business-friendly city while maintaining transparency and engaging effectively with the community.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

The challenges and concerns that I see in Sumter include litter, infrastructure and economic development and crime. While each of these challenges come with great concern, they each require a structured approach to understanding and resolving each issue. First we must identify and define each challenge then develop solutions given the city's resources and constraints while working with experts to design actionable plans.

What successes have you seen in Sumter City Council that you want to build on?

One of the many great successes supported through our

city council has been the Penny for Progress. The Penny for Progress has made many impacts to our city that include public safety, youth engagement, advanced education, increased walkability, improved road maintenance, nature trails like the Shot Pouch Greenway, restoration of property and more. Looking forward, this penny supports economic development, infrastructure projects, public safety needs and quality of life projects for our community. This penny has provided Sumter with great opportunity to enhance the community with needs and beyond for our residents.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

My community involvement for Sumter starts at home as I lead out each day as husband, father, friend. Acquiring the position as chair of the Greater Sumter Chamber of Commerce, I was fortunate to carry an important role in local community development. Through the day-to-day, you can find me leading a business and investing in our employees. I want to see their success and happiness in Sumter. My wife and I are members of Christ Community Church where we attend with our two children, Nada and Abram. I am co-founder of the charitable event Comfort for Christmas, which

helps collect blankets and canned goods to donate to Sumter United Ministries and provides a family with a free heating and air unit. I actively partner with Habitat for Humanity to provide HVAC services for families in need. I am a former Tuomey fellow graduate and recognized as an ambassador for our local hospital.

Is there anything else you want to add about yourself?

My dedication to Sumter goes beyond myself as I look at the future of Sumter and know the best is yet to come. I want to know that my children and yours will value and love Sumter the way that I have and will be proud to call it home for many years. I am infinitely grateful to our military families and the sacrifices they make. It is an honor to have them in our community. My passion for joining city council is to help make a difference where I am able and the how the Lord can use me. I read a quote from Brian Tracy that states, "Success is not just about having ideas; its about making things happen. Being a doer means turning vision into reality through action and perseverance."



LUCY MAHON
NONPARTISAN

Tell us about yourself, including any political experience and how long you have lived in the city of Sumter.

I have lived in Ward 4 since I moved to Sumter in January of 2021. My political experience is limited to the recent experience I just had running for the Senate District 35 race. What I learned from that campaign is that our community needs more people running for office that have a heart for service, enthusiasm for our future and a tireless passion for bringing the changes our community needs to fruition.

How would you describe the responsibilities of the Ward 4 representative?

Be accessible: I am on my porch

the afternoons and evenings (depending on the meeting time) after every city council meeting. I plan to continue to be on my porch after every city council meeting, if elected, and perhaps even if not elected. I hope this communicates very clearly to my future constituents that I am ready, not only to listen to their concerns, but to address them to the fullest extent possible. Most of what I hear from my neighbors is that they feel like existing codes are not being enforced. I pledge to be an advocate for every member of Ward 4 who feels like they are hitting their head against a brick wall when it comes to code enforcement.

If elected, what specific goals do you have for city council over the next term, and how do you plan to achieve them?

Every other person running for this office is involved in the small business arena of Sumter. I am the only health care worker. This automatically sets me apart from my fellow candidates for

this reason: people who work in health care go into this field to serve and help others. My primary goal/reason for running is to serve others. I can genuinely say I have no agenda, and I think that is a good thing. I love Sumter and want to see her grow in all the right ways. My grandfather was the Sumter County civil engineer for many years, which may explain my fascination with codes and zoning, which is a big part of what city council is responsible for.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

I love Sumter, and that is why I am committed to helping solve her three biggest problems. Poverty, crime and schools. All three of these areas require a long-term vision of supporting our most at-risk children and their mothers. To the best of my ability, I will do everything in my power to help improve the lives of those who are born equal but without equal opportunity.

What successes have you seen in Sumter City Council that you want to build on?

Job creation. Sumter has a real opportunity to continue working with her teammates on the county and state level to develop more manufacturing and health care jobs in the Sumter area. Across all local workforce development areas in South Carolina, the Santee-Lynches area (including Sumter) has the highest percentage of its working population employed outside of the region, at 55%. If over half of our population has to leave this area every day to work, children have to wake themselves up to get to school on time, parents can't attend PTO meetings or after school programs, and families generally suffer from the loss of time together when a parent is commuting outside of the community to work.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

My wife, Christi, and I attend the Episcopal Church of The Good Shepard on Dingle Street

in Sumter and Saint Martin's in the Field's in Columbia. We both volunteer with the music ministry at Saint Martin's, and we regularly attend Sumter High athletic events to watch Christi's two boys play football. I am a board member of Sumter County Pride and a member of the Heart of Sumter Neighborhood Association. I have volunteered regularly with Harvest Hope and Fostering Foster in Camden. I am a member of the Farm Bureau, the American Physical Therapy Association, The National Deer Association and the Wild Turkey Federation. I have a level 2 Clinical instructor certification with the APTA.

Is there anything else you want to add about yourself?

I am the only female hunt club manager in North and South Carolina, according to my lease company. I love the outdoors, fantasy football, mint chocolate chip ice cream, my two dogs and a good glass of champagne.



VOTE

FAWNSC.COM

FAWN



PEDALINO

FOR HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ★ DIST. 64



Re-Elect

FAWN PEDALINO

for House 64

Paid for by Fawn Pedalino Campaign



LYNN R. KENNEDY
NONPARTISAN

Tell us about yourself, including any political experience and how long you have lived in the city of Sumter.

My name is Rebecca Lynn Kennedy, and I am proud to be a lifelong resident of Sumter. Having been born and raised here, I have a deep appreciation for our community and its unique character. My professional journey has been diverse, with roles such as quality control specialist at Cardinal Tire, customer service representative at Peoples Natural Gas and operations manager at Service Master/Ontrack. These experiences have equipped me with strong problem-solving and management skills, which I believe are essential for effective leadership.

I also have a rich history of community involvement, including 17 years as the events manager for the City of Sumter. In this capacity, I planned and executed numerous city events, collaborating with various departments and external organizations to create meaningful experiences for our residents. Additionally, I co-own Danny's Trophy Shop and manage my own business, Carnivore Butcher & Bottle, which emphasizes high-quality service and community engagement.

While I may not have formal political experience, my extensive work in community service has allowed me to connect with

residents from all walks of life. I have served as president of the Sumter Jaycees, chaired events like the Iris Festival and volunteered with many local organizations. Through these roles, I have developed a keen understanding of the issues facing our community, particularly in Ward 4. I am committed to advocating for our residents and ensuring that their voices are heard in the decision-making process.

How would you describe the responsibilities of the Ward 4 representative?

As the Ward 4 representative, my responsibilities would encompass serving as a voice for the residents of our community, ensuring their needs and concerns are effectively communicated to the city council. This role involves actively engaging with constituents to understand their challenges and aspirations and advocating for policies that promote the well-being and growth of Ward 4.

Additionally, I would be responsible for overseeing local initiatives and projects, ensuring they align with the interests of our community. This includes collaborating with various stakeholders, such as local organizations, businesses and government agencies, to foster partnerships that can enhance the quality of life in Ward 4.

Moreover, I would focus on addressing critical issues, such as public safety, economic development and community engagement. This means not only advocating for increased

SUMTER CITY COUNCIL, WARD 4 FROM PAGE D15

resources and support for these areas but also being accessible to residents, listening to their feedback and keeping them informed about city developments.

Ultimately, my role as a Ward 4 representative would be to champion the needs of our community, promote transparency and accountability in local government and work tirelessly to create a vibrant and prosperous environment for all residents.

If elected, what specific goals do you have for city council over the next term, and how do you plan to achieve them?

If elected as the Ward 4 representative on Sumter City Council, I have set specific goals aimed at enhancing the quality of life for our residents while addressing the pressing issues in our community. My primary objectives include improving public safety, promoting neighborhood revitalization and fostering economic growth.

To enhance public safety, my foremost goal is to advocate for a greater police presence in high-crime areas and support community policing initiatives. I plan to engage with both law enforcement and community members to strengthen relationships and build trust. Additionally, I will encourage the establishment of neighborhood watch programs and promote the installation of security measures, such as surveillance cameras and improved lighting, to deter criminal activities.

Promoting neighborhood revitalization is another essential goal. I aim to collaborate closely with zoning boards to enforce property maintenance codes and tackle issues related to neglected homes and zoning violations. By working with local organizations and community members, I will advocate for beautification projects and initiatives that enhance the aesthetic appeal of our neighborhoods, fostering pride among residents and creating a welcoming

environment for all.

Finally, I am committed to fostering economic growth by attracting new businesses and supporting local entrepreneurs. I plan to collaborate with the Development Board to create incentives that encourage businesses to invest in Sumter. Additionally, I will focus on promoting the city's cultural, historical and recreational offerings to enhance our community's appeal to potential investors and visitors.

To achieve these goals, I will prioritize open communication with residents, hold regular forums to discuss progress and actively seek feedback to ensure that my initiatives align with the community's needs. By leveraging my extensive background in community service and collaboration, I am dedicated to making meaningful improvements in Ward 4 and the City of Sumter as a whole.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

In Sumter, several pressing challenges require immediate attention, particularly public safety, support for small businesses and economic development.

Public safety is a critical concern, with rising incidents of shootings, thefts and car break-ins. To address this, I will advocate for a stronger police presence and faster response times in high-crime areas. Promoting community policing initiatives will help build trust and encourage residents to report crimes. Additionally, I will support the expansion of neighborhood watch programs and push for enhanced security measures like improved lighting and surveillance cameras to deter criminal activities.

Small businesses are essential to our local economy but often face obstacles to growth. The city can play a significant role in supporting these enterprises by fostering community

engagement, which benefits both small businesses and the community as a whole. I will prioritize education, training and development opportunities to empower entrepreneurs. Furthermore, I will advocate for zoning regulations that create a supportive environment for small businesses, ensuring they have the necessary resources to thrive. By boosting profitability through targeted support, we can cultivate a dynamic ecosystem that encourages innovation and sustainability.

Lastly, economic development is crucial for creating opportunities that retain our youth in Sumter. By fostering a vibrant job market and supporting local businesses, we can provide meaningful employment options that motivate young people to stay in our community. Investing in workforce development programs aligned with their skills and interests will help them secure well-paying jobs. By encouraging entrepreneurial initiatives, we can inspire youth to start their own businesses, contributing to the local economy.

By addressing these challenges through targeted initiatives and community collaboration, I am committed to enhancing the quality of life for all residents in Sumter, creating a safer, more vibrant, and economically prosperous community.

What successes have you seen in Sumter City Council that you want to build on?

Public safety is my top priority, and I have observed positive developments in this area through community policing and crime prevention programs. If elected, I will support the expansion of these initiatives and seek additional funding to ensure that all neighborhoods feel safe.

Additionally, community engagement has improved through town hall meetings and outreach programs. I plan to build on this success by increasing the frequency of

community forums and utilizing social media to gather more feedback and encourage broader participation, creating a stronger platform for residents to discuss local projects and priorities.

Infrastructure improvements have also been a key focus, with significant upgrades to roads, parks and public facilities. I will advocate for ongoing investment in infrastructure to ensure our neighborhoods remain safe and accessible while promoting projects that enhance greenspaces and recreational facilities.

Economic development initiatives have successfully attracted new businesses and supported local entrepreneurs. I aim to strengthen these efforts by partnering with local businesses and educational institutions to create job training programs that align residents with available opportunities.

Finally, I will advocate for sustainability initiatives, promoting environmental conservation and sustainable development to ensure a prosperous future for our community.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

Yes, I am actively involved in the community in many ways. Growing up in Sumter, I built lasting friendships, including connections with many local leaders. My engagement with nonprofit and civic organizations has allowed me to participate deeply in local initiatives.

One of my greatest joys has been volunteering at the First Church of God, where I helped with children's activities and fundraisers that support vital youth programs. My focus in youth ministry has been on creating engaging opportunities for children to learn and grow.

Over the past 40+ years, I have volunteered with various civic and nonprofit organizations. My work with the Friends of Swan Lake and the Sumter Evening Pilot Club has centered on enhancing local

parks and providing support to those in need. As an honorary commander at Shaw Air Force Base, I worked to strengthen the relationship between the base and the community, fostering mutual understanding. I also dedicated time to the Emmanuel Church Soup Kitchen, serving meals to individuals facing food insecurity.

Through my membership in the Rotary Club, I continue to collaborate on projects that benefit Sumter as a whole. These diverse experiences have enriched my life and contributed to a stronger, more supportive community. I often find myself running into someone I know, sharing a chat about family and the latest happenings, which underscores the connections I've built over the years.

Is there anything else you want to add about yourself?

What sets me apart is my deep-rooted connection to Sumter, having lived here my entire life. This has given me a unique understanding of the community's history, values and needs. Additionally, I have over 17 years of experience working for the city, which has equipped me with the skills necessary to collaborate effectively with city departments, business owners, civic organizations and residents.

My personal love for Sumter drives my dedication to enhancing the quality of life in our community. I am committed to listening to the concerns of my neighbors, representing their voices and working collaboratively to create positive change. I believe that this personal connection, combined with my professional experience, positions me well to advocate for the interests of Ward 4 residents effectively. I'm eager to bring my passion and commitment to city council to serve the residents of Sumter, ensuring that their needs and aspirations are prioritized in our city's future. "Together for a Safer, Stronger Sumter!"



SCOTT BURKETT
NONPARTISAN

Tell us about yourself, including any political experience and how long you've lived in your district.

I have always been passionate about my community and its growth and development.

Despite not having any political experience, I have actively contributed to making a positive impact through initiatives like the litter campaign in Sumter. My deep roots in the historic district and my recent return to Ward 4 in 2020 have given me a unique perspective and understanding of the needs and concerns of the people in these areas. I am excited to use my passion, experience and commitment to serve and make a difference in my community.

How would you describe the responsibilities of the Ward 4 representative?

As a representative for Ward 4, my main responsibility is to serve and advocate for the constituents in my ward. However, I also have a larger goal of improving the overall well-being of the entire Sumter community. While I will prioritize the needs of my specific ward, I am committed to implementing initiatives that benefit all residents of Sumter.

If elected, what specific goals do you have for city council over the next term, and how do you plan to achieve them?

The implementation of a city-wide camera system, paired with improved lighting, will be a key component of my proposed initiative if elected. This system will serve three main purposes: 1) to catch criminals after a crime has been committed, providing valuable evidence for prosecution, 2) to

act as a deterrent for criminal activity and 3) to aid authorities in determining fault in car crashes at intersections. This will ultimately improve the safety and security of our city and its citizens.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

It is important to acknowledge that crime exists in all communities, including Sumter. As a mid-sized city, we must prioritize enforcing laws and keeping dangerous individuals off our streets. We must also work to change the perception of Sumter as a crime-ridden city, as it does not truly reflect the hardworking and law-abiding citizens who call this place home. We must come together as a community to address this issue and make Sumter a safer place for all.

What successes have you seen in Sumter City Council that you want to build on?

It is imperative to also recognize the contributions of past leaders and their efforts in getting the city to where it is today. The new generation brings fresh perspectives, but it is the collective efforts of all leaders that have shaped our city into what it is now. We must continue to work together and build upon each other's ideas to ensure the continued success and growth of our community. Let us also not forget to thank and acknowledge the hard work and dedication of our city and county council in addressing issues such as litter, which affects us all. Together, as Team Sumter, we can make our city even stronger for generations to come.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

My passion for community service led me to create the Sumter Litter Alliance years ago, which has now become a formal commission between the city and county and has been renamed the Sumter Litter

Advisory Board. Currently, I serve as the vice-chairman of this committee, working toward a cleaner and more sustainable environment for our community. In addition to my work with the Sumter Litter Alliance, I have also dedicated my time and efforts to the Sumter Sertoma Club for several years and look forward to joining more clubs in the future to continue making a positive impact in my community.

Is there anything else you want to add about yourself?

I am proud to be a part of the community in my "small" town. I have lived here for most of my life, only leaving to attend college. Over the years, I have witnessed the growth and transformation of Sumter thanks to initiatives like the Penny for Progress campaign, which I fully support. As I see Sumter continue to evolve in the 21st century, I am committed

to being actively involved in its progress for the long term. Ward 4 is my home, and I am proud to be a resident here.

VOTE TUESDAY NOV. 5th

A strong voice for real South Carolina values

- ✓ The Biden/Harris border policies have enabled millions to illegally cross our southern border. Ralph Norman says we need to secure the border now!
- ✓ Ralph Norman warned Democrats that their reckless, wasteful spending in Congress would cause massive inflation. Ralph was right!
- ✓ Only a return to common-sense, conservative values in Washington can help restore our country and economy. Your vote matters on November 5th!

www.ElectRalphNorman.com

Paid for by Ralph Norman for Congress

SUMTER COUNTY COUNCIL, DISTRICT 1



ANGUS MCDUFFIE
REPUBLICAN

Tell us about yourself, including any political experience and how long you've lived in your district.

I have lived in Sumter all my life with the exception of when I was in school. I am married to Susan and between us we have eight grown children. I was adopted as an infant and have three adopted children myself, two of whom are special needs. I am and always will be a child advocate. I was a foster parent of 32 children, served as a child advocate and served on the Sumter County DSS board and the Sumter County Foster Parents association. My family owned and operated McDuffie Furniture Company on Main Street in Sumter. I started working at the store (then Home Furniture Company) before I was a teenager. My father didn't believe in allowances; he believed you work to earn money. I worked at the furniture store all my life, going on the payroll at 14. My father bought the business from his parents, and like my father I bought the business from him. My wife and I also started and operated "The Sleep Rite Shop," which was located in the Sumter Mall. I have been in business over 50 years having gone from floor sweeper to office worker to bookkeeper, to salesman, to manager to owner. I guess you could say there isn't

anything I haven't done when it comes to business. I have a BS degree in finance from the University of South Carolina (deans list) and completed all the course work for a MS degree in human recourse management from Troy State University. Where my wife and I now live has been in our family since the 1950's and was a "getaway" for our family and employees. I more or less grew up here, it was where I spent much of my weekends. Sue and I officially moved to Rembert about seven years ago after I made some much-needed renovations to the original house.

How would you describe the responsibilities of Rembert's county council representative?

As far as my political experience, I did run for school board once, but this is my first entry into a wider political arena. I don't really see myself as a politician at all. Rather, I see myself as servant to the people in my district and Sumter County as a whole. I feel it is shortsighted to focus only on a single district because what is good for the county is good for everyone. If you are in public service, you listen. You make certain you understand the issues the people in your district have then be honest about what you can and can't do.

Playing politics with people's issues is not something I will do. If you have an issue or a problem as a council member, I will not tell you I will do something or have something done if I know it's not the truth. When it comes to me, what you see is what you get.

If elected, what specific goals do you have for the county council over the next term, and how do you plan to achieve them?

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter County (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

If elected, one of my goals will certainly be to use my business experience and education to make certain that we, the county, get our money's worth for every penny we spend. After all, it's not our money. It came from the people we serve and should be treated as such. I have spent most of my life in business. I know what it means to make a payroll, to pay that power bill, and it teaches you to be a fiscal conservative.

Another one of my goals is to be available to everyone in my district. I'm retired and therefore will be a full-time councilman, not part-timer working out of the area. I will publish my phone number, and email address and I will be there when you call.

As far as goals for council, there will always be roads, taxes, education, and these are important issues. If elected, I will do what I can to meet the needs of the people in my district in a fair and honest way. As additional issues arise, I will address them with the same honesty and straightforward attitude I outlined above.

What successes have you seen in Sumter County Council that you want to build on?

Sumter County Council has accomplished a great many

things. Roads have been paved, areas cleaned, new industries recruited, business development, and the list goes on.

Sumter County Council has been and will continue to be a driving force to improve the living standard of everyone in Sumter County. That is why I am running for council, to be a part of something that is working to make the lives better for everyone, not just in one district but in the entire county. It's a lofty goal, but without people willing to give of their time and energy we will not progress. One thing is for sure, if I'm elected you will see my working as hard as I know how to see that Sumter County is the prominent County in South Carolina.

Do you agree with Sumter County Council's decision to place the Capital Projects Sales Tax Referendum (Penny for Progress) onto ballots in November?

When it comes to the Penny for Progress, I don't think the general population sees all the improvements it has brought to our area. One thing that I do know is that a great deal of the money raised through the Penny for Progress comes from people who are visiting our county. When we have a baseball tournament or soccer tournament, or people going to the beach or a tennis match, all these visitors are paying into the Penny for Progress. That means you and I are not footing the bill. Where do people think the extra money comes from to pave roads in the county? How about the new judicial center, fire department, police department,

and the list goes on. Yes, I support the Penny for Progress.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

Am I actively involved in the community? The list is a long one because I learned from my father that you give back to the community that has given to you. I have mentioned being a foster parent and child advocate, but I have been involved with the Chamber of Commerce, Merchants Association, downtown promotional council, Department of Social Services, Downtown revitalization, Through the Sumter Rotary Club, Happy Feet, Roadside clean-up, The CART fund (served as Treasurer) and bell wringing for the Salvation Army. At my church, I've served as treasurer, bookkeeper, sang in the choir, usher and building and grounds committee. I'm sure there are more, but I don't keep score on such things. I just try to do what I can when the need is there.

Is there anything else you want to add about yourself?

If elected, there will never be a time when I'm not available. There will never be a time that I don't try to solve a problem that is brought to me. There will never be a time that I am not honest with what I can and can't do. There will never be a time that I stop trying to serve the needs of my district and my county.



CARLTON B. WASHINGTON
DEMOCRAT
INCUMBENT

Tell us about yourself, including any political experience and how long you've lived in your district.

First and foremost, I am a Christian, husband, father and grandfather. My family has lived in the Rembert community for six generations. I attended public schools in Sumter School District 2, Hillcrest High School, Class of 1982 graduate. I am a member of Mt. Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church. I returned to the district full time in 2012.

I have worked in the General Assembly arena for the past 30 years. I am a consultant and strategist. The ability to communicate with people from all walks of life and find common ground is paramount to successful problem resolution. My professional experience has yielded me the ability to be a change maker.

How would you describe the responsibilities of Rembert's county council representative?

Sumter County Council District 1 encompasses Pinewood, Manchester Forrest, Cherryvale, Wedgefield, Horatio, Pisgah Crossroads, Borden, Rembert and parts of the SHAW AFB community. All these areas are principally rural in nature. As

such, the issues facing Sumter County Council District 1, while massive, are comparable to those of the City of Sumter. Those common issues include roads, water infrastructure, economic development, litter, environmental protection, street lighting and quality of life challenges.

The difference is those issues in rural Sumter County are not adequately addressed. The lack of resource allocation to rural Sumter County has widened the gap. Therefore, the responsibility to bring long overdue basic services to rural Sumter County Council District 1 is the principal responsibility.

If reelected, what specific goals do you have for county council over the next term and how do you plan to achieve them?

Continuing the progress made in terms of making basic services the fundamental goal of government, the purpose for which government was established. The plan to accomplish this objective is easy. Instead of making ancillary projects a priority, making basic services a priority through coalition building, community engagement and solution-based conversation and work.

What do you consider your most significant achievement as District 1 representative since you assumed the role in 2021? How has it benefited the county?

Making basic services front and center has yielded notable

progress in the areas of litter, road maintenance and, for the first time since 1991, real solutions and support to bring more roads into the county road system. Work in these areas has produced measurable health, public safety and emergency service access and delivery improvements.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter County (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

Poor infrastructure, which includes roadways, water systems, outdated schools, lack of public transportation in some areas, litter control/enforcement, additional administrative and professional support for the Veteran's Affairs Office and more support for law enforcement (Sumter County Sheriff's Office) and the Office of the Solicitor.

I intend to make improvements in these areas by thoroughly addressing our infrastructure deficiencies. Doing so will lead to better economic development opportunities, which in turn will produce higher paying jobs. Establishing a solid infrastructure base is critical to increasing household incomes, which ultimately drives improved quality of life in Sumter County.

What successes have you seen in Sumter County Council that you want to build on?

Building consensus among council members to focus on basic services, incorporating public input and implementing solutions.

Do you agree with Sumter County Council's decision to place the Capital Projects Sales Tax Referendum (Penny for Progress) onto ballots in November?

No. The Capital Projects Sales Tax, CPST, development process needs to be more transparent. Citizens should be able to easily access detailed project plans, scope, budgets, timelines, preliminary renditions, etc., online via the county's (hopefully soon to be interactive) website or via public meetings, presentations, focus groups, etc. More detailed information will allow residents to fully evaluate proposed projects and make an informed decision.

The CPST Commission meetings should be open to the public. The opportunity to listen to the CPST Commissioner's dialogue, questions, concerns, scoring system and how projects are ultimately selected for inclusion or excluded is beneficial to voters. Moving forward, Sumter County should consider soliciting surveys from residents, community organizations and other stakeholders prior to formulating project proposals.

As it stands, residents were denied the opportunity for substantial input, project details, and feedback from the County or the CPST Commission on the project selection process and merits of proposed projects with supporting data. My constituents, as well as residents in other districts, are not satisfied with the lack of emphasis placed on basic services. Instead of a state-of-the-

art baseball arena, outdoor skate park, golf course upgrades, pickle ball courts and more greenways, they want emphasis placed on water problems that plague rural areas across the County and in the City of Sumter. The same goes for road infrastructure, which is in dire need of improvements in, out and around the entire County. A strong road system is fundamental to economic development and quality of life which are top priorities for residents in Sumter County Council District 1.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

Absolutely. Prior to my election, community involvement and service included addressing rural food scarcity, promoting and protecting rural schools, community – law enforcement partnerships, and seeking resources and solutions to the lack of resources in rural areas.

Is there anything else you want to add about yourself?

As a new council member, my focus on basic services was received with some resistance. However, over the course of my service on council, which challenged long-held practices and mindsets, senior members have started to embrace new ideas and solutions to address issues that appeared futile and are now engaged in solution-based discussion and action. I am dedicated.

SUMTER COUNTY COUNCIL, DISTRICT 5



VIVIAN MCGHANEY
DEMOCRAT
INCUMBENT

Tell us about yourself, including any political experience and how long you've lived in your district.

I am one of nine children born to Samuel and Louise T. Fleming. I grew up in the Shiloh Community of Sumter County where I still reside. I am married to Rev. Daryl McGhaney. We have a blended family of three adult children and six grandchildren. I was educated in the public schools of Sumter and graduated from Mayewood High School in 1975. I attended college and earned a bachelor of science degree from USC State University, a master of science from Cambridge College

and a second master's from the University of SC. I was first elected to Sumter County Council (representing District 5) in 2002 to fill an unexpired term and was reelected in 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016 and 2020.

I have served in many capacities as councilwoman, which includes vice-chairman, chairman for several terms and chairman of several committees. I also served on the Sumter County Development Board and continue to serve on the Santee-Lynches Regional Council of Governments and the Sumter County HOME Consortium.

How would you describe the responsibilities of District 5's County Council representative?

As the county council representative of District 5, it is

SEE SUMTER COUNTY COUNCIL, DISTRICT 5, PAGE D18

David

MERCHANT

for

MAYOR

www.merchantformayor.com

PAID FOR BY MERCHANT FOR MAYOR

SUMTER COUNTY COUNCIL, DISTRICT 5 FROM PAGE D17

my responsibility to represent the citizens of District 5 by being my constituent's voice and assuring that their needs are brought to the table. Doing this is imperative for me to build relationships with my colleagues to support my agenda and advocate for the unique, specific needs of District 5. These needs include water expansion, rural road paving and maintenance, supporting volunteer firefighters, waste management, stormwater mitigation, access to quality-of-life amenities (i.e. recreational facilities and services for children), etc.

If reelected, what specific goals do you have for county council over the next term, and how do you plan to achieve them?

I plan to continue working with other leaders to ensure that our efforts accomplish the intended plight of finding ways to fund the fundamental needs of constituents. I also endeavor to help Sumter to be progressive and appealing to our younger citizens. We tend to lose them to metropolitan areas.

What do you consider your most significant achievement as District 5 representative since you assumed the role in 2002? How has it benefited the

county?

My most significant achievement has been the expansion of clean drinking water to more residents, having Emergency Medical Services in the eastern part of the county, helping volunteer firefighter fighters to receive trucks and equipment they need and the paving of more rural dirt roads. These are fundamental needs for so many residents. By collaborating with state representatives and senators, I was able to garner the support needed to resurface one of the longest thoroughfares in District 5 - Narrow Paved Road (SC Highway 53). My advocacy has also helped me to be a part of decisions to find ways to mitigate stormwater runoff and flooding, fund public education, support economic development and support the process of developing a referendum that generated revenue for capital projects throughout the county. This benefits the entire county, not just District 5.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter County (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

Some of the challenges/concerns I see in Sumter are:

- Limited commercial development (our younger citizens

leave Sumter for innovative shopping experiences) - I would like to be a part of solutions to help effectuate positive change. Having had past participation in collaboration and strategic planning, I have witnessed how coming together can work. I plan to continue to advocate for strategic planning and collaboration with other leaders for the benefit of growth in commercial and economic development.

- Slow progress (trying to expand water to everyone who needs it has been at a snail's pace). Paving and resurfacing rural roads have also been very slow, as only a few rural roads have been paved or resurfaced over time) - I intend to continue pushing for more funding to support this vision.
- Inequity in access to quality-of-life amenities (residents in the rural areas are not privileged to many of the quality-of-life assets that others have in excess). I intend to continue to advocate equal access. There is also a disparity among areas when it comes to access to recreational facilities including gymnasiums. I will continue to advocate for rural recreation support as well as help grassroots organizations with their efforts to bring quality to their communities. I intend to

keep these challenges/concerns at the forefront and advocate for strategies to expedite progress.

What successes have you seen in Sumter County Council that you want to build on?

Progress has been made through the funds afforded by the Capital Projects Sales Tax (commonly called Penny for Progress). This process has proven to be successful in generating funding for large-scale projects. There is still a need for more support for public safety—law enforcement, emergency medical equipment and support of tankers, brush trucks and fire engines for our volunteer firefighterfighters. I would also like to help build on this concept to help fund much-needed capital projects like the one proposed for a pedestrian crosswalk to alleviate safety issues that resulted in fatalities when residents of the Walnut Hill Community try to cross over the freeway simply to shop for food and other essentials. I endeavor to advocate for a paradigm shift that would help everyone see the need to support the rural communities of Sumter County. When we ride through Sumter, we can see the plethora of projects that past referenda have afforded. It is time to shift that focus to rural

communities with the same level of collaboration, persistence, and quality. That is what I would like to build upon.

Do you agree with Sumter County Council's decision to place the Capital Projects Sales Tax Referendum (Penny for Progress) onto ballots in November?

Yes, I agree to allow this question to be placed on the ballot. This action allows the voters to make the decision, thus supporting the democratic process—government of the people, by the people, and for the people. I am not one to stifle that process.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

Yes, I support grassroots community groups throughout my District. I attend meetings, listen to concerns, report to constituents and advocate for their concerns.

Is there anything else you want to add about yourself?

My mantra is, "If I can help anyone as I pass along, then my living shall not be in vain". I have been a public servant all my adult life, and I want to continue to serve.



SHERY WHITE
REPUBLICAN

How would you describe the responsibilities of a county council representative?

I believe a county council representative first has a fiduciary responsibility to the people of his/her district and the entire county. County council should be transparent in all facets of government. Council is also responsible for providing the proper environment for growth and new opportunities for our citizens as well as improving living conditions and infrastructure for all parts of the district and the county, not just a select few.

If elected, what specific goals do you have for the county council over the next term, and how do you plan to achieve them?

I would like to see our council exercise professionalism and decorum when dealing with each other and the public. Mutual respect is vital to cooperative governance. A significant need throughout our county, and especially in District 5, is infrastructure, including, but not limited to our crumbling roads and bridges. I seek to work more closely with SCDOT and whomever it takes to ensure we have better roads throughout the county. District 5 roads, especially in the rural areas around Mayesville and Lynchburg are simply shameful. In addition, our roadways are not being maintained, so we have grass

along the roads that is 3-4 feet tall and litter that is out of control.

Regarding litter, we need the increase in millage that was initiated specifically to litter control to be used effectively. Right now, the appearance of our county is not conducive to new citizens and companies coming to our county. This needs to be seriously addressed.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter County (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

- There is a great need in Sumter County for accountability at all levels. Elected officials should be held accountable for actions (or inaction) that harm our citizens or do not help them. Complacency and deafness toward the constituency is not acceptable. Neither is self-enrichment. I intend to play an active role in developing solutions to the problems we face as well as staying in touch with the people of my district. I will maintain an open line of communication with all.
- We have a problem with civility that runs throughout our government institutions and bleeds into our streets, sometimes literally. Crime is out of control, and no one is being held accountable. Much of this, I believe, is due to generational poverty. We must reach our people where they are. Sitting aloft without taking action daily

is not acceptable anymore. Most people do not know who their county council representative is, and once elected, change this will change.

What successes have you seen in Sumter County Council that you want to build on?

Sumter has been fortunate to have good people of our community to step up and help improve opportunities for individuals and businesses, large and small, so that people can thrive and enjoy their lives. I would like to see more problems resolved that influence companies not to come to Sumter, while improving opportunities for small businesses to open and to flourish.

Do you agree with Sumter County Council's decision to place the Capital Projects Sales Tax Referendum (Penny for Progress) onto ballots in November?

Yes. The Penny for Progress program is a great way to improve our city and county that does not place an undue burden on any one aspect of the community. Do I like every project on the proposed projects referendum? No. But no one does, and there is something for everyone on the list. We need solutions like this one to address needs without raising property and other taxes and fees. Furthermore, Sumter benefits from an improved County that has been

financed over 35% by people who come to Sumter for conferences and sporting events. That's a win-win situation.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

Yes. I participate in civic organizations, my church and the school system, of course. As a board member, I am prevented from volunteering in our school system in a meaningful way. However, when elected to county council, I look forward to being able to volunteer in the school district. I am finishing out a term on the Governor's Advisory Council on Aging. My husband and I enjoy helping our friends and neighbors when we can. We both have been blessed with servant's hearts.

Is there anything else you want to add about yourself?

I believe that being elected to any office creates an important bond between the elected official and his/her constituents. This bond is not to be taken lightly or treated with indifference or complacency. I will be honored and humbled to serve the people of Sumter County District 5 as their councilwoman and look forward to the challenges and victories I know we can see for our County.

SUMTER COUNTY COUNCIL, DISTRICT 7



TASHA GARDNER-GREENE
DEMOCRAT

School in 1991. I have a Bachelor of Science in Criminology from Saint Leo University. I was employed by Black River Electric Cooperative Inc., for twenty-one years. I serve on two boards the Litter Advisory board and I am a Housing Authority commissioner.

In your own words, how would you describe the responsibilities of a County Council Member?

The responsibility of a County Council Representative is to represent the people of their District. The council person is the face of the district, who will be responsible for listening,

speaking, working, and helping their constituents. It is important that we work together as a team and together we are responsible to make District 7 a better place for everyone to live, work and raise a family, no matter how small.

If elected, what specific goals do you have for the county over the next term and how do you plan to achieve them?

If elected, I would like to extend economic development along Highway 378/76, and Highway 521. I would like to promote farmland preservation, and work with local farmers to prevent soil erosion

damage. These two items that I just mentioned, will take a lot of cooperation to increase growth without destroying the land. I would like to partner with local businesses and the school district to establish a high school internship program for all students.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

The Challenges/concerns I see in Sumter County would be the increase of crime specifically gun violence and underdeveloped areas of potential growth. I believe without having all of the information, data, and resources it is hard to fully see the whole spectrum of the challenges / concerns we face in Sumter County. Challenges / concerns should be addressed by meeting with all vested parties, writing down all possible solutions, formulating a strategy/ action plan and implementing that plan.

Sumter County has made major strides in economic development that I would like to see spread into other areas, especially in District 7. It would be nice to have: business, hotels, and parks down Hwy 378/76, Hwy 15 South and Hwy 521 South.

Do you agree with Sumter County Council's decision to place the Capital Projects Sales Tax Referendum (Penny for Progress) onto ballots in November?

I agree with the Sumter

County Council's decision to pass the Capital Projects Sale Tax Referendum (Penny for Progress) to be on the ballot in November so that the people (voters) can make the decision. That does not mean I agree with the order that the projects should be done, those projects that enhance the quality of life should be completed first. I do believe it the responsibility of Sumter County Council is to present suggestions, recommendations, and plans to move the county forward with the people in mind. Then those suggestions, recommendations and plans should be voted on by the people especially, when it concerns a monetary increase. The vote for or against, is one way to know what is important and valuable to the people. That is why it is so important that everyone exercise their right to vote.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

I am very active in my community. I am a member of three neighborhood associations: Greater Turkey Creek neighborhood association which meet the third Thursday of every month at the South Hope Center, Crosswell neighborhood association that meets the first Monday of every month at the North Hope Center, and South Sumter neighborhood association that meets the third Monday of every month at the South Sumter Gym.

Michael Leviner (Republican) did not submit responses.

David
MERCHANT
for **MAYOR**
www.merchantformayor.com
PAID FOR BY MERCHANT FOR MAYOR

SUMTER SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 1



BRIAN L. ALSTON
NONPARTISAN

Why are you running?

The role of a board member is to work in collaboration with the administration and the communities that it serves. I am running to continue to serve the students, staff and communities of Sumter School District. It was hard to not run when the stakeholders (students, staff, school board trustees, parents, administrators, civic leaders and communities) of Sumter School District have called upon you to serve with a focus on decisions that are in the best interest of all children. My commitment to Sumter School District and the community at large is just as strong today as it was when I took the oath of office. The focus and unwavering dedication that I possess is for what is best for all children and the betterment of our community. With no ulterior or partisan motive, the focus will be on putting children first.

Have you run for political office before? If so, explain:

- Lost in 2014 and 2016 for the S.C. House District 50 seat.
- Won 2018 general election for the Area 1 seat on school board.
- Lost 2022 general election for the Area 1 seat on school board.

How long have you lived at the address you filed with?

I am a lifelong resident of Area 1. My family relocated at the end of my eighth-grade year at Hillcrest Middle School to Columbia, South Carolina, where I graduated from Columbia High School, and subsequently, I moved to Atlanta, Georgia, to attend and graduated from Morehouse College. Although I have lived in various communities, states and countries, Sumter County and the Rembert community are my home.

Current job/profession:

Grant administrator for a state of South Carolina agency and apprentice funeral director and embalmer at Palmer Memorial Chapel Inc.

What makes you qualified for the seat?

I believe that my experiences both professionally and personally make me qualified and the most-qualified candidate for this seat. Professionally, I have served as a Senate page/legislative aide in the South Carolina state Senate; an equal employment opportunity investigator with South Carolina Human Affairs Commission; was tasked by the Governor's State Workforce Development Board to provide assistance with the development and implementation of employment and training programs through funding awarded to local workforce development areas, including Santee-Lynches (Sumter, Clarendon, Lee and Kershaw counties); and most recently, as a grant administrator of federal, state and local multimillion-dollar grants. These professional experiences have been a result of a decade of service to the state of South Carolina. Personally, my experiences as a former K – eighth-grade student in Sumter School District, grandson of the late Mrs. Mary Lee Alston -- an employee who dedicated 42.5 years of service to our beloved district as a secretary and acting administrator -- and most recently as a former school board trustee have allowed me to see the full spectrum of our school district. These are unique experiences that allow me to make decisions that are beneficial to all students, staff and communities.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter School District (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

Staff recruitment and retention: Every student in Sumter School District deserves a high-quality teacher in every classroom. Increasing teacher salaries is my top fiscal priority, in addition to salaries of other essential staff, including para-professionals, bus drivers, school nurses, food service and building service workers. Our school district

is better when its staff is valued, respected and compensated for their dedication and commitment to our children. Unfilled vacancies and positions sitting idle are unacceptable in our schools and must take budgetary priority. We must stop expanding the district office and expand our schools, classrooms, buses and cafeterias with staff that are contributing to educating our students.

Facilities: We say in our communications that "our top priority is ensuring the safety of our students, staff and families," but that must also be true when it comes to the facilities as well. As such, making certain our schools are safe, secure and protected is not optional; it is mandatory. We can formulate a Master Plan, but our students, staff and communities are in our facilities now; they cannot wait until a bond referendum is passed to address facility needs. The Facility Study must be evaluated and used to make decisions regarding the health, safety and security issues that are posed in real time. The board of trustees approves a Capital Improvement Bond twice a year; we must use these resources to ensure facility needs are met. We must advocate for our district with stakeholders to assist with addressing the facility needs that are greater than our capacity.

Academic achievement and performance: Every school in Sumter School District must maintain the same quality and content of education, programming, resources and services. We must conduct an academic audit of Sumter School District and analyze what is not working to engage what is working to replicate and implement it. Our district must invest into services to provide support, resources and opportunities for our students and their success. As policy makers, we must adopt and implement policies that support academic achievement and performance in collaboration with the administration. We should never blame children for what they have not been taught and we cannot ridicule staff for performance issues when we have not equipped them with resources to be successful. As your

school board trustee, my duty is to ensure every student in Sumter School District receives a high-quality education because they deserve the very best!

What successes have you seen in Sumter School District that you want to build on?

I would like to build upon the successes that were started during my tenure as a school board trustee, to include: equity audit; transportation ad-hoc committee; salary study; utilizing the facility study to support the work regarding safety and security of our schools; strengthening our relationship with the Sumter County Sheriff's Office and City of Sumter Police Department, along with our school resource officers; expansion of the Cybersecurity and STEM Mobile Units programming; and formal partnerships between our Sumter Career and Technology Center, local higher education partners and Shaw Air Force Base/Third Army. As former Policy Committee chair, the most important piece of legislation that I had the privilege to work on was the strategic plan and utilizing it to move our district forward. We must use this document and its policy implementation as a working document; it is the catalyst for change and creating the education system we desire and one our children deserve. We have a responsibility to our children to support and prepare them to be successful adults while navigating the complexities of our time.

Do you have children or grandchildren who attend a Sumter School District school? Please specify (you don't need to give their names). No.

Sumter School District has 15 schools that are more than 60 years old and has not constructed any schools since the 1990s. However, the district is also losing enrollment. The board of trustees has created a Master Plan Committee to craft a long-term vision for the district's facilities. What do you believe should be part of that vision?

We must evaluate *all* data

and do a cross comparison with neighboring districts to see where they are and where we should and/or need to be. It is important to ensure our students have comparable facilities and resources to neighboring districts and educational entities. They must be prepared and capable to compete locally, nationally and globally for careers both in the present and future. The decisions that we make must be beneficial to *all* children in every community for the betterment of their educational journey. Our Master Plan to craft a long-term vision for the district's facilities must include its stakeholders and ensure all voices are heard and considered. The district losing enrollment should not be a determining factor in the quality of education our children receive. As I mentioned previously, "We can formulate a Master Plan, but our students, staff and communities are in our facilities now." The school board of trustees and administration must develop a collaborative vision and be ambassadors for the shared vision in our communities and greater Sumter community. Let us stop talking in silos and be about the business of our students, staff and communities. Our students and staff deserve action, and our community deserves a clear plan with practical objectives to reach the desired goal of a quality education system in state-of-the-art facilities.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

I am actively involved in the community through civic organization affiliations, faith-based engagement and community center activities. As a member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc., I live by our motto, "Culture for Service and Service for Humanity." I think our former Sumter School District Teacher of the Year Amy Chua captured the essence of my community involvement the best: "email him, he replies, call him, he answers, invite him, he's there. That speaks for itself."



DANIEL PATRICK PALUMBO
INCUMBENT
NONPARTISAN

Why are you running?

I'm running because -- for nearly 10 years before I was elected to the board in 2022 -- I watched our schools struggle with board drama, declining test scores and growing student behavior issues. Since joining the board, alongside Dr. Wright/Sumter superintendent, we have managed to get things back on track. We have had two consecutive years of test score increases, implemented a new Code of Conduct, reduced bus driver and teacher vacancies to multi-year lows and placed security resource officers in every school. Our board has also worked hard to address differences in a constructive way.

While I'm proud of the progress we have made, I'm not satisfied yet -- there is still work to do. My 20 years of military service -- with skills in budgeting, discipline, security and human resources -- have played a key role in our success, and I want to finish the job. I ask the voters to support me again to keep this progress going, not only for my children, but for all the kids in our community. I'm still doing this for my own children, and now I feel my daughter sees one person can commit to community service and make a difference.

Have you run for political office before? If so, explain.

Yes, I ran for Sumter school board for the first time in the 2022 elections and won. I didn't have any political experience, but I have always felt like a parent first -- that is what drove me to run then, and that's why I'm running again. I want to continue being a voice for parents and students, making sure their needs are heard and addressed.

How long have you lived at the address you filed with?

11 years

Current job/profession:

I have been a local small business owner for the last six years, and I'm proud to bring joy and happiness to the community. When people asked why there wasn't more for families to enjoy, I heard them and invested in a franchise, bringing three tropical shaved ice trucks and kiosks to Sumter. Our motto is "Be Good, Do Good, For Good," and I live by that. I have used my business to educate children about operating food trucks, supported the Sumter Police Department with a recruiting video and donated thousands of dollars to nonprofits and schools. Giving back and making a positive impact is at the heart of everything I do.

What makes you qualified for the seat?

I have a total of 20 years of military service. I spent 10 years as a human resource manager and recruiter in both the government and private sector, where I earned multiple awards. Additionally, I have six years of experience as a resource advisor, managing an \$11 million budget, developing government spending plans, purchasing \$8 million in security equipment and procuring \$37,000 in maintenance contracts. I also served as a physical security program superintendent and flight chief, leading a 65-person division and managing law enforcement activities, including active shooter response to protect students, personnel and resources valued at \$3 billion.

Currently, I'm a business owner/manager with three Kona Ice franchises for the last seven years. I have given more than \$100,000 back to the local community (to nonprofits and schools).

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter School District (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

Absenteeism: The board has been made aware of alarming statistics regarding absenteeism in Sumter School District with thousands of school days being missed. To address this, we approved the hiring of a new truancy officer to track down students and hold parents accountable for their child's

attendance. We are also looking at involving the court system to enforce parental responsibility. In my view, keeping a child away from education is a form of child abuse and neglect, and we need to do more to ensure that every child attends school regularly.

New schools: Many of our schools are more than 75 years old and have only received minor renovations or patchwork repairs. Some schools are even closing off entire hallways due to disrepair, and it's costing taxpayers too much to maintain these outdated buildings with their old pipes and antiquated electrical systems. The statistics show that birth rates are falling, and we simply don't need as many buildings as we once did. Our students deserve modern, efficient schools where they can receive a great education.

Safety: Our new security administrator is working diligently to improve safety in our schools. After reviewing the current security camera system, I have seen that there are significant gaps, and the system is far from perfect. We need to install more cameras throughout the schools, including in classrooms. Many incidents happen in classrooms where a camera could provide vital evidence. Teachers are often called names or threatened, and having cameras would help protect them. In addition, in the event of an active-shooter situation, 911 centers could tap into the camera system and direct security forces to the threat, potentially saving lives in those critical moments.

What successes have you seen in Sumter School District that you want to build on?

In the 20 months that the new school board has been in office, we have accomplished quite a bit:

- We removed the 50% minimum grading floor, with more than 82% of teachers supporting its removal, putting responsibility back on students and parents for incomplete work.
- We have seen two consecutive years of test score increases, following nearly a decade of consistent declines.
- Teacher vacancies dropped

from 120 to just 40.

- We provided pay raises for teachers, administrators and bus drivers and approved a new pay scale.
- The new Code of Conduct we implemented led to a 25% reduction in behavior incidents and fighting.
- Bus driver vacancies decreased, and on-time rates improved.

- We appointed a new human resource director, who has boosted morale and streamlined processes, helping maintain low teacher vacancy rates.
- We approved the construction of a new professional development building.

SEE **SUMTER SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 1**, PAGE D20

Re-Elect

Margaret Jackson Sorrell (R)
Clarendon County Probate Judge

Vote
November 5, 2024



Attorney Since 1989
Probate Judge Since 2017

Make the right choice on November 5, 2024.
Re-Elect Clarendon County Probate Judge Margaret Sorrell. She is the only candidate with the education, experience and integrity we need in Probate Court.

SUMTER SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 1 FROM PAGE D19

- Our board has also maintained fiscal responsibility, ensuring the school budget grew during the last two years without raising property taxes, while receiving perfect audit reports with zero findings.
- This progress reflects our commitment to improving education and maintaining accountability in the district.

Do you have children or grandchildren who attend a Sumter School District school? Please specify (you don't need to give their names).
Yes, I have a daughter who is

currently a junior at Crestwood High School and also a USC Early College student. My two sons are both alumni of Crestwood High School and USC Early College. They were in the top 11% of their class, earned associate degrees and are now attending Clemson University. My middle son is working toward a bachelor's in business management, and my oldest son will be graduating in December with a bachelor's in wildlife management and a minor in business management. My wife and I are extremely proud of all their accomplishments.

Sumter School District has 15 schools that are more than 60 years old and has not constructed any schools since the 1990s. However, the district is also losing enrollment. The board of trustees has created a Master Plan Committee to craft a long-term vision for the district's facilities. What do you believe should be part of that vision?

As the co-chair of the Master Plan Committee, I believe that every school in our district needs upgrades. The data shows that families are getting smaller, which means we don't need as many

buildings and consolidation is necessary. I have visited neighboring districts, and their schools are top-notch — able to hold 40% more students while incorporating energy-saving features, built-in technology and better design flows for each grade level.

Our schools, on the other hand, are literally falling apart. That is why we have invited the public to tour these facilities and see firsthand what needs to change. We are pushing for a bond referendum to start building new schools by 2027. If we don't get this approval, our children's

learning environment will be at serious risk, and the situation could become dire.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

Yes, I have sat on the Sumter County Sheriff Community Relations Board for the last five years and have been a coach/mentor for the Sumter County Parks and Recreation Department for 11 YEARS.

SUMTER SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 2



CHRIS PATTEN
NONPARTISAN

Why are you running?

I am deeply concerned about the current state of our education system and believe that meaningful change is essential to improve our trajectory. Our End of Course scores and SC READY Test scores show that about 60% of our students are struggling and not ready to move to the next level. Education is the cornerstone of a stable and efficient society, and it plays a crucial role in breaking the cycle of poverty that affects so many in our nation.

By serving on the school board, I aim to advocate for policies and initiatives that will enhance the quality of education, support our students and teachers and ensure that every child has the opportunity to succeed. Most importantly, I am the husband of an elementary teacher, a father of two students and a man who is deeply committed to ensuring the success of our students. My diverse experiences and dedication to education make me well-qualified for the school board seat.

Have you run for political office before? If so, explain:

No.

How long have you lived at the address you filed with?

Five years, nine months

Current job/profession:

I am a retired U.S. Air Force master sergeant with 20 years of service. In 2021, I became the owner and operator of my own small business.

What makes you qualified for the seat?

With 20 years of experience as a senior non-commissioned officer, I have handled a wide range of challenges that require dedication, thorough research and resilience. I'm not afraid to ask tough questions and have developed a thick skin. Core values are deeply embedded in my character, and I embrace challenges head-on. I understand what it takes to lead and build an effective, efficient team, and I am eager to apply these skills and experiences to enhance the current team.

In my career, I spent three years overseeing education and

training, leading our team to win the Training Center of the Year award for three consecutive years. I was honored as Instructor of the Year for two consecutive years. Additionally, I conducted 37 Problem Identification training courses, educating more than 1,100 military leaders. I also acted as a liaison for an innovation team, where I implemented three distinct training courses and fostered multi-national partnerships.

My extensive experience in leadership, education and training uniquely positions me to contribute significantly to Sumter School District. By leveraging my skills in team building, problem-solving and innovation, I am confident that I can help drive marked improvements within the school board, ultimately leading to a more effective and successful educational environment for our students.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter School District (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

One of the most pressing challenges in Sumter School District is the unacceptable End of Course failure percentage. According to the 2023 district scores for math state assessment report, 61.9% of third-graders fail to meet state standards and expectations. This percentage grows exponentially through the eighth grade, where 82.4% of students fail to meet math standards. The data for ELA is similarly concerning. This situation is truly unacceptable and must be corrected immediately.

Improvement will only be made if we directly address the problem and stop sugar-coating it. I intend to be upfront and put things bluntly: We are failing. We cannot be surprised that our high school students struggle when we don't fix the problem at its root. We must tackle the issue early and be direct with students, parents, teachers and administration.

To improve these outcomes, I propose the following steps:

- Early intervention: Implement targeted intervention programs for students who are struggling in the early grades to prevent them from falling further behind.
- Enhanced support for teachers: Provide teachers with the necessary resources, training and support to effectively teach and engage students in both math and ELA.
- Parental involvement: Foster stronger partnerships with parents to ensure they are

actively involved in their children's education and aware of their progress.

- Data-driven decisions: Utilize data to identify specific areas of weakness and tailor instructional strategies to address those needs.
- Accountability: Hold all stakeholders accountable for student success, including setting clear goals and regularly reviewing progress.
- Stop advancing unprepared students: If a student is not ready and cannot be made ready in the summer months, the difficult decision must be made to hold the student until they are ready. The problem compounds if students are pushed through, as they will not be prepared for the next step in the curriculum.

By addressing these challenges head-on and implementing these strategic solutions, we can improve the educational outcomes for all students in Sumter School District.

What successes have you seen in Sumter School District that you want to build on?

Recent security measures, such as metal detectors at school entrances, have significantly reduced incidents and added a layer of deterrence that positively impacts our schools. I would like to see programs that involve law enforcement officers in hallways and cafeterias. These officers can get to know the students and provide positive reinforcement. Too often, our interactions with police officers occur only during negative situations. Programs like Dads on Duty can offer similar positive reinforcement, allowing community members to have a direct impact on our children.

The "Dads on Duty" program, which started at Southwood High School in Shreveport, Louisiana, has been a remarkable success. A group of fathers decided to take action after a series of fights led to numerous student arrests. By being present on campus, these dads have created a safer and more positive environment. They greet students, share jokes and offer support, which has significantly reduced violence and improved the overall atmosphere.

Other schools have also successfully implemented similar programs. For example, Pine Forest High School in Florida introduced "Dads on Duty" to reduce violence and support students. The program began with five dads who wore branded T-shirts and became familiar faces around the school, providing

positive male role models and helping to create a peaceful environment.

Currently, Sumter School District employs school resource officers (SROs) for its schools. Increasing the number of school resource officers can significantly improve interactions and positively impact students' lives. By integrating more law enforcement officers into daily school life, we can create a more supportive and secure environment, fostering a sense of community and safety.

Do you have children or grandchildren who attend a Sumter School District school? Please specify (you don't need to give their names).

No.

Sumter School District has 15 schools that are more than 60 years old and has not constructed any schools since the 1990s. However, the district is also losing enrollment. The board of trustees has created a Master Plan Committee to craft a long-term vision for the district's facilities. What do you believe should be part of that vision?

- Understanding enrollment decline: Sumter has 12 private schools serving more than 2,500 K-12 students, with enrollment growing as public-school academics fail to meet parents' and state standards. We must analyze why enrollment is decreasing by surveying families who left, studying demographic trends and understanding local economic factors.
- Community engagement and feedback: Engage with the community to gather insights and feedback. Understanding the needs and concerns of parents, students, teachers and community members can help address issues contributing to declining enrollment.
- Improving academic programs: Enhance the quality and variety of academic programs to attract and retain students. This could include expanding STEM programs, arts education and vocational training to meet diverse student interests and career paths.
- Modernization of facilities: Prioritize updating and renovating older schools to create a more appealing and functional learning environment. Modern, well-maintained facilities can be a significant factor for students

and teachers.

- Flexible and adaptive spaces: Design learning spaces that can adapt to changing educational needs and teaching methods. This includes creating multipurpose rooms, collaborative workspaces and outdoor learning areas. Not every child can learn sitting at a desk.
- Safety and security: Ensure that all schools have up-to-date security measures to provide a safe learning environment. This can include secure entry points, programs like "Dads on Duty," and emergency response plans.
- Reducing waste: Implement lean management principles to reduce waste in processes and operations. This can help optimize resources, improve efficiency and ensure that funds are used effectively.
- Accountability: Establish clear accountability measures for all stakeholders, including administrators, teachers, staff, students and parents. Regularly review performance metrics, set SMART goals and ensure transparency in decision-making processes to build trust and drive continuous improvement.

By focusing on these root causes and implementing strategic solutions, including the modernization of facilities, Sumter School District can create a sustainable and attractive educational environment that addresses declining enrollment and meets the needs of its community.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

I am deeply connected to our community, even though my involvement doesn't come with a formal title or specific position. As the owner and operator of my business, I have the privilege of interacting with community members daily. This allows me to understand their challenges and celebrate their successes alongside them. I genuinely care about the well-being of our community and am committed to making a positive impact. If given the opportunity to serve on the school board, I look forward to taking on a more active role and contributing even more to the community I care so much about.

Brittany English did not submit responses.

SUMTER SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 9



BONNIE S. DISNEY
INCUMBENT
NONPARTISAN

Why are you running?

I believe that public education is the key to allowing all children an opportunity to reach their goals and potential in life. Public educational systems welcome children from all walks of life and make efforts to find ways to enrich and give students the tools to be college and/or career ready and successful in future endeavors. I want to help Sumter School District be the best school district in South Carolina.

Have you run for political office before? If so, explain:

- 2017-2018 – Appointed by the legislative delegation to fill an at-large seat
- 2020 – Ran and lost in the general election in the district's former Area 6 race
- 2022-2024 – Ran and won but that term was changed to a two-year term by law to stagger future school board races and replacements

How long have you lived at the address you filed with?

My family and I have lived at this address for 24 years.

Current job/profession:

I am the current chairwoman of the Sumter School District school board. I am a retired teacher and former educational consultant.

What makes you qualified for the seat?

My educational background and experience provide me

with insights into the world of education as well as the ability to analyze issues, successes and problems in a school district.

Education: BA Baylor University, (English and Spanish); M.Ed., Wayne State University (Educational Psychology and Counseling); Master's plus 30, USC (education-related courses); Juris Doctorate/SC Bar (Capital Law School)

Work History:

- Taught in the following states and countries while a dependent spouse in the U.S. Air Force: Department of Defense Dependents Schools at Karamursel, Turkey, and Okinawa, Japan; Texas; Arizona; California; Ohio; South Carolina
- Worked for the S.C. State Department of Education as a teacher-specialist-on-site and tasked with helping failing school districts improve

academically

- Worked as an English Language Arts (ELA) consultant for school districts in S.C. and for the S.C. Writing Improvement Network
- Elected vice chair and now serve as chairwoman to the Sumter School District school board
- Appointed to serve on the state Board of Education representing the Third Judicial Circuit
- Appointed to the Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Committee for the Sumter School District school board
- Chosen as Teacher of the Year for District 17
- Earned National Board Certification in ELA/AYA
- Chosen to present for the National Writing Project
- Wrote professional articles

including one published in the Bread Loaf Teacher Network Magazine

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter School District (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

Three of the most serious and prevalent challenges/concerns are student absenteeism, teacher recruitment and retention and poor student academic achievement. These three challenges are all interrelated and cyclical. For example, students tend to do poorly academically in core classes such as English, science and mathematics when their teachers are below-average instructors and perhaps may even be substitute teachers since qualified teachers could not be found. Students may

SUMTER SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 9 FROM PAGE B20

become discouraged and begin to lose interest in attending school; hence, absenteeism may end up being the major reason for the student's poor grades, and the poor instruction from the classroom teacher did little to enhance the learning. Unfortunately, the vicious cycle of absenteeism and inadequate instruction equals low academic achievement.

Across the nation, schools are struggling to find qualified teachers. Sumter School District must have a strong recruitment and retention process to find and keep excellent teachers. We have increased teacher pay, but we will need to continue to seek and retain great instructors and pay them well.

South Carolina's state tests are based upon the state standards for each subject. Student achievement and knowledge of the standards are measured by SC READY, grades 3-8, and End-of-Course tests in English 2, Biology 1, Algebra I and U.S. History and the Constitution. We must find ways to make our students want to be in classes and be engaged in the lessons. Again, across the nation, schools are having to find

creative ways to entice students to be in class. One high school allowed lunchtime to be gym time for students. Also, effective learning environments using an observation tool such as ELEOT can help with effective teaching.

What successes have you seen in Sumter School District that you want to build on?

Sumter School District's successes over the last 21 months include improvement in the following areas:

- Our state test scores are trending in a positive direction, and we are working to continue with gains. Some schools have experienced large gains.
- We focused on teacher recruitment and retention, resulting in fewer teacher vacancies.
- We have increased teacher and staff pay and morale.
- The Code of Conduct is more effective, and student behavior is improved.
- We created positions for a district bus transportation director, grant writer and truant officer.
- Board members chair

and attend the following committees: Finance, Policy, Facilities, and the Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Committee.

Do you have children or grandchildren who attend a Sumter School District school? Please specify (you don't need to give their names).

Vern and I have five grown children, all of whom attended Sumter schools when we were stationed at Shaw Air Force Base and later after retirement from the military. (I taught both times at Sumter High School.)

Our oldest two children graduated from the Department of Defense Dependents Schools in Okinawa, Japan, and the other three children graduated from Sumter High School. Our children have degrees from Texas A&M, Georgia Tech, Clemson and the University of South Carolina.

We have three grandchildren who graduated from Sumter High School who now have college degrees from The Citadel, North Greenville University and the University of South Carolina.

Sumter School District has 15 schools that are more than 60 years old and has not constructed any schools since the 1990s. However, the district is also losing enrollment. The board of trustees has created a Master Plan Committee to craft a long-term vision for the district's facilities. What do you believe should be part of that vision?

Shall we rent some buses and let Sumter city and county leaders and other interested citizens see the schools of the future? We would only have to travel to Horry County and a city such as Rock Hill to see tomorrow's schools.

Most of our 70-plus-year-old schools have had their walls painted and floors waxed so they appear clean and attractive. But roofs and HVAC systems tell the tale and reveal the real wows of aging buildings. Even mold has infiltrated the walls and rooms in one building. We need to reevaluate our priorities and visit state-of-the-art elementary and middle schools across the state to begin our vision. We have not thought beyond paint and wax for our future generation of leaders.

We also need a technology high school where modern technology and systems can allow students the opportunities to take the kind of courses that will prepare them for tomorrow's jobs. We might have discussions with adjoining counties and consider joining with another county such as Clarendon to create a large and extensive school for both counties.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

I belong to and support the following community organizations: DAR, The Forum, The Art Association, the Sumter County Museum, The Sumter County Gallery of Art, The Little Theater (former board member), a local book club, Sumter Tennis Association, The Azalea Garden Club and the YMCA (former board member). I am also an elder at the First Presbyterian Church in Sumter.

These organizations support the arts, local history, healthy living and exercise, and worship in the Sumter community.



DESARAY S. ROSS
NONPARTISAN

What makes you qualified for the seat?

Having not only children, but nieces and nephews in this school district, the policies and procedures directly affect those whom I love and care about. It affects their current school experience, which in turn can affect the choices that they make once they have completed their grade-school education.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Sumter School District (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

1) One thing that I would want to undertake is the effectiveness of high school guidance counselors touching each student and creating a successful plan of action to get their assigned students to where they want to be once they arrive to their final year of high school. As a parent, I have firsthand awareness of the lack of support in this area.

2) Bullying in Sumter School District schools is a huge issue. I have seen signs around schools condemning bullying, but creating a safe space for students to

speak out without worrying about ramifications and backlash also needs to be of high priority.

3) Support for families of children that are struggling/impooverished.

What successes have you seen in Sumter School District that you want to build on?

Not applicable

Do you have children or grandchildren who attend a Sumter School District school? Please specify (you don't need to give their names).

Yes, I have three children who attend Sumter schools, ranging from pre-kindergarten to ninth grade and 12th grade.

Sumter School District has 15 schools that are more than 60 years old and has not constructed any schools since the 1990s. However, the district is also losing enrollment. The board of trustees has created a Master Plan Committee to craft a long-term vision for the district's facilities. What do you believe should be part of that vision?

Prior to moving to Sumter in 2021, I attended a technical vocational high school in Boston, Massachusetts. I appreciate the vision for the career center, but I believe it can be expounded on. I believe the children in our city are bored, and for those who do not come from families with deep pockets, high educational standards or even the standard middle class, two-parent household, the sky does not really appear to be the limit. The district is losing students because a lot of families are now homeschooling and/or sending their children to the new charter school. I understand that public schools are limited in what they can do in comparison to the two aforementioned alternative schools, but pushing the envelope on what they can do would make a world of difference in current enrollment.

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

I currently co-own a nonprofit organization named Phase Three Center Inc. with my immediate family members and spouse. In this organization, our mission is

to improve the quality of options for transitional foster children and at-risk youth. It is also our goal to open the world up to youth and mentally stimulate them in a hands-on approach. This year, we have put together Sumter's Inaugural Kite Festival (April 27) to raise awareness of child abuse, and we have more great things coming.

Historically, I have volunteered as a Guardian Ad-Litem, youth advocate and I worked as a juvenile probation officer in Sumter County from 2015-2022. My passion is making a difference and advocating for those who feel as though they do not have a voice. This includes the children and parents of our school district. I have seen it with the families that I served at my previous job, and I have also lived it as a parent to the children who I currently have in the school district.

Additionally, I co-spearheaded last year's Florence/Sumter Breast Cancer Walk, and proceeds from this walk were donated to both the McLeod Foundation and the Tuomey Cancer Foundation.

CLARENDON PROBATE JUDGE



MARGARET JACKSON SORRELL
INCUMBENT
REPUBLICAN

me extensively for three years, I ran for and won the judgeship in November 2016 and have served two terms. I have done every job in the court.

I am a member of the SC Bar Association, the SC Association of Probate Judges and the National College of Probate Judges. I am a former Rotarian (Paul Harris Fellow), president of the Clarendon County Historical Society, member of U.S. Daughters of the American Revolution, U.S. Daughters 1812, Colonial Dames XVII Century, First Families of South Carolina, Huguenot Society of South Carolina and Sons and Daughters of the Pilgrims.

In your own words, how would you describe the responsibilities of the probate judge in Clarendon County?

The probate judge is both a judge and a department head. I run the department, to include hiring staff, training, budget requests and management, and procurement of supplies and equipment. Additionally, I maintain continuing education certifications for myself and my deputy judge. I stay abreast of court rulings and laws that pertain to probate and must be well-versed in the forms promulgated by court administration for our use. Probate Court is responsible for estates, marriage licenses being issued and recorded, guardianship/conservatorship matters and certain mental health issues. The responsibilities are many, varied and serious.

Probate Court appoints guardians for incapacitated

adults and conservators for both minors and incapacitated adults. I am often called upon to hold hearings on such matters as the appointment or removal of a personal representative, the validity of a creditor's claim, contempt of court for dereliction of duties, partition actions, settlements for minors, will contests, appointment of a guardian or conservator and distribution of assets in estates. These issues affect families deeply and are often complex.

What do you consider your most significant achievement as probate judge since you assumed the role in 2015? How

has it benefited the county?

I took office in January 2017. Since that time, everything we have done in Probate Court has been for the benefit of individuals, families, creditors, incapacitated individuals, heirs and people seeking various Probate Court orders. Furthermore, this work serves not just Clarendon County residents, but also decedents, heirs, devisees, creditors and marriage license applicants from all over the state and country. Therefore, with a strong desire to serve the people and serve them well, my most significant achievement may have been to assemble a staff (of two) who are conscientious, diligent, pleasant,

helpful, polite and knowledgeable. The three of us make what I consider to be an excellent team that works together to serve the people. Other significant achievements have included converting the bookkeeping system to the computer and fully utilizing the systems available through our software provider. We also streamlined the marriage license application process.

Over the years, how have you handled complex cases involving guardianships and

SEE CLARENDON PROBATE JUDGE, PAGE D22

David

MERCHANT

for **MAYOR**

www.merchantformayor.com

PAID FOR BY MERCHANT FOR MAYOR

CLARENDON PROBATE JUDGE FROM PAGE D21

conservatorships of vulnerable individuals and what have you learned from those experiences?

Guardianship/conservatorship (GC) files comprise a small percentage of what we do. Since January 2022, we have opened approximately 29 GC files. In comparison, we opened approximately 420 new estate files in 2023 alone. Most of the GC cases are not complex, but all are important. The guidance for handling these matters is set forth in Article V of the Probate Code, and we have an effective checklist to follow to guide both

us and the attorneys through the process. Complex GC cases often involve multiple lawyers and multiple litigants. What these complex cases have taught me is how valuable my education and experience as an attorney have been to me and to everyone involved.

How have you ensured that the probate court has remained up-to-date with changes in state and federal laws? How have you adapted your practices accordingly?

Our Probate Court stays current with changes in the

laws through continuing legal education. We frequently attend conferences and seminars. We have an email list-serve with all the elected probate judges, associate judges and deputy judges. We often ask questions of one another through this list-serve, and we work diligently to keep each other informed of updates and changes. Our court administration in Columbia does a superb job of keeping us informed. Our Supreme Court mandates several seminars throughout the year to make sure that judges are well-informed. When Supreme Court rulings that impact Probate

Court are handed down, court administration usually emails a copy of the case and the ruling to all judges. Free webinars are often available for us to watch online. We are continually updated throughout each session of the General Assembly with legislation and draft legislation pertinent to Probate Court.

If reelected, what specific goals do you have for the probate court over the next term and how do you plan to achieve them?

If reelected, I have the specific goal of continuing to operate as

an effective, impartial court where people have a positive experience. We will continue to serve the public with integrity, respect and compassion, while also ensuring that all matters before the court comply with the law. In addition, I have the desire to add another staff person to increase our ability to educate the public about probate court and help them navigate the process through what is often a difficult and emotional time in their lives.



TERRANCE TINDAL
DEMOCRAT

Tell us about yourself, including any political experience and how long you've lived in your district.

Terrance G. Tindal is a native of Summerton and proud graduate of Historic Scott's Branch High School. His education and training continued as he attended Benedict College, Grand Canyon University, The Art Institute, Kenneth Shuler School of Cosmetology, Carolina Theological Seminary and School of the Great Commission Bible College and Seminary. Tindal served as councilman for the Town of Summerton for 12 years, former youth director of the Clarendon County Branch NAACP, executive director of the iCare2 Anti-Bullying Program Inc. and is the first vice chair of the Clarendon County Democratic Party.

What life experiences and qualifications do you believe best prepared you for the role of probate judge?

My 20 years of experience in

funeral services have provided me with a deep understanding of the grieving process and the legalities surrounding death and inheritance. I have developed strong communication skills and empathy for those facing difficult times, qualities that are essential for a probate judge who must handle sensitive cases with compassion and understanding.

My 15 years in public education have honed my ability to research, analyze information, make informed decisions and effectively communicate complex ideas to a diverse audience. These skills are crucial for a probate judge, who must evaluate evidence, interpret laws and clearly explain legal processes to individuals navigating the probate system.

After 12 years of service to the community through council, it has given me firsthand knowledge of the issues facing our local community and the ability to work collaboratively with diverse groups to find solutions. I understand the importance of upholding the law while also considering the unique needs and circumstances of the individuals coming before me.

My diverse background has provided me with a well-rounded skill set that I believe uniquely qualifies me to serve as a probate judge. My experiences have equipped me

with the knowledge, empathy, communication skills and collaborative spirit necessary to effectively and compassionately fulfill the responsibilities of this important role.

In your own words, how would you describe the responsibilities of the probate judge in Clarendon County?

To my knowledge, the probate judge is responsible for overseeing the probate process, which includes handling the distribution of a deceased person's assets, determining the validity of their will, appointing executors or administrators, resolving any disputes that may arise among the heirs or beneficiaries, issuing marriage licenses, handling guardianship cases.

What strategies would you use to ensure that estates and wills are processed efficiently and fairly?

As a newcomer, I would work to create a standardized and efficient process for handling estates and wills, including clear guidelines and deadlines for filing paperwork and resolving disputes.

My goal would be to foster strong communication and collaboration among all parties involved in the probate process, including attorneys, heirs and

court staff, to ensure that all aspects of the estate are properly managed.

It is my desire to bring the probate court up to date with exploring and implementing technology solutions to automate certain aspects of the probate process, such as digital document filing and online scheduling for hearings.

Continued education and training would be a must. I would stay current on probate laws and regulations, as well as seek out ongoing education and training opportunities to ensure that my staff and I are equipped to handle any challenges that may arise in the probate process.

How would you handle complex cases involving guardianships and conservatorships to ensure the best interest of vulnerable individuals?

The key is to approach these cases with empathy, diligence and a commitment to upholding the best interest of the vulnerable individual. Collaboration with a team of professionals and regular oversight and review of the arrangement is crucial to ensure that the individual's well-being is prioritized.

How do you plan to make the probate court more accessible and transparent to Clarendon County residents?

After researching over the last few months, I've found that there are several steps that can be taken to make the probate court more accessible and transparent to Clarendon County residents. Some potential strategies include increasing communication, ensuring that information about the probate court, including its services, procedures and resources, is readily available and easily accessible to residents through various channels such as the court's website, social media and community outreach efforts. Providing education and support to the community. Offering educational seminars, workshops and resources to help residents better understand the probate process, their rights and how to navigate the court system effectively. Improving customer service would be a must. Implementing policies and procedures that prioritize providing personalized and efficient service to residents, addressing their needs and concerns in a timely and respectful manner.

Most importantly getting feedback. Actively seeking input from residents and stakeholders on how to improve the accessibility and transparency of the probate court, and incorporating their feedback into decision-making processes.

CLARENDON COUNTY COUNCIL, DISTRICT 2



CLAYTON PACK
DEMOCRAT

Tell us about yourself, including any political experience and how long you've lived in your district.

I am a hometown son, born and raised in Clarendon County. I've lived in district 2 for 60 years. I know my fellow citizens and I've worked hard beside many of them who share the same

admiration and vision for our county. And truthfully, it's not about what political party that one affiliates themselves with but it's more about knowing how to work together in the best interest of Clarendon County.

In your own words, how would you describe the responsibilities

of Clarendon County Council District 2 representative?

- Listen to and represent the citizens of Clarendon County District 2
- Work collaboratively with Clarendon County Council towards solutions that benefit our community.

- and Representative to obtain more C-fund
- Jobs~ leveraging my certified retail recruiter experience and relationships/partnerships with Retail Strategies Inc.

If elected, what specific goals do you have for the county council over the next term and how do you plan to achieve them?

As the new county council district 2 representative to this seat, my #1 goal is listening to the concerns of the people of District 2 and partnering with council on ideas that will be beneficial to all.

What challenges/concerns do you see in Clarendon County (up to 3), and how do you intend to improve them?

- Millage rate~ Industry growth within our county
- Road repairs/upkeep~ working with our Senator

What successes have you seen in Clarendon County Council that you want to build on?

- Water and Sewage expansion
- Alcolu industrial park

Are you actively involved in the community? How so?

- Yes, currently serving on Manning, SC city council district 1 over 20 years.
- Paxville Brotherhood
- Briggs- De Laine Pearson Foundation

Is there anything else you want to add about yourself?

- Ready to serve Clarendon County Council District 2

Kurtis Rodine (Republican) did not submit responses.



I AM LUCY MAHON
Sumter deserves a leader who is not only authentic and transparent, but also tenacious enough to tackle the needs of our community. As a healthcare provider, I know that teamwork and communication are vital to delivering the best care to patients and I believe these skills will translate well as I serve our community as your City Council representative. I am committed to serving Sumter with the same passion with which I have served my patients for the last 22 years.

Please go to <https://www.lucyforthepeople.com/> to learn more.

Paid for by Lucy for the People

WANT TO IMPROVE SALES?

Call an Item sales representative to advertise in our many publications!

KAREN CAVE
(803) 774-1242
karen@theitem.com

DEVIN MCDONALD
(803) 983-0786
devin@theitem.com

MARK PEKURI
(803) 464-8917
markp@theitem.com

CLARENDON SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 1



DR. FALECIA MILLER
INCUMBENT
NONPARTISAN

Do you have children and/or family members currently in the CCSD system either as students, teachers or administrators?

My husband, Michael (Mike) Miller, is a 1990 graduate of Manning High School, my parents graduated from Manning Training. My sons Michael (MJ) and Carter are both Manning High school honor graduates, 2019 and 2024, respectively, and my step-daughter, Joi, graduated from the former Phoenix Charter School.

Have you served as a school board member in the past? If so, where and for how long and what were your significant contributions to those boards?

I have served on the Clarendon County Board of Directors District 2 since 2019 and transitioned into the Clarendon County School District once consolidated in 2021.

Why are you running for a seat on the CCSD Board of Trustees?

My No. 1 priority is to make sure that "every child has a voice." There is work to continue.

What do you consider the most pressing needs of CCSD? List top 3.

- Continued educational advancement
- Continued safety of our children and staff
- Exposure and lived experiences familiarity

How do you foresee meeting those needs?

- Providing resources to all students across the district, which aids in their ability to be productive students that will follow them and open doors for them to be productive adults in whatever career path they choose.
- Exposure and preparation to life outside of Clarendon County and returning those ideas and plans back to make us greater and a more informed and innovative county.
- Provide various avenues to becoming and remaining a productive student. This can be accomplished through applicable CTE programs, agricultural advancements through knowledge and understanding of the high commodity the county offers

in various areas including but not limited to farming, natural resources like our access to the great lakes that surround us, just to name a few.

How can CCSD meet the needs of its children when considering the wide disparity in their home lives, backgrounds, socio-economic status, learning abilities, etc.?

The biggest thing is meeting everyone where they are at. We must understand that every child has a different dynamic as it relates to their home life, backgrounds, etc. Not every student comes to school unfortunately to learn, but more to be in a safe place. Once they feel comfortable, safe and genuinely cared for, they are better prepared to learn and obtain what is being taught.

What can CCSD do to ensure that the students who are graduating can find placement in higher and/or secondary learning institutions, whether technical school, universities or colleges?

We have to make sure that we are accessing the interest of the student on a regular basis and

most importantly expose them to their interest. The certified medical assistant program at F.E. Dubose is a great way to propel a student into the next level of being a part of the health care industry as a nurse, medical assistant, health care provider or other areas. Because the students are exposed to real-life examples and hands-on experiences, not to mention the opportunity to become certified upon completion, they are given the opportunity to take a "test-drive" view at a profession in which they have interest in.

Why should the voters in your district vote for you on Nov. 5, 2024?

There is work yet to be done, and I have not completed my assignment. As a school board member, I take pride in pouring back into what was poured into me my entire life. I choose community health nursing because I want to ensure that I am a part of the sustainability, healthiness and overall wellbeing of "my home" - Clarendon County.

Kim E. Jones did not submit responses.

CLARENDON SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 2



JOHN DAVID BONAPARTE
NONPARTISAN

Do you have children and/or family members currently in the CCSD system either as students, teachers or administrators?

My daughter graduated in 2000, son in 2004. My wife is a retired teacher from Clarendon County School District.

Have you served as a school board member in the past? If so, where and for how long and what were your significant contributions to those boards?

- I have served on the Clarendon One board of trustees for 18 years, eight years as chairman.

My contributions are too many for this article, but a few are: professionalism, leadership, integrity, commitment, compassion for students and community, dedication and accountability just to name a few.

Why are you running for a seat on the CCSD Board of Trustees?

I am running because my constituents asked me to represent them on this new elected board to ensure all the contributions listed above are established.

What do you consider the most pressing needs of CCSD? List top 3.

It's really difficult to list just the top three things without first understanding the concerns in the district and community. So, I will use my experience to seek first the things that need immediate attention then develop recommendations to present to the board for discussion.

How do you foresee meeting those needs?

To address the concerns in district and community, I will recommend the board make

transparency a top priority. I will listen to my constituents; I will train/educate my constituents on board operations; I will encourage all board members to be proactive in serving our constituents and not play games or politics.

How can CCSD meet the needs of its children when considering the wide disparity in their home lives, backgrounds, socio-economic status, learning abilities, etc.?

To meet the needs of our scholars, we must utilize all available tools provided us to identify their needs and address them immediately. We will work with our parents and encourage them to participate with us, not fight against us. Each scholar is different, and therefore we must design what's best for scholars' needs.

What can CCSD do to ensure that the students who are graduating can find placement in higher and/or secondary learning institutions, whether technical school, universities or colleges?

Ensure our guidance departments are working with students and parents with placement in advance of graduation. This should be identified before their senior year. If I remember, this planning should begin in ninth grade.

Why should the voters in your district vote for you on Nov. 5, 2024?

If the voters want a dedicated, professional, experienced, committed and hard worker on their board of trustees, they will vote for John David Bonaparte.

Please list your background (where you grew up, education, employment, how long you've lived in Clarendon County, etc.). Please list your current job (retired, etc.).

- I was born in Elloree, S.C., in Orangeburg County.
- I have a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration.
- I worked for International Paper for 38 years.
- I have lived in Clarendon County 42 years.

Retired December 2021.



LORETTA WARLEY POLLARD
NONPARTISAN

in my life was receiving a state award from Gov. Hodges at a state dinner in Columbia. There was a presentation of awards for other county volunteer citizens as well as myself.

Do you have children and/or family members currently in the CCSD system either as students, teachers or administrators?

I have a niece, Rena Rhymer, who is a mathematics teacher at Scott's Branch High School, and a sister, Kathleen Warley McElveen, who is now a SBHS and JHS retired teacher.

Have you served as a school board member in the past?

If so, where and for how long and what were your significant contributions to those boards?

I was a volunteer reading mentor at Scott's Branch High School, which led to being appointed to the Clarendon School District One Board of Trustees for six years. At the start, boardsmanship was for two-year terms. Later, the county delegation made it a four-year service. I served on the Summerton One Board of Trustees for six years.

Why are you running for a seat on the CCSD Board of Trustees?

I am running for a seat on the CCSD Board of Trustees because I was asked to run by community persons in Summerton and Manning residents who are familiar with my background in community service in the county and that I am a strong believer from experience

that accomplishing worthy goals that involved children especially requires respect and appreciation of others and their beliefs or ideas to make a significant difference for our children, senior citizens or any human contribution successful. Working together respectfully is most essential to bring any goal for others to a favorable outcome. I believe my desire and experience working for and with children will make a positive difference in building Clarendon County a historic new board of trustees. My background in boardsmanship will be an asset to this foot forward in the education of our most precious commodity, the children of future America.

What do you consider the most pressing needs of CCSD? List top 3.

One, bringing together the investors in the education and future of our most precious and No. 1 interest commodity, the needs of our children to succeed after their education to contribute to making life in whatever place they continue to live a viable, happy society that works together for a greater America.

A need to bring together a liaison of parents, teachers and school leadership that prioritizes the needs, goals and concerns for the well-being of our school children who represent America tomorrow.

Do all that can be done to access funding to make it possible to put into action planning to benefit the education of our

school district's children.

I foresee meeting the aforementioned needs by working cooperatively with school boardsmanship, parents, liaison and community at-large involvement in investing interest, time and funds where accessible to succeed in this common endeavor for our school children who are our future leadership, etc.

How do you foresee meeting those needs, and how can CCSD meet the needs of its children when considering the wide disparity in their home lives, backgrounds, socio-economic status, learning abilities, etc.?

This is a dire important question. Meeting the needs of our school children is not and will not be an easy task. I do not believe it will be possible to meet all needs of our school children because of the disparity of home needs, backgrounds, socio-economic status and learning abilities. But I do firmly believe my working together harmoniously with CCSD Board leadership and great efforts will achieve a huge portion of what it will take to be proud of the children we have fostered in their education to succeed as good citizens, law-abiding society beneficiaries and happier lives.

What can CCSD do to ensure that the students who are graduating can find placement in higher and/or secondary learning institutions, whether technical schools, universities or colleges?

colleges?

What we can do to give our students who are graduating a better chance finding placement in higher or secondary learning or technical schools, universities or colleges, I believe and think is to start early on in their education viably in eighth grade or younger grades the programs and hands-on projects to find student weaknesses in determining factors that affect getting desirable placement in higher education advancement for our rising students. Find student needs, develop programs to improve after-school and summer projects that will be offered to students in need of extra help in finding achievable placement success after graduating from high school.

Why voters should vote for me on election day?

To foresee and endorse my candidacy in an effort to benefit the future of CCSD school children is I truly believe my experience working for the children and their parents in programs or projects, etc., that have fostered incentives, ways and means to achieve what parents, teachers and involved educators as well as we as American citizens want for the future of our children who are America's tomorrow.

Robert Allen McFadden did not submit responses.

WHEN IS A RUNOFF NEEDED?

For races with more than two candidates, someone must get more than 50% of the vote to win outright. If no one earns 50% of the vote plus one vote, the top two vote-getters will move on to a runoff. This applies to every race on the ballot, whether they are partisan or nonpartisan.

CLARENDON SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 3



GREGORY THOMAS BRADLEY
NONPARTISAN

Please list your background (where you grew up, education, employment, how long you've lived in Clarendon County, etc.). Please list your current job (retired, etc.).

I was born in Wilmington, N.C., but raised in Clarendon County. I've lived in Clarendon County for 32 years. I graduated from Scott's Branch High School in 1998. I am a retired Navy veteran.

Do you have children and/or family members currently in the

CCSD system either as students, teachers or administrators?

My daughter (Ka'tearah Bradley) is a Scott's Branch High School freshman.

Have you served as a school board member in the past?

No

Why are you running for a seat on the CCSD Board of Trustees?

I am running for a seat on the CCSD Board of Trustees because I have a student in the school system, and I want her and her peers to receive the best resources that will have a positive influence on their future.

What do you consider the most pressing needs of CCSD? List top 3.

The top three pressing needs of CCSD are the lack of mental

health resources, lack of family/community school engagements and the quality of the dietarian menu.

How do you foresee meeting those needs?

I foresee meeting those needs by recruiting volunteers from colleges and other organizations providing services such as tutoring and mentorship. I will also increase family engagement by holding family bonding events at the schools such as family bingo night and encourage families to attend the teacher and parent nights.

How can CCSD meet the needs of its children when considering the wide disparity in their home lives, backgrounds, socio-economic status, learning abilities, etc.?

CCSD can meet the needs

of the children of the community by conducting yearly community trips. Traveling to the communities of our students will help CCSD understand not only the student body, but also the needs and how to help.

What can CCSD do to ensure that the students who are graduating can find placement in higher and/or secondary learning institutions, whether technical school, universities or colleges?

CCSD can help students pursuing higher education by introducing them to career paths and colleges starting in eighth grade. CCSD can conduct a hands-on career day that will provide an opportunity for the students to experience different careers.

Why should the voters in your

district vote for you on Nov. 5, 2024?

Voters in my school district should vote for me because I am a positive product of my community and CCSD. I've experienced both sides of the spectrum. I was a student of the district and am currently a parent of a CCSD student. I am a valuable asset to the school district board because I am heavily involved in school activities. I've volunteered as the assistant coach for Scott's Branch Middle School girls basketball team and also the football team. I have close friendships with a plethora of the faculty of the schools of CCSD.

Roger Jowers and Johnny L. Lawson did not submit responses.

CLARENDON SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 4



LEE MAHONEY
NONPARTISAN

Please list your background (where you grew up, education, employment, how long you've lived in Clarendon County, etc.). Please list your current job (retired, etc.).

Born and raised in Manning and a proud 2003 graduate of Manning High School. I attended Central Carolina Technical College before starting my career in the fire service in 2005. I've worked for Clarendon County Fire Rescue full time for 19 years, where I currently serve as a battalion chief. I also work part time at our family business, Bob's Body Shop.

Do you have children and/or family members currently in the CCSD system either as students, teachers or administrators?

My wife is currently a physical education teacher and coach with the Clarendon County School District. I have one daughter that

is a student within the district and one daughter that will be attending when she is old enough.

Have you served as a school board member in the past? If so, where and for how long and what were your significant contributions to those boards?

I have not served on a school board in the past.

Why are you running for a seat on the CCSD Board of Trustees?

I am running for a seat on the school board because I want the opportunity to have a positive influence in our children's education. Having a child already attending our public schools certainly gives me a vested interest in this as well as wanting a successful future for our community.

What do you consider the most pressing needs of CCSD? List top 3.

In my opinion, the most pressing needs of CCSD would be

- define success, we need a consistent metric and goal to measure our progress both for our students and staff.
- trust in administration, it would seem the current

administration has lost some level of trust in the community as well as with staff. This needs to be addressed and rectified before we can move forward as a team.

- evaluation of curriculum. I believe we need to take a look at our curriculum in its entirety to see what is working and what is not. Are we setting our children up for success upon graduation? Can they enter college or the workforce and be successful contributing members of our community with what we provide?

How do you foresee meeting those needs?

To achieve these needs, we would simply need to work together as a team and have open, honest and possibly some difficult conversations about these needs and form a focus for the district to move toward. These needs and others won't be quick changes, but a focused board supporting the administration and backed by the community can see a difference in our future.

How can CCSD meet the needs of its children when considering the wide disparity in their home lives, backgrounds, socio-economic status, learning

abilities, etc.?

Our school district has an incredibly diverse group of students as well as teachers. Empowering our teachers to make recommendations and decisions for students that need extra attention, such as learning or behavioral differences, is imperative. Additional staff and/or training to assist teachers with these students would seem beneficial as well. Each student should be provided the same opportunities for success. Accountability would be important to ensure fairness across our district. Not all students have the same resources or home life to allow further study outside of school, and this should be taken into consideration when making assessments. After-school programs and study resources should be evaluated and encouraged to be sure we give each student an opportunity at an equal playing field.

What can CCSD do to ensure that the students who are graduating can find placement in higher and/or secondary learning institutions, whether technical school, universities or colleges?

I believe to ensure our students' success after graduation, we need to ensure their curriculum is meeting their needs beyond standard testing. I personally believe a more balanced curriculum would be beneficial, balancing life skills and technical education along with college preparation.

Why should the voters in your district vote for you on Nov. 5, 2024?

I believe I'm the best candidate to represent my district for a few reasons. I've been through our school system and currently have family working in the district and also attending, giving me insight and interest in the success of our system. I have experience through my life and work history that would be beneficial, such as working on various committees, budget preparation and understanding, personnel management and project supervision. As a part of a small business, I can see first hand what our current community workforce has to offer as well as what may be lacking. If you want what's best for our children, our teachers and our community, vote for Lee Mahoney!



SHELLEY RICHBURG
NONPARTISAN

Please list your background (where you grew up, education, employment, how long you've lived in Clarendon County, etc.). Please list your current job (retired, etc.).

I was born and raised right here in Clarendon County and am a proud product of the Clarendon School District. Growing up on my family's farm, Richburg Farms, I learned the value of hard work and the importance of agriculture. I earned my Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education from USC Upstate and spent six years teaching grades ranging from kindergarten to third grade. My time in the classroom fueled my desire to advocate for teachers and students on a larger scale. Currently, I serve as a ministry assistant at First Baptist Church

of Manning, where I coordinate events, manage schedules and assist with broadcasting and children's ministry, along with other background duties. My commitment to this community and passion for education drive my candidacy for the Clarendon County school board.

Do you have children and/or family members currently in the CCSD system either as students, teachers or administrators?

I do not currently have any family members in the Clarendon County School District, but I have many friends who are teachers and several friends' children who I consider like family. Additionally, my mother is a former educator within the district, and I have a strong personal connection to the school system through my relationships with those who work and learn in it.

Have you served as a school board member in the past? If so, where and for how long and what were your significant contributions to those boards?

I have not previously served as

a school board member.

Why are you running for a seat on the CCSD Board of Trustees?

I am running for a seat on the CCSD Board of Trustees to give a voice to the teachers and make a lasting impact on our schools. As a former student and educator in the Clarendon School District, I've experienced firsthand the challenges both students and teachers face. Although I no longer teach, my commitment to our community's children and educators remains strong. I believe the current system needs change to better support those who are on the front lines every day. My goal is to advocate for policies that truly benefit our teachers, students and community, ensuring our schools are a place where everyone can thrive. It's time for a teacher's perspective, and I'm ready to bring that to the board.

What do you consider the most pressing needs of CCSD? List top 3.

- 1- Supporting teachers: Our teachers are the backbone of the education system, and we must

ensure they have the resources, training and support necessary to succeed. This includes providing professional development, reducing unnecessary burdens and recognizing their expertise in the classroom.

- 2- Ensuring transparency and effective allocation of funding: The current handling of funds in the district must be more transparent and aligned with the needs of students and teachers. I will work to ensure that financial decisions are made with integrity and that funds are allocated to improve educational resources, support teachers and enhance student learning environments.
- 3- Prioritizing student achievement and well-being: Student success goes beyond academics. We must address mental health, conflict management and social skills development. By providing mental health resources and fostering a positive school culture, we can ensure students are well-equipped for both academic success and personal growth.

How do you foresee meeting those needs?

To meet these needs, I plan to work closely with teachers, administrators, parents and the community to ensure that policies reflect their real, on-the-ground challenges and goals. I will advocate for transparent allocation of funds, ensuring that resources are used effectively to benefit both students and teachers. Additionally, I will push for the implementation of mental health and social support services, as well as professional development opportunities for teachers. By fostering collaboration and prioritizing the well-being of both students and staff, we can create a positive, supportive environment that promotes growth and success for all.

socio-economic status, learning abilities, etc.?

One thing CCSD is already doing well is providing free lunches to all students, ensuring they have access to a nutritious meal each day — one less thing for families to worry about. Additionally, the district's Parenting Center offers valuable resources to parents. We can build on these efforts by expanding support programs, offering more resources such as parenting classes and adult education opportunities and providing pathways for parents to improve their employment prospects. To address the growing number of students with learning disabilities, we must focus on reducing class sizes and providing additional aides to offer more individualized support. While some schools already have after-school programs, there is room for improvement to better meet the needs of students. We also need to prioritize our special education (SPED) students by providing adequate classrooms, resources and trained teachers to meet their specific needs.

What can CCSD do to ensure that the students who are graduating can find placement in higher and/or secondary learning institutions, whether technical school, universities or colleges?

CCSD needs to prioritize building a strong foundation in understanding and critical thinking from an early age. I have witnessed students being pushed through the system without fully mastering key concepts due to overcrowded classrooms and limited resources, and this is not the fault of our teachers. This creates a cycle where students face ongoing challenges as they move through the grades, which can later cause struggles when seeking or maintaining employment. We must ensure

David
MERCHANT
for **MAYOR**

www.merchantformayor.com

PAID FOR BY MERCHANT FOR MAYOR

How can CCSD meet the needs of its children when considering the wide disparity in their home lives, backgrounds,

SEE CLARENDON SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 4, PAGE D24

CLARENDON SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 4

FROM PAGE D24

that early education, especially in grades K-3, is stacked with the necessary resources and personnel to help students master literacy and math skills, setting the stage for future academic success. Additionally, we should begin forming partnerships with trade schools, technical colleges and

universities early on to expose students to various career paths. Bringing back practical life skills — such as managing finances, paying taxes and changing a tire — will also help prepare students for real-world challenges beyond academics, ensuring they are ready for life after graduation.

Why should the voters in your district vote for you on Nov. 5, 2024?

Clarendon District 4 voters should vote for me because I have been on the front lines as both a former student and teacher in our district. I bring a teacher's

perspective to the table, and I can share firsthand what is really happening in our classrooms while voicing the concerns of current educators. I am fully committed to advocating for both teachers and students, ensuring we create the best possible learning environment for everyone. From

the Classroom to the Boardroom — A Voice for Our Teachers, I'm ready to bring real change to Clarendon County.

Linda P. Lemon (incumbent) and Pam Rodine did not submit responses.

CLARENDON SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 5



MARGARET WALKER
NONPARTISAN

- Office Nurse – Lake Marion Primary Care and Santee Cooper Primary
- Care
- Nurse Educator – FE DuBose
- Teacher Assistant – Alcolu Elementary
- EMT-P – Clarendon County EMS
- Office Nurse – Lake Marion Primary Care and Santee Cooper Primary Care

How long you've lived in Clarendon County, etc.
41 years

Please list your current job (retired, etc.)
Semi-retired - Hope Health staff nurse - PRN (as needed)

Do you have children and/or family members currently in the CCSD system either as students, teachers or administrators?

I don't currently have any children attending school in Clarendon School District. However, my husband and two sons are all proud graduates of Manning High School.

Have you served as a school board member in the past?

No, I have not served as a school board member in the past.

Why are you running for a seat on the CCSD Board of Trustees?

I know I can make a positive difference by being a voice for the voiceless, in particular students with special abilities and needs. I use a practical, common-sense approach as well as research to solve problems. I will bring a new, fresh perspective to the board. I am particularly concerned about students experiencing

mental and physical health disorders and educators/staff feeling unsupported.

What do you consider the most pressing needs of CCSD? List top 3.

- Improved academic gains
- Parental/community support/involvement
- Infrastructure needs and equitable distribution of resources

How do you foresee meeting those needs?

1. I believe the CCSD can improve academic gains utilizing a holistic approach to education for all students to include those with special abilities and needs. A comprehensive holistic approach to educating the whole person beyond core academics recognizes and understands that hungry, tired, sick students and/or experiencing anxiety/depression, etc. will make learning difficult if not impossible.

Mental health services combined with physical activity helps to combat stress and relieve tension. Additional choices of physical exercise programs might improve students' physical and mental health thereby improving their academic gains. I advocate for investing in our educators to help them achieve their professional aspirations and ensuring they have the resources needed to teach our children. Supporting our educators should create better outcomes and prepare our students to compete globally.

2. Fostering positive parental/community involvement is imperative to creating a wholesome environment for

students and district employees. Understanding that parental involvement cannot be mandated, I believe CCSD can foster positive parental/community involvement by creating a warm, respectful and welcoming environment, flexibility in accommodating parents/families and hosting events and activities that will bring parents and families into the school.

3. Ensure that stakeholders' (students, parents, teachers, staff and other stakeholders, especially stakeholders for students with special abilities and needs) concerns are being heard. Communicate clearly and in a timely manner criteria, plans, strategies and desired outcomes.

How can CCSD meet the needs of its children when considering the wide disparity in their home lives, backgrounds, socio-economic status, learning abilities, etc.?

Using a holistic educational approach for all students to include those with special abilities and needs incorporates social-emotional learning (SEL) skills (self-regulation, empathy, teamwork, etc.) into the curriculum, promotes healthy eating habits and physical activity, creates a safe and supportive school climate and provides easily accessible and readily available counseling and mental health services. I also think the CCSD can better meet the needs of our children by utilizing a collaborative approach that includes our internal and external stakeholders. The stakeholders should be diverse and include students, parents, paraprofessionals, teachers, administrators, board members and community

partners (i.e. daycare/Head Start representatives and other community partners.)

What can CCSD do to ensure that the students who are graduating can find placement in higher and/or secondary learning institutions, whether technical school, universities or colleges?

Using a holistic educational approach for all students, including those with special abilities and needs, would increase the likelihood of graduating students finding placement in higher and/or secondary learning institutions.

However, recognizing that every student will not have a desire and/or the qualifications to attend an institution of higher learning, a holistic approach may identify interests and skills that students, especially those with special needs, may be able to turn into a lucrative business or career.

Why should the voters in your district vote for you on Nov. 5, 2024?

Voters in my district, District 5, should vote for me because my education, experience and character make me an excellent choice. I use a practical, common-sense approach as well as research to solve problems. My goal is to work collectively with fellow board members, students, educators, administrators and the community to ensure our children are offered an education that is second to none. I am passionate about advocating for students, parents, educators and staff ... being the voice for the voiceless.



MIKE SHORTER
NONPARTISAN

coach, elementary, middle and high school principal, assistant superintendent and interim superintendent. I also worked as a hearing officer for the district.

I am currently married to Lydia Elkins Shorter, who graduated and taught school in this district. We have four children who attended and graduated from Manning High School.

I am presently retired.

Do you have children and/or family members currently in the CCSD system either as students, teachers or administrators?

My daughter, Kristin Crisanti, and my son-in-law, Steve Crisanti, currently work in Clarendon County School District. Two grandchildren attend MECC.

Have you served as a school board member in the past?

I have never served as a school board member but as an administrator and hearing officer.

I have met with and presented to the school board many times.

Why are you running for a seat on the CCSD Board of Trustees?

I am running for a seat on the CCSD board to assure that all students get the best education possible. I feel that with my knowledge and experience in education, I have a lot to offer.

What do you consider the most pressing needs of CCSD? List top 3.

- Top three pressing needs of CCSD
- 1) To make sure we have an atmosphere conducive for learning, both for teachers and students
 - 2) To oversee the spending of money
 - 3) To assure we have the best teachers and staff working in our district

How do you foresee meeting

those needs?

I need to become a board member and be actively engaged in meetings. I would share my past experiences and ideas with members. I would make sure to get input from parents and the community as to what they expect. I will work with all board members to make sure we offer the best education possible for all students in the county.

How can CCSD meet the needs of its children when considering the wide disparity in their home lives, backgrounds, socio-economic status, learning abilities, etc.?

Our curriculum must provide all students the best education possible no matter their background or learning ability.

What can CCSD do to ensure that the students who are graduating can find placement in higher and/or secondary learning institutions, whether technical school, universities or colleges?

We need to provide a curriculum for all students to meet their educational goals.

Why should the voters in your district vote for you on Nov. 5, 2024?

I believe that with my experience and educational background, I will make a good board member.

Eleazer Leazer Carter did not submit responses. Arthur Moyd (incumbent) withdrew from the election.

CLARENDON SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 6



BOBBY FLEMING
NONPARTISAN
INCUMBENT

My educational journey began at Manning High School, from which I graduated in 1981. I then pursued a Bachelor's Degree in Marketing at South Carolina State University, graduating in 1985, followed by my graduation from Gupton-Jones College of Mortuary Science in 1986. Additionally, I had the privilege of being a graduate of Leadership South Carolina in 1996, which further developed my leadership skills and community engagement.

Do you have children and/or family members currently in the CCSD system either as students, teachers or administrators?

I currently have distant relatives who are employed within the Clarendon County School District. While I do not have children in the system at this time, my connections to the district run

deep through my family ties.

Have you served as a school board member in the past?

I am currently serving as a member of the appointed CCSD Board of Trustees from 2022 to the present. In this role, I continue to advocate for the needs of our students and community, drawing on my extensive experience from my previous tenure with Clarendon District 2 (1992-2021).

Why are you running for a seat on the CCSD Board of Trustees?

As a longtime member of the Clarendon County School District board and previous Clarendon school boards, I, Bobby Fleming, have dedicated over four decades to this role because I believe

Please list your background (where you grew up, education, employment, how long you've lived in Clarendon County, etc.). Please list your current job (retired, etc.).

I am a lifetime resident of Clarendon County, deeply rooted in this community and committed to its growth and success. I have spent my entire career working alongside my family in our business, Fleming and Delaine Funeral Home, where I currently serve as a senior funeral director.

REPUBLICAN - STATE SENATE

JEFF ZELL

GENERAL ELECTION NOV. 5!

A LIFETIME OF SERVICE. READY TO WORK!

- IMPROVING SCHOOLS**
- SAFER COMMUNITIES**
- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

While much of South Carolina is thriving, many areas in our Senate District are struggling. Our region has good people, beautiful country and plenty of room to grow.

We need a Senator who will work hard in Columbia and in our district

to help make things better. I am no stranger to hard work in trying situations, sticking to the mission and building teams to get results. I am running for the State Senate to put people over politics and deliver the results you deserve!

FATHER • VETERAN • LEADER

@VoteJeffZell

Paid for by Jeff Zell for State Senate

HAVE QUESTIONS? CALL JEFF ZELL ANYTIME!

803-607-0797



CLARENDON SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 6

FROM PAGE D25

deeply in the power of education to transform lives.

I'm running for a seat on the CCSD Board of Trustees once again because I want to continue my commitment to our students, teachers and community. I am passionate about advocating for our students' needs, ensuring they receive the highest-quality education and support available.

Additionally, I am committed to addressing pressing issues such as improving school safety, enhancing technology access and supporting mental health resources for our students.

What do you consider the most pressing needs of CCSD? List top 3.

- 1. Enhanced student mental health resources
- 2. Improvement of school infrastructure
- 3. Curriculum and technology advancements

How do you foresee meeting those needs?

Meeting the pressing needs of CCSD will require a collaborative and strategic approach.

- Enhanced student mental health resources:
- a. Organizations
 - b. Professional development for staff
 - c. Awareness and outreach programs
- Improvement of school

- infrastructure:
- d. Conducting facility assessments
 - e. Seeking grants and funding
 - f. Long-term capital improvements plan
 - g. Curriculum and technology advancements:
 - h. Curriculum review and updates
 - i. Investing in technology access
 - j. Professional development

How can CCSD meet the needs of its children when considering the wide disparity in their home lives, backgrounds, socio-economic status, learning abilities, etc.?

- 1. Differentiated instruction:
- 2. Tailoring teaching methods
- 3. Personalized learning plans
- 4. Support services and resources:
- 5. Access to social services
- 6. After-school and tutoring programs
- 7. Family and community engagement
- 8. Strong home-school partnerships
- 9. Community involvement
- 10. 4.Equitable resource allocation
- 11. Targeting funding where needed
- 12. Focus on early intervention
- 13. 5.Cultural competence and

- inclusivity
- Training for staff
- Celebrating diversity

WHAT CAN CCSD DO TO ENSURE THAT THE STUDENTS WHO ARE GRADUATING CAN FIND PLACEMENT IN HIGHER AND/OR SECONDARY LEARNING INSTITUTIONS, WHETHER TECHNICAL SCHOOL, UNIVERSITIES OR COLLEGES?

As the South Carolina Department of Education released that 75% of students will be at, meets or exceeds by 2030, we must ensure students are graduating college, career or military ready, leading them to higher and secondary institutions.

- 1. Robust college and career counseling:
 - Dedicated counseling services
 - College and career workshops
- 2. Partnerships with higher education institutions:
 - Dual-enrollment programs
 - Campus tours and college visits
- 3. Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs:
 - Expand CTE offerings
 - Internships and apprenticeships
- 4. Academic support and enrichment:
 - Tutoring and mentoring programs

Extracurricular activities
5. Financial literacy and scholarship guidance:
Financial literacy education
Scholarship resources

- 6. Fostering a college-going culture:
 - Promote college awareness
 - Engagement with alumni

By implementing these strategies, CCSD can equip its graduates with the tools, resources and support they need to successfully transition to higher-learning institutions, helping them achieve their academic and career aspirations.

Why should the voters in your district vote for you on Nov. 5, 2024?

Proven experience and commitment: With over four decades of dedicated service on the board, I have a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing our district.

Passion for education: I am deeply passionate about ensuring every child has access to a high-quality education. I have continuously advocated for policies and programs that enhance learning opportunities, improve student outcomes and support the diverse needs of our students.

Focus on equity and inclusion: I am dedicated to addressing disparities within our

school system by ensuring that all students receive the resources, support and opportunities they need to thrive.

Vision for the future: I have a forward-thinking vision for the future of CCSD, which includes enhancing mental health resources, improving school infrastructure and advancing curriculum and technology initiatives.

Strong community engagement: I believe that effective governance begins with listening to and involving our community. I am committed to fostering strong relationships with parents, teachers and local stakeholders. I will ensure that your voices are heard and your concerns are addressed in decision-making processes.

Integrity and accountability: I prioritize transparency and accountability in all my actions. Voters can trust that I will operate with integrity, ensuring that taxpayer dollars are used effectively and responsibly to enhance the educational experiences of our students.

By voting for me, you are choosing a candidate who is dedicated to our children's success, committed to equity and passionate about creating a thriving educational environment in Clarendon County.



KENNETH LOVORN
NONPARTISAN

company in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. We moved to Clarendon County in 2016, now retired.

Do you have children and/or family members currently in the CCSD system either as students, teachers or administrators?

I have no relatives in the CCSD school system.

Have you served as a school board member in the past?

If so, where and for how long and what were your significant contributions to those boards?

I have not served on a school board in any capacity. However, I have worked in the construction industry for 55 years and under school design and utilization. I raised 11 children, six biological and five adopted.

Why are you running for a seat on the CCSD Board of Trustees?

During my time in Clarendon County, I have observed that the school system needs some serious oversight on the expenditures, and I have the experience to provide that oversight.

What do you consider the most pressing needs of CCSD? List top 3.

- 1. Fiscal responsibility for facilities, teachers and staff for the CCSD.
- 2. Provide a program to improve the student performance.
- 3. Improve graduation success.

How do you foresee meeting those needs?

- 1. Better oversight on facility expenditures

- 1. Rerouting public school funding to improve school staffing.
- 2. Improve student performance by engaging students in their own success.

How can CCSD meet the needs of its children when considering the wide disparity in their home lives, backgrounds, socio-economic status, learning abilities, etc.?

Interrelating life success by correlating school performance to life goals.

What can CCSD do to ensure that the students who are graduating can find placement in higher and/or secondary learning institutions, whether technical school, universities or colleges?

Based on the latest testing results, the majority of CCSD students will not be successful in expanding their education to the secondary institutions. As an alternative, develop internship programs in technical programs to provide a path for students that are not college bound.

Why should the voters in your district vote for you on Nov. 5, 2024?

Having been successful in ensuring success in raising 11 children with widely variable backgrounds, I can provide a positive direction to the school board to improve fiscal utilization and empowerment to give students a range of options for their success in life, particularly for those that are not college bound.



LAKISHA SAMUEL
NONPARTISAN

Carolina Technical College. I am currently the owner and operator of Kia's Cakes, a local bakery here in Clarendon County.

Do you have children and/or family members currently in the CCSD system either as students, teachers or administrators?

I've had two children that have graduated from Manning High and one currently enrolled.

Have you served as a school board member in the past?

I have not served as a school board member in the past.

Why are you running for a seat on the CCSD Board of Trustees?

I am running to ensure that our students and teachers are being put first.

What do you consider the most pressing needs of CCSD? List top 3.

The most pressing needs of CCSD are taxpayer dollars, the number of qualified teachers and not enough after-school resources.

7. How do you foresee meeting those needs?

I foresee meeting those needs by ensuring that funds are being utilized to recruit and retain our qualified teachers and to see that we fund more programs to help our students become more college and

career ready.

How can CCSD meet the needs of its children when considering the wide disparity in their home lives, backgrounds, socio-economic status, learning abilities, etc.?

I believe that CCSD can better meet the needs of its children by offering more workshops for our parents, children and teachers.

What can CCSD do to ensure that the students who are graduating can find placement in higher and/or secondary learning institutions, whether technical school, universities or colleges?

To ensure that students who are graduating can find placement in higher or secondary learning institutions, CCSD can offer scholarship workshops and host work shadow programs to get our students more career ready.

Why should the voters in your district vote for you on Nov. 5, 2024?

Voters in my district should vote for me so that I can be an advocate for our students and our teachers to ensure that they are being put first.



LANETTE SAMUELS COOPER
NONPARTISAN

Have you served as a school board member in the past? If so, where and for how long and what were your significant contributions to those boards?

While I have not previously served on a school board, I believe it is crucial to bring fresh perspectives and individuals with experience in budget management and innovative problem-solving to the role.

Why are you running for a seat on the CCSD Board of Trustees?

I am running for a seat on the CCSD Board of Trustees because I believe our primary focus should be on the educational growth of our children. I advocate for implementing policies that support this goal, including cutting unnecessary administrative spending, enhancing school security and returning to foundational subjects like math and English; we also need to bring back cursive writing. By concentrating on essential educational content and eliminating extraneous elements, we can better support our students' development and success.

What do you consider the most pressing needs of CCSD? List top 3.

Hiring qualified instructors: Ensuring that we have skilled and effective teachers is crucial for delivering high-quality education and fostering student success.

Cutting unnecessary administrative spending: Streamlining administrative costs will allow us to allocate more resources directly to educational programs and support services that benefit students.

Ensuring the safety of staff and students: Implementing robust safety measures is essential to create a secure learning environment where both staff and students feel protected and can focus on education and learning.

How do you foresee meeting those needs? To address these pressing needs in CCSD, we can implement the following strategies:

Hiring qualified instructors: We should enhance our recruitment efforts by offering competitive salaries and professional development opportunities to attract and retain top teaching talent. Additionally, collaborating with local universities and educational organizations can help us identify and cultivate potential candidates early.

Cutting unnecessary administrative spending: Conduct a comprehensive review of administrative expenses to identify and eliminate inefficiencies. This process should include evaluating current administrative roles and responsibilities to ensure they align with our core educational goals. Redirect the savings toward direct classroom support and student programs.

Ensuring the safety of staff and students: Invest in modern security measures, including surveillance systems and access controls, and conduct regular safety drills and training for staff. Establish a clear safety protocol and emergency response plan to address potential threats and ensure a safe learning environment.

How can CCSD meet the needs of its children when considering the wide disparity in their home lives, backgrounds, socio-economic status, learning abilities, etc.?

CCSD can address the diverse needs of its students by adopting a multifaceted approach that considers their varying home lives, backgrounds and learning abilities. First, we should prioritize cutting funding from inflated administrative salaries and

eliminating unnecessary positions. This reallocation of resources can then be directed toward establishing and expanding after-school programs. These programs would serve dual purposes: providing academic tutoring and offering a safe, supportive environment for students until their parents are able to pick them up.

Additionally, we can use these funds to create specialized programs within the district to support students with learning disabilities, ensuring they receive the targeted help they need to succeed. By focusing on these areas, we can better address the individual needs of students and create a more equitable and supportive educational environment for all.

What can CCSD do to ensure that the students who are graduating can find placement in higher and/or secondary learning institutions, whether technical school, universities or colleges?

To ensure that students graduating from CCSD can successfully transition to higher education or technical institutions, we can take the following steps:

Enhance career counseling

CLARENDON SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 6 FROM PAGE D26

and college preparation: Strengthen our career counseling services to provide personalized guidance on post-secondary options, application processes and financial aid. This can include workshops on resume writing, interview skills and application deadlines.

Expand partnerships and opportunities: Leverage our existing partnership with F.E. Dubose and Central Carolina

Technical College by promoting and expanding access to technical trades and college courses. Encourage students to take advantage of these opportunities, which are available at no cost if they have enough credits. We can also explore additional partnerships with other local colleges and universities to offer dual enrollment or advanced placement programs.

Develop support programs: Implement mentorship and support programs to help students

navigate their post-graduation plans. This could include connecting students with alumni or professionals in their field of interest, providing guidance on scholarship applications and offering preparatory courses for college entrance exams.

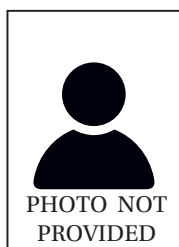
Why should the voters in your district vote for you on Nov. 5, 2024?

My goal as a board member is to prioritize our students' needs by

ensuring they receive the support and resources necessary for their success. On top of the changes I would like to make within our school district, I am committed to being accessible to voters and addressing their concerns directly. While I will adhere to established protocols, I understand that sometimes issues may fall through the cracks. Therefore, I believe it is crucial for constituents to have direct access to their school board members. I will make it a

priority to be available for calls and discussions, ensuring that every voice is heard and every issue is addressed effectively.

By focusing on these strategies, we can better prepare our students for successful transitions to higher education or technical training, ensuring they have the support and resources needed to achieve their goals.



ROBERT W. KOLB
NONPARTISAN

Please list your background (where you grew up, education, employment, how long you've lived in Clarendon County, etc.). Please list your current job (retired, etc.).

I grew up in Pinewood. After graduating from Clarendon Hall, I went on to The Citadel, where I graduated in 1992 with a commission in the USAF. After graduation while awaiting to go on active duty, my wife and I lived in Manning. She taught school full time at Manning High School while I substituted in Clarendon County schools. For the next 20 years, we moved from California to Wyoming to California to North Dakota, to Illinois, to Hawaii to Washington, D.C. I finally retired in 2013. Some of the notable accomplishments, I launched two tests of the Peacekeeper InterContinental Ballistic Missiles, master instructor, operations commander, member of the

Chairman's Joint Chiefs of Staff and three tours in Afghanistan as the National Reconnaissance Office's member to the Interagency Board of Directors for Task Force 5-35. I then went to work as a division manager at the software firm RadiantBlue. I led the group to unprecedented growth over the next seven years. After beating cancer in 2020, I returned to Manning to reunite with my family who returned to S.C. in 2018. I then started and continue to run the Jethro and Jenny's BBQ sauce company, which is a fun endeavor. I also work at Shaw Air Force Base as an operational requirements analyst.

Do you have children and/or family members currently in the CCSD system either as students, teachers or administrators?

Yes.

Have you served as a school board member in the past? If so, where and for how long and what were your significant contributions to those boards?

No.

Why are you running for a seat on the CCSD Board of Trustees?

We need leadership on the

board to get the CCSD running better. Look at our major issues we have facing us, over 50% of students not meeting state standards, the district is 1 of 6 districts in the state on fiscal watch/caution/emergency, and we spend over \$16K per student to get the awful results.

<https://tinyurl.com/5emtvjz>
<https://tinyurl.com/2wcbmjad>
<https://tinyurl.com/4w2uy3zt>

What do you consider the most pressing needs of CCSD?

- Leadership
- Financial accountability
- Certified teachers

How do you foresee meeting those needs?

- I've led in the AF and in business; the same principles of leadership apply.
- I will work with the CFO to get our financial house in order using the knowledge gained running a line of business for a large corporation.
- We must work with SCDOE, each state college which has an education major and other organizations to show how teaching in Clarendon County can be a fulfilling job.

How can CCSD meet the needs of its children when considering the wide disparity in their home lives, backgrounds, socio-economic status, learning abilities, etc.?

It starts with our elementary ed teachers working to get our K-3 students reading on grade level. Look at our SC Ready scores. Until we get the students reading on grade level, we are "spinning our wheels." We as a district must hold a standard and let nothing get in our way. I understand our demographics in Clarendon County, but we cannot use demographics as an excuse.

<https://tinyurl.com/3dwhz7yk>

What can CCSD do to ensure that the students who are graduating can find placement in higher and/or secondary learning institutions, whether technical school, universities or colleges?

To answer the question, simply set and hold standards. We have some students who are currently receiving attendance certificates versus diplomas. We don't have the community involvement required to enlighten the students on different career paths. Two paths which come to mind are locomotive engineer, which

requires a high school diploma to enter. A locomotive engineer has median salary of \$67K. The other, U.S. Merchant Marine, also has high school diploma entrance. An entry-level ordinary seaman's salary is over \$65K. We must focus on setting higher standards for our students. Our board plays a critical role in being involved with the process. As a board, we must break down any and all barriers which hold back our teachers in the classroom. The teachers in the district touch the students daily. If unencumbered, the teachers can teach and mentor students at a scale the board cannot match.

Why should the voters in your district vote for you on Nov. 5, 2024?

As your representative on the Clarendon County school board, I will work to:

- Employ the absolute best teachers in the classroom and support and compensate them fairly.
- Ensure that money spent is accounted for and is used to educate students.
- Provide the best possible learning environment for every student.



The following constitutional amendment question will appear on all ballots in the Nov. 5 general election. Read over the question so you will be familiar with it before casting your vote

Proposed constitutional amendment question:

"Must Section 4, Article II of the Constitution of this State, relating to voter qualifications, be amended so as to provide that only a citizen of the United States and of this State of the age of 18 and upwards who is properly registered is entitled to vote as provided by law?"

David MERCHANT

for **MAYOR**

www.merchantformayor.com

PAID FOR BY MERCHANT FOR MAYOR

CLARENDON SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 7



AMY GREEN
NONPARTISAN

Do you have children and/or family members currently in the CCSD system either as students, teachers or administrators?

I do not have any family members or children in the CCSD.

Have you served as a school board member in the past? If so, where and for how long and what were your significant contributions to those boards?

No

Why are you running for a seat on the CCSD Board of Trustees?

The public education system provides one of the most important experiences that will have a lifetime impact in our children's lives. I want to ensure

that all children have access to the best education possible.

What do you consider the most pressing needs of CCSD? List top 3.

State test scores show district schools need improvement in math and science. A 2023 report from the state Inspector General shows a truancy rate of 24.99% in the CCSD. Transparency of the CCSD board of trustees.

How do you foresee meeting those needs?

Address the problem areas in math and science and identify how we can help improve the state testing scores.

Let's find out why so many students are chronically absent. Help students and their families understand the importance

of education. Keep the public better informed of agenda items that will directly impact students and their families.

How can CCSD meet the needs of its children when considering the wide disparity in their home lives, backgrounds, socio-economic status, learning abilities, etc.?

It is the role of public education to equip all students with basic educational tools needed to better their lives on all levels. An education can help a student lift themselves out of poverty, a dysfunctional home life and give them confidence in their abilities.

What can CCSD do to ensure that the students who are graduating can find placement

in higher and/or secondary learning institutions, whether technical school, universities or colleges?

Get to know the students. Key in on their natural proclivities. This will help us better understand how to set them on a successful path after graduation.

Why should the voters in your district vote for you on Nov. 5, 2024?

I feel we need citizens to serve on the board that have not served as trustees in the past. I will have a fresh perspective on current and future challenges facing the CCSD. I have a sincere desire to see our children thrive in the school environment and receive the education and preparation needed for life after public school.



GEORGE FRIERERSON
NONPARTISAN

Clarendon County schools. I have three college degrees. Retired from Santee Print Works after 40 years.

Do you have children and/or family members currently in the CCSD system either as students, teachers or administrators?

None at the present time

Have you served as a school board member in the past? If so, where and for how long and what were your significant contributions to those boards?

25 years as a member of the Clarendon County School District

Three Board of Trustees. I was the last chairman of the CSD3 School Board.

Why are you running for a seat on the CCSD Board of Trustees?

To make sure that our children get a proper education

What do you consider the most pressing needs of CCSD? List top 3.

- Education
- Discipline
- Teachers

How do you foresee meeting those needs?

Board of Trustees run the district. They are the governing body of the district.

How can CCSD meet the needs of its children when considering the wide disparity in their home lives, backgrounds, socio-economic status, learning abilities, etc.?

Follow accepted educational practices and governance. We have excellent who are known professionally worldwide. Practice what you preach.

What can CCSD do to ensure that the students who are graduating can find placement

in higher and/or secondary learning institutions, whether technical school, universities or colleges?

Give occupational diplomas. We educate children to meet the needs of their skill sets. I know they work because we did that at Clarendon School District 3.

Why should the voters in your district vote for you on Nov. 5, 2024?

I am a public servant proven.

Ron Wingard (incumbent) did not submit responses.

CLARENDON SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 8



JENNIFER HOWARD POWELL
NONPARTISAN

Howard Chapel A.M.E. Church Some of my past leadership roles include: student body president in high school; vice chair of the former Clarendon School District Four Board; secretary of the Friends of the Harvin Clarendon County Library; chair of the Portsmouth City, Virginia, Library Board; member of both Norfolk/Virginia Beach and Florence Junior Leagues; 2007 graduate of Leadership Clarendon

In my spare time, I enjoy spending time with family, researching issues related to children and seniors and learning about government and politics. I am an active volunteer in community events such as the Puddin' Swamp Festival.

Do you have children and/or family members currently in the CCSD system either as students, teachers or administrators?

I do not have any immediate family members currently in the CCSD system in any capacity. However, living in such a small community, it is almost impossible not to somehow be related to someone in the school system. With that being said, I have a few distant cousins that are students and staff.

Have you served as a school board member in the past?

If so, where and for how long and what were your significant contributions to those boards?

I was appointed and served on the Clarendon County School District Four Board (consolidated Clarendon One and Three) in March 2020 through June 2022

when all Clarendon County schools were unified as one district. I served once as parliamentarian and later vice chairperson. Since March 2023, I have been serving on the Wateree Action Agency board. This board includes oversight for the Head Start programs in Clarendon, Kershaw, Lee, Richland and Sumter counties.

Why are you running for a seat on the CCSD Board of Trustees?

I want to contribute and make a significant difference in our community's future. I will be a dedicated candidate committed to improving our schools, advocating for better resources and ensuring every student receives a quality education. I will be a leader who will champion our students and make positive changes in our school system.

What do you consider the most pressing needs of CCSD? List top 3.

- First - teacher support
- Second - small classroom sizes
- Third - holistic student development

How do you foresee meeting those needs?

First and foremost, listening to constituents and hearing their concerns. Having empathy when making decisions is also important. I have found that as a former student, parent and community member, I have had opinions that were not the same as those that were making decisions. Once appointed to the previous Clarendon Four board, my thoughts on the process had

to change at times. Sometimes decisions are made with guidance from policy and law that must be followed. I believe as long as I am making the best decision with information given and an explanation to the stakeholders when possible, that is my duty. As a board member, I am not a micromanager and will direct to protocol when necessary. I am there to support the superintendent, staff, community and most importantly, our students.

How can CCSD meet the needs of its children when considering the wide disparity in their home lives, backgrounds, socio-economic status, learning abilities, etc.?

I believe in collaborations with agencies in the community is a big plus to help fill in the gap. Some are, but not limited to, community resource centers, the county library, Save the Children and other similar organizations. These resources often are more specific in their reach and can assist in some instances. I also believe a strong parenting program is a key piece to bridging the gap between families and the schools. Sometimes when a parent has not had a great school experience, it may be difficult for them to express their needs and or advocate for their child(ren).

What can CCSD do to ensure that the students who are graduating can find placement in higher and/or secondary learning institutions, whether technical school, universities or colleges?

I think a strong guidance department that collaborates with learning institutions beyond high school would be good. I know that there are already some of these opportunities for students in place. Perhaps adding one in the evening if not already so that working parents could attend with their student(s). Coordinate field trips to some of these institutions. I would also like to see students come back and share their experiences in a forum type setting. While in Virginia, my children had an additional counselor from a local nonprofit that worked with the school's guidance department that specialized in getting students prepared for the next level. They assisted with applications, financial requirements, found funding to assist financially with expenses related to taking tests and fees for college applications. Perhaps there are grant opportunities to add a staff person that concentrates solely for these purposes.

Why should the voters in your district vote for you on Nov. 5, 2024?

I feel that a vote for me is having a voice for the voter on the board. I want to keep an "open door" invitation to all that can voice their opinion so that I may keep those thoughts in mind as the board discusses and deliberates on what is before us. I will always remind constituents that protocol should be followed when there is an issue. There are steps to getting concerns heard and dealt with before involving a board member in a situation.



DARREN G. WILSON
NONPARTISAN

Barrineau community. My education was fostered at these institutions: East Clarendon, Central Carolina Technical College, St. Leo University, Union Presbyterian Seminary. My employment includes: Clarendon County Sheriff's Department, 1995-2002; South Carolina Highway Patrol, 2002-2015; South Carolina Law Enforcement Division, 2015-2016; Presbytery of New Harmony, 2016-2018; Lee County School District, 2018-Present, where I am the operations/technology coordinator. I am a lifelong resident

of Clarendon County. I am a retired military veteran from the U.S. Army National Guard.

Do you have children and/or family members currently in the CCSD system either as students, teachers or administrators?

My wife is employed with the CCSD. I have two children who attend school in the CCSD.

Have you served as a school board member in the past?

If so, where and for how long and what were your significant

contributions to those boards?

No

Why are you running for a seat on the CCSD Board of Trustees?

I have a vision of making meaningful improvements in the educational system that will positively impact students' lives both now and in the future

What do you consider the most pressing needs of CCSD? List top 3.

As a school board member, my top three priorities are to empower

academic excellence, ensure school safety and strengthen relationships between schools and the community, particularly local businesses.

How do you foresee meeting those needs?

I will achieve this by advocating for initiatives that enhance our curriculum and invest in teacher development to ensure students are prepared for college and

SEE CLARENDON SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 8, PAGE D29

CLARENDON SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 8

FROM PAGE D28

careers. Additionally, I will support comprehensive safety measures, including physical security upgrades, mental health resources and crisis management training, to create a secure learning environment. Finally, I will work to establish partnerships between local businesses and schools, creating opportunities for internships, apprenticeships and career mentorship programs that equip students with practical skills and real-world experience while fostering community engagement.

How can CCSD meet the needs of its children when considering

the wide disparity in their home lives, backgrounds, socio-economic status, learning abilities, etc.?

Meeting the diverse needs of students requires a district-wide commitment to equity, inclusion and support at multiple levels. By addressing academic, social, emotional and economic disparities, schools can create a more supportive and effective learning environment where all students, regardless of backgrounds or ability, have the opportunity to thrive.

What can CCSD do to ensure

that the students who are graduating can find placement in higher and/or secondary learning institutions, whether technical school, universities or colleges?

To ensure that students in CCSD can find placements in higher education institutions, technical schools and the workforce, the district should implement its Career and Technical Education (CTE) program with fidelity. This includes establishing strong partnerships with local technical schools, colleges and universities to create clear pathways for students. Additionally,

CCSD can collaborate closely with specialists and administrators to provide students with necessary guidance and resources. These efforts will help ensure students are well prepared, competitive and equipped to secure meaningful placements after graduation.

Why should the voters in your district vote for you= on Nov. 5, 2024?

Voters should vote for me because I am deeply rooted in Clarendon County, having graduated from East Clarendon High School and lived here all my life. With over 20 years of

experience in law enforcement, a career in the military, recognition as state and national trooper of the year and my current role as a district administrator in a neighboring district, I bring a unique skill set and a proven work ethic. My love for the district and commitment to educational excellence drive me to ensure every student has the opportunity to succeed. I will work tirelessly to empower education and secure a brighter future for our children.

John R. Hardy did not submit answers.

CLARENDON SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 9



CETH LAND
NONPARTISAN
INCUMBENT

Please list your background (where you grew up, education, employment, how long you've lived in Clarendon County, etc.). Please list your current job (retired, etc.).

I grew up in Manning.

- education:** Manning High School, 1990; College of Charleston, 1994; University of South Carolina School of Law, 1997
- employment:** Land Parker Welch LLC Attorney with Land Parker Welch LLC for the past 26 years
- how long you've lived in Clarendon County:** My entire life, other than leaving to attend college and law school

Do you have children and/or family members currently in the CCSD system either as students, teachers, or administrators?

My daughter dates a gentleman with a son that attends Manning Elementary School, and we consider him our grandson. In addition to that current student, my three children and I are all graduates of Manning High School.

Have you served as a school board member in the past?

If so, where and for how long and what were your significant contributions to those boards?

Yes, Clarendon School District Two, 2002 – 2021, including two terms as the chairman; Clarendon School District; 2021 - Current, including one term as the chairman. During my time on the District Two board, we were able to use the penny sales tax funds to retire all school bond debts and maintain our facilities without having to issue any new bonds, therefore, saving the residents of District Two from higher property tax bills. While on the Clarendon School District Board, we have also maintained our facilities with the penny sales tax money without issuing any bonds.

Why are you running for a seat on the CCSD Board of Trustees?

I would like to continue the success of our district. We need to continue to ensure that our students are being educated for the jobs of the future. We need to ensure that our students are college or career ready when they graduate. I have been on the Clarendon County School District Two and the Clarendon County School District Board for a total of 22 years. During that time, I have served as the chairman for three terms. This experience will help me ensure that the district achieves the goals that I have outlined above.

What do you consider the most pressing needs of CCSD? List top 3.

Funding is always a pressing need for a school district located in a rural county. We have a limited tax base and must work hard as a board and a district to ensure that we manage our budget wisely. With the potential loss of federal funding due to the Title IX controversy and the loss of the penny sales tax, if the tax is not renewed, our district stands to lose approximately \$8M in federal funds and approximately \$8M in local funds from the penny sales tax. This \$16M loss would be devastating to the children and staff of our district. I ask all federal and state elected officials to work hard to ensure that these funds are not lost. If these funds are lost, then the board will be forced to choose between our students suffering or raising property taxes. I do not want to choose between those two options, when our federal and state elected officials can act to ensure that our district does not lose these funds.

The safety of our children while at school has become an ever-increasing concern. During my time on the board, we have worked hard to update our schools with locks for classrooms and secure vestibule areas where visitors to our schools can be cleared to enter our schools. With the school shooting in Georgia, we have seen that this threat is ever present.

The continued modernization of our schools, equipment and curriculum must be a priority to ensure that our students graduate with the education to prepare them for the modern jobs in our

economy.

How do you foresee meeting those needs?

The funding issue must be met with the help of the federal and state elected officials working to ensure that the federal and local tax funds are not lost.

We are currently working on using some of the penny tax funds to implement additional security measures at our schools. These funds are vital to allow the board to make improvements without the need to increase property taxes.

We must have the computers and other assets available to our students so that they will have the training and background for the jobs of the future.

How can CCSD meet the needs of its children when considering the wide disparity in their home lives, backgrounds, socio-economic status, learning abilities, etc.?

The diversity of the home lives, backgrounds, socio-economic status and learning abilities is both a challenge and an opportunity. I believe our district staff works tirelessly to ensure that every student is educated to his or her fullest potential and is not limited by the home, background, status or ability that they bring to school. I have seen students that come from very difficult situations excel in our district and go on to further their education and improve their lives over the background from which they came.

What can CCSD do to ensure that the students who are graduating can find placement in higher and/or secondary learning institutions, whether technical school, universities, or colleges?

As I have stated above, the continued modernization of our schools, equipment and curriculum must be a priority to ensure that our students graduate with the education to prepare them for the modern jobs in our economy. During my time on the board, we have ensured that every school has high-speed internet and electronic devices available to every student. These advances do not come cheaply, and we must work as a board to budget for these costs.

Why should the voters in your district vote for you on Nov. 5, 2024?

Experience matters. During my 22 years of service, I served on the board during the difficult times suffered by everyone during the Great Recession. We, as a board, had to make difficult decisions to balance our budget during a time of decreased revenue, while still providing for the needs of our students. I was also on the board when we all suffered through the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. I commend the district staff for continuing to educate our students during this unprecedented event. My experience prepares me for the known and unknown challenges that face our district in the future.



JAMEEL ZAMIR
NONPARTISAN

Please list your background (where you grew up, education, employment, how long you've lived in Clarendon County, etc.). Please list your current job (retired, etc.).

I was a student of the Clarendon County school system from fourth to the 12th grade; I attended Morris College and Central Carolina Technical College in Sumter, where I earned two certificates. I then embarked on a career as an independent contractor until a severe on-the-job injury forced me to discontinue my endeavors. After my recovery, I worked independently as a videographer and photographer. Unfortunately, further medical issues eventually caused me to slow down my activities.

Do you have children and/or family members currently in the CCSD system either as students, teachers or administrators?

No

Have you served as a school board member in the past? If so, where and for how long and what were your significant contributions to those boards?

No

Why are you running for a seat on the CCSD Board of Trustees?

I am running for a seat on the CCSD Board of Trustees because I am deeply passionate about addressing the pressing issues in our school system,

particularly violence in schools and the challenges faced by troubled youth. I fear that they are unprepared to face life after high school, with some of them unproficient in reading, writing or reading comprehension, unable to properly utilize cursive writing skills, unable to stay focused or seated for long periods of time, coming to school dressed inappropriately and unable to control their emotions. I feel that with my background as a youth pastor, community advocate and mentor and my decades as a business owner, I have developed a strong commitment to community service and a deep understanding of the needs of our students and families.

I believe in the importance of life skills education and community involvement, and I am dedicated to ensuring that our schools provide a safe and supportive environment for all students. I also believe that we need to be more responsible with our school budget.

Furthermore, I am concerned about disparities in education and believe that every student deserves access to high-quality resources and opportunities. I also support curating public school libraries to ensure that students are not exposed to inappropriate content.

Overall, I am running for the CCSD Board of Trustees to bring a fresh perspective, advocate for our students and work toward a brighter future for our community.

What do you consider the most pressing needs of CCSD? List top 3.

1. Addressing violence in schools: Ensuring the safety of our students and staff is paramount. We need comprehensive strategies to prevent violence, including increased mental health support, conflict resolution programs, and

stronger partnerships with local law enforcement.

2. Supporting troubled youth: Many students face significant challenges outside of school that impact their academic performance and well-being. We need to provide more resources for counseling, mentorship programs and community support to help these students succeed.

3. Enhancing life skills education: Preparing students for life beyond school is crucial. We should prioritize life skills education, including financial literacy, career readiness and social-emotional learning, to equip students with the tools they need to thrive in the real world.

How do you foresee meeting those needs?

Meeting these needs will require a multifaceted approach, and while I am not aware of how much funding, if any, is available for implementing what I have outlined, I do believe that these ideas should be taken into consideration, because I believe they can work.

Implement comprehensive safety plans: Develop and enforce safety protocols, including regular drills and clear communication channels, if cameras aren't already installed in each classroom (including hallways and entrances to restrooms). They should be installed, as well as live cameras on school buses.

Increase mental health support: Hire more counselors and social workers to provide students with the emotional and psychological support they need.

Strengthen partnerships: Collaborate with local law enforcement and community organizations to create a safe school environment. Sponsor National Night Out events so

that parents and students can become better acquainted with local law enforcement, EMT and firefighters, as well as counselors that both parents and students will feel comfortable with sharing their concerns.

Expand counseling services: Ensure that every school has access to qualified counselors who can provide one-on-one support to students in need.

Mentorship programs: Establish mentorship programs that connect students with positive role models from the community.

Community involvement: Engage local businesses and organizations to provide resources and support for students facing challenges outside of school.

Integrate life skills into curriculum: Incorporate financial literacy, career readiness and social-emotional learning into the standard curriculum.

Workshops and seminars: Offer workshops and seminars on practical life skills, such as budgeting, job interviewing and conflict resolution. I believe these skills should be offered to parents as well.

Partnerships with local experts: Collaborate with local professionals and organizations to provide students with real-world insights and experiences.

I feel that by taking these steps, we can create a safer, more supportive and well-rounded educational environment for all students.

How can CCSD meet the needs of its children when considering the wide disparity in their home lives, backgrounds, socio-economic status, learning abilities, etc.?

Individualized Education Programs (IEPs): if it has not already been implemented,

develop tailored learning plans for students with special needs to ensure they receive the appropriate support and resources.

Differentiated instruction: Train teachers to use differentiated instruction techniques to cater to the varying learning abilities and styles of students. I realize that this will be time consuming, but it is one of several ideas that I would introduce to the board of trustees to see if we can work together to give it a try.

Parent and community involvement: Although this may prove to be difficult and very time consuming in the beginning, we must foster strong partnerships with parents and community organizations to create a supportive network for students.

Family support services: Provide resources and programs to support families, such as parenting workshops, counseling services, and access to social services.

Equitable Resource Allocation: Needs-based funding: Allocate resources based on the specific needs of each school and student population, ensuring that those with greater needs receive more support.

Access to technology and learning materials: Ensure all students have access to necessary technology and learning materials, regardless of their socio-economic status.

Holistic Support Programs: Health and wellness: Increase access to mental health services and wellness programs to support students' emotional and psychological well-being.

Extracurricular activities: Offer a wide range of

CLARENDON SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 9

FROM PAGE D29

extracurricular activities to provide students with opportunities to explore their interests and develop new skills.

Cultural competency training: Provide ongoing training for teachers and staff on cultural competency and inclusive teaching practices.

Support for teachers: Ensure teachers have access to the resources and support they need to effectively address the diverse needs of their students.

What can CCSD do to ensure that the students who are graduating can find placement in higher and/or secondary learning institutions, whether technical school, universities or colleges?

First, I want to commend the current school board for implementing many of the ideas that I have listed below, as well as many other ideas that I have listed based upon the questions that you've asked, and I believe that those programs should continue to be a part of the

CCSD plan of action to ensure that our students are college and job ready after graduation. And I would also like to include and emphasize the importance of.

Dedicated counselors: Hire dedicated college and career counselors to guide students through the application process, scholarship opportunities and career planning.

Workshops and seminars: Organize workshops and seminars on college applications, financial aid and career exploration.

Dual-enrollment programs: Establish partnerships with local colleges and universities to offer dual-enrollment programs, allowing students to earn college credits while still in high school. (I believe that this has already been implemented)

College visits and fairs: Arrange regular college visits and fairs to expose students to various higher education options and help them make informed decisions. (I believe this has been implemented as well)

Technical education programs: Develop and expand technical education programs that provide students with hands-on experience and certifications in various trades.

Apprenticeships and internships: Partner with local businesses to offer apprenticeships and internships, giving students real-world experience and a pathway to employment.

Tutoring and mentorship programs: Provide tutoring and mentorship programs to help students excel academically and prepare for college entrance exams.

Advanced Placement (AP) and honors courses: Offer a wide range of AP and honors courses to challenge students and enhance their college applications. (I believe that this is being offered as well)

Parent workshops: Conduct workshops for parents to educate them on the college application process and how they can

support their children.

Community partnerships: Engage community organizations to provide additional resources and support for students pursuing higher education.

Why should the voters in your district vote for you on Nov. 5, 2024?

Voters in CCSD should vote for me on Nov. 5 because I am dedicated to ensuring our students receive the best possible education and opportunities. My priorities include:

1. Quality education: Implementing programs that raise academic standards, ensuring students are prepared for higher education and future careers.
2. Support for teachers: Increasing support and resources for teachers, including professional development and fair compensation, empowering them to provide the highest quality education.
3. Safe and inclusive schools:

Promoting policies that create a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment for all students, addressing bullying and fostering mental health support.

4. Parental involvement: Encouraging greater parental and community involvement in school activities and decision-making, creating partnerships that benefit students.
5. Modern facilities: Investing in modernizing school facilities, ensuring they are safe, technologically advanced and conducive to learning.
6. Fiscal responsibility: Ensuring taxpayer money is spent wisely and efficiently, prioritizing spending that directly benefits our students' education.

I am committed to listening to the community concerns and working tirelessly to provide our children with the best educational experience. I believe that together, we can make a significant, positive impact on our school district's future.

LEE COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

C.B. Player III is running for reelection as commissioner of the Lee County Soil and Water Conservation District. He did not return the questionnaire by press time, and he is running unopposed after Justin Boyce withdrew.

TRI-COUNTY PRECINCTS

SUMTER COUNTY

Barrier Free — Voter Registration Office, 141 N Main St Rm 114, Sumter

Bates — Bates Middle School, 715 Estate St, Sumter

Birnie — Birnie Hope Center, 210 S. Purdy St, Sumter

Burns-Down — Alice Drive Middle School, 40 Miller Road, Sumter

Causeway Branch 1 — Millwood Elem School, 24 Pinewood Rd, Sumter

Causeway Branch 2 — Millwood Elem School, 24 Pinewood Rd, Sumter

Cherryvale — Cherryvale Community Cntr, 4340 Confederate Rd, Sumter

Crosswell — Crosswell Elem. School, 301 Crosswell Dr, Sumter

Dalzell 1 — Hillcrest Middle School, 4355 Peach Orchard Rd, Dalzell

Dalzell 2 — Hillcrest Middle School, 4355 Peach Orchard Road, Dalzell

Delaine — Delaine Community Center, 5400 Cane Savannah Rd, Wedgefield

Ebenezer 1 — Ebenezer Middle School, 3440 Ebenezer Rd, Sumter

Ebenezer 2 — Ebenezer Middle School, 3440 Ebenezer Rd, Sumter

Folsom Park — Willow Drive Elementary, 26 Willow Drive, Sumter

Furman — Furman Middle School, 3400 Bethel Church Rd, Sumter

Green Swamp 1 — Sumter School District, 1345 Wilson Hall Rd, Sumter

Green Swamp 2 — Sumter School District, 1345 Wilson Hall Rd, Sumter

Hampton Park — Meeting House at Memorial Park, 407 W Hampton Ave, Sumter

Hillcrest — Hillcrest Middle School, 4355 Peach Orchard Rd, Dalzell

Horatio — Horatio Fire Station, 7720 Sumter Landing Rd, Horatio

Lemira — Lemira Elementary School, 952 Fulton Street, Sumter

Loring — Crosswell Elem. School, 301 Crosswell Dr, Sumter

Magnolia-Harmony — S. Sumter Resource Center, 337 Manning Ave., Sumter

Manchester Forest — Wedgefield Fire Station, 2035 S.C. Highway 261 S, Wedgefield

Mayesville — Mayesville Fire Station, 20 S. Main Street E., Mayesville

Mayewood — RE Davis College Preparatory Academy, 345 Eastern School Rd, Sumter

McCrays Mill 1 — Sumter County Career Cntr, 2612 McCrays Mill Road, Sumter

McCrays Mill 2 — Sumter County Career Cntr, 2612 McCrays Mill Rd, Sumter

Millwood — Millwood Elementary School, 24 Pinewood Rd, Sumter

Morris College — North Hope Center, 904 N. Main Street, Sumter

Mulberry — North Hope Center, 904 N Main St, Sumter

Oakland Plant 1 — Oakland Primary School, 5415 Oakland Dr, Sumter

Oakland Plant 2 — Oakland Primary School, 5415 Oakland Dr, Sumter

Oswego — Crestwood High School, 2000 Oswego Rd, Sumter

Palmetto Park — Central Carolina Tech. College, 660 N Guignard Dr Bldg 700, Sumter

Pinewood — Manchester Elementary School, 200 Clark St, Pinewood

Pocotaligo 1 — Lakewood High School, 350 Old Manning Rd, Sumter

Pocotaligo 2 — Lakewood High School, 350 Old Manning Rd, Sumter

Privateer — Pocalla Springs Elem Scho, 2060 Bethel Church Rd, Sumter

Rembert — Rembert Fire Station, 7045 Post Office Street, Rembert

Salem — Rural Fire Station, 6090 Myrtle Beach Hwy, Gable

Salterstown — Chestnut Oaks Middle Schl, 1200 Oswego Road, Sumter

Savage-Glover — S.Sumter Resource Center, 337 Manning Ave, Sumter

Second Mill — USC Sumter Arts/Letter Lecture Room, 200 Miller Rd, Sumter

Shaw — Shaw Heights Elem School, 5121 Frierson Rd, Sumter

South Liberty — American Legion Home Bldg, 28 Artillery Dr, Sumter

South Red Bay — South Hope Center, 1125 S. Lafayette Dr, Sumter

Spectrum — Kingsbury Elementary School, 825 Kingsbury Rd, Sumter

St. John — Shiloh Community Center, 475 Puddin Swamp Rd, Lynchburg

St. Paul — Cherryvale Elementary Sch, 1420 Furman Drive, Sumter

Stone Hill — Jehovah Baptist Church, 803 S. Harvin St, Sumter

Sumter High 1 — Sumter High School, 2580 McCrays Mill Rd, Sumter

Sumter High 2 — Sumter High School, 2580 McCrays Mill Rd, Sumter

Sunset — Kingsbury Elem. School, 825 Kingsbury Rd, Sumter

Swan Lake — Willow Dr Elem. School, 26 Willow Dr, Sumter

Thomas Sumter — Hillcrest Middle School, 4355 Peach Orchard Rd, Dalzell

Turkey Creek — Lemira Elementary School, 952 Fulton St, Sumter

Wilder — Wilder Elem. School, 900 Floral Ave, Sumter

Wilson Hall — Wilson Hall School, 520 Wilson Hall Rd, Sumter

CLARENDON COUNTY

Alcolu — Alcolu Fire Station, 1612 Main St., Alcolu

Barrineau — Barrineau Fire Station, 3803 St. James Road, Lake City

Barrows Mill — Oakdale Union Fire Station, 1757 Fire Tower Road, Lake City

Bloomville — Liberty Fire Station, 5119 Brewer Road, Manning

Calvary — Mt. Pleasant RUME Church, 14076 Panola Road, Pinewood

Davis Station — Davis Station Fire Station, 2684 M.W. Rickenbaker Road, Manning

Harmony — Harmony Presbyterian Church, 8629 Highway 301, Alcolu

Hicks — Turbeville Town Hall, 1400 Main St., Turbeville

Home Branch — Paxville Town Hall, 10279 Lewis Road, Manning

Jordan — (New) Wyboo Fire Station, 9699 Highway 260, Manning

Manning 1 — Weldon Auditorium Lobby, 7 Maple St., Manning

Manning 2 — Clarendon County Administration Building, 411 Sunset Drive, Manning

Manning 3 — Clarendon County Administration Building. 411 Sunset Drive, Manning

Manning 4 — Manning Fire Station, 42 W. Boyce St., Manning

Manning 5 — Weldon Auditorium Lobby, 7 Maple St., Manning

New Zion — Clarendon County EMS Building, 15677 Highway 301, New Zion

Oakdale — Oakdale Union Fire Station, 1757 Fire Tower Road, Lake City

Panola — Mt. Pleasant RUME Church, 14076 Panola Road, Pinewood

Paxville — Paxville Town Hall, 10279 Lewis Road, Manning

Sardinia-Gable — Melina Presbyterian Church, 3539 Black River Road, Gable

Summerton 1 — Summerton Fire Station, 6 N. Cantey St., Summerton

Summerton 2 — Clarendon 1 Resource Center Gym, 1154 4th St., Summerton

Summerton 3 — Clarendon 1 Resource Center Gym, 1154 4th St., Summerton

Turbeville — Turbeville Town Hall, 1400 Main St., Turbeville; and

Wilson-Foreston — Wilson-Foreston Fire Station, 1115 N. Brewington Road, Manning

LEE COUNTY

Ashland/Stokes Bridge — Fire Station #4, 3018 Una Rd, Bishopville

Ashwood — Fire Station #3, 4396 Sumter Hwy, Bishopville

Barrier Free — Voter Registration Office, 101 Gregg St, Bishopville

Bishopville No. 1 — Fire Station #1, 122 E Church St,

Bishopville

Bishopville No. 2 — Old Fire Department, 113 E Council St, Bishopville

Bishopville No. 3 — The Pilot Home, 120 Barnett Dr, Bishopville

Bishopville No. 4 — Lee County School District Office Annex, 310 Roland St, Bishopville

Cedar Creek — Cedar Creek Baptist Church, 3002 Camden Hwy, Bishopville

Cypress — Fire Station #8, 2346 15 N, Bishopville

Elliott — St Paul United Methodist Church, 16 Clarence McFadden Rd, Lynchburg

Hickory Hill — Fire Station #5, 763 McCaskill Rd, Camden

Ionia — Fire Station #5, 763 McCaskill Rd, Camden

Lynchburg — RYANNE'S Catering Hall, 154 Main St, Lynchburg

Manville — St. Mark Missionary Baptist Church, 510 Manville-Wisacky Rd, Bishopville

Mt. Clio — New Zion AME Church, 789 Coopers Mill Rd, Bishopville

Rattlesnake Springs — St. Andrew Church Of God, 4238 Red Hill Rd, Camden

Schrocks Mill/Lucknow — Concord United Methodist Church, 354 Old Camden Rd, Bishopville

South Lynchburg — Warren Chapel UM Church, 24 Back Swamp Rd, Lynchburg

Spring Hill — Spring Hill Lodge 188 AFM, 3980 Springhill Rd, Rembert

St. Charles — Lower Lee Elementary, 26 Lower Lee School Rd, Mayesville

St. Matthews — St Matthews Methodist Church, 2144 Stokes Bridge Rd W, Bishopville

Turkey Creek — Fire Station #6, 2386 Hubb Kelley Rd, Bishopville

Woodrow — Mt Olive AME Church, 2738 Woodrow Rd, Sumter



SAMPLE BALLOT

SAMPLE BALLOT

- **This is NOT your ballot.** This is a Sample Ballot showing a representation of the offices and candidates that will appear on your official ballot and is provided for informational purposes only.
- While your actual ballot will look different, this sample ballot contains all the offices and questions for which you will be eligible to vote at the time this sample ballot was produced. Sometimes candidates withdraw or are disqualified prior to an election. Also, if you move and update your address, your sample ballot will likely change. Sample ballots are made available approximately 100 days prior to an election. It is best to check your sample ballot close to election day to check for any changes in offices and candidates.
- Your Sample Ballot may differ from other voters' ballots in your precinct.
- **Straight Party:** For partisan elections, your actual ballot will provide a straight party selection option. If you make a straight party selection on your ballot, you will be selecting all candidates of that party on your ballot. Any vote cast for an individual candidate will take precedence over any straight party selection. Nonpartisan offices and questions are not included in the straight party vote and must be marked individually. There is no straight party option in primaries and nonpartisan elections.
- **Click** your county voter registration office to vote in person or to early vote, or go to your polling place to vote on election day.
- You may take this Sample Ballot with you when voting absentee or do NOT display or distribute it at your polling place or early voting location.

COUNTY: SUMTER
 VOTING PRECINCT: Hampton Park
 PRECINCT LOCATION: Meeting House at Memorial Park
 PRECINCT ADDRESS: 407 W Hampton Ave Sumter SC 29159
 VOTING DISTRICTS:
 US Congressional District: 06 SC Senate District: 36 SC House District: 067
 County Council: 06 School District: 09 City Council District: S4
 Municipality: 645 Magistrate/Jury/Ang: 431

SUMTER COUNTY BOARD OF VOTER REGISTRATION & ELECTIONS
 129 E Liberty St Phone Number: (803)4362313
 Sumter SC 29150 Email: pjelferson@sumtercountysc.gov

THE FOLLOWING ELECTIONS ARE INCLUDED IN THIS SAMPLE BALLOT
 Statewide General Election
 City of Sumter General Election

SAMPLE BALLOT - SUMTER COUNTY

STATEWIDE GENERAL ELECTION

President and Vice President

- You may vote for One.
- Randall A Terry / Stephen E Broden (Constitution)
 - Cornel West / Melina Abdulla (United Citizens)
 - Jill Stein / Rudolph Butch Ware (Green)
 - Donald J Trump / JD Vance (Republican)
 - Chase Oliver / Mike ter Maat (Libertarian)
 - Kamala D Harris / Tim Walz (Democratic)
 - Claudia De La Cruz / Karina Garcia (Workers)

U.S. House of Representatives, District 6

- You may vote for One.
- Gregg Marcel Dixon (United Citizens)
 - Duke Buckner (Republican)
 - Joseph Odds (Alliance)
 - Michael Simpson (Libertarian)
 - James E Jim Clyburn (Democratic)

State Senate, District 36

- You may vote for One.
- Jeff Zell (Republican)
 - Kevin L Johnson (Democratic)

State House of Representatives, District 67

- You may vote for One.
- Murrell Smith (Republican)

Sheriff

- You may vote for One.
- Anthony Dennis (Democratic)

Clerk of Court

You may vote for One.

- James C Campbell (Democratic)

Coroner

- You may vote for One.
- Robbie Baker (Democratic)

Auditor

- You may vote for One.
- Lauretha A McCants (Democratic)

County Treasurer

- You may vote for One.
- Carolina B Richardson (Democratic)

Soil and Water District Commission

- You may vote for One.
- Chris Sumpter II (Nonpartisan)

School Board, District 9

- You may vote for One.
- Bonnie Disney (Nonpartisan)
 - Desaray S Ross (Nonpartisan)

Statewide Constitutional Amendments

Must Section 4, Article II of the Constitution of this State, relating to voter qualifications, be amended so as to provide that only a citizen of the United States and of this State of the age of eighteen and upwards who is properly registered is entitled to vote as provided by law?

- Yes, In Favor of the Question
- No, Opposed to the Question

Local Questions

Capital Projects (Penny) Sales Tax Referendum Must a special One Percent Sales And Use Tax be imposed in Sumter

County (the "County") for not more than eight (8) years, to begin May 1, 2025, to raise the amounts specified for the following purposes and in order to pay the costs (including rights-of-way acquisition and architectural, engineering, legal, administrative costs, and related fees) of the projects described below; pending the receipt of such sales and use tax, must the County also be authorized to issue and sell, either as a single issue or as several separate issues, General Obligation Bonds (the "Bonds") of the County in the aggregate principal amount not to exceed \$40,000,000.00 to be paid from the Sales And Use Tax to be received and to pledge the Sales And Use Tax to be received to the payment of the principal of and interest on the Bonds? 1. \$13,000,000—Emergency Radios / Pagers. New communications technology infrastructure to meet man-dated digital radio and pager services, allowing county-wide coverage, and will replace obsolete radios and pagers. 2. \$14,000,000—County Fire Trucks. Replace dated fire trucks throughout the County. Rural fire stations are Cherryvale, Bethel, Graham, Pinewood, Pleasant Grove, Mayesville, Dabbs, Byrns, Wedgefield, Rambert, Beech Creek, Concord, Horatio, Dubose, Oswego, Dalzell and Manning Road. 3. \$5,000,000—City Fire Trucks. Purchase additional fire trucks for City and local industries. 4. \$1,500,000—Stadium Road EMS Station. A new 4,000 sq. ft. satellite facility to include a two-bay truck port. Located on Stadium Road on property behind the Fire Station. 5. \$1,000,000—EMS Ambulances. To purchase four (4) new ambulances to replace the aged high mileage fleet for the County. 6. \$2,000,000—Industrial Infrastructure. To construct a "Pad Ready" industrial site approximately 200,000 sq. ft. with options to expand for industrial recruitment. 7. \$1,750,000—Intersection Safety Improvements. Improve safety for all pedestrians at crosswalks/intersections near schools and neighborhoods. 8. \$2,500,000—Bobby Riddick Park Improvements. To transform the park into a state-of-the-art baseball park to include a practice facility, increased parking capacity, and two new entrances for better access- ibility. 9. \$2,800,000—Patriot Park Pickleball Courts. Expand Patriot Park to include fifteen (15) new Pickle Ball Courts along with adjacent parking to support this and other park activities. 10. \$2,750,000—Downtown Building Improvements & Acquisitions. Downtown building renovations and purchases to drive economic development initiatives in- cluding utility upgrades at the Liberty Center. 11. \$21,000,000—County Paving/Resurfacing. New paving road projects on 18.34 miles of dirt roads to ease public travel and emergency vehicle accessibility and to improve maintenance services on other County roads. PAVING ROADS to include: Ambrose Drive, Bainbridge Road, Burneau Street, Campbell Court, Coastal Dr., Gayman Road, Hairs Drive, Hugh Ryan Road, Jaguar Run, James Quincy Court, James Quincy Road, Joe Billy, Lobbyly Road, Joey Latta, Mayrant Court, McLean Street, Milhouse Road, Mundy Street, Munn Street, N. Mayrant Cir., Northridge Drive, Old Stone Road, Ott Street, Pasture Road, Pratt Avenue, Rosehill Road, Rufus Drive, Scotts Branch, S. Mayrant Cir., Spangberry Rd., Statesburg Hills, Stokes Road, Tala Street, Teakwood Drive, Walters Avenue, and Woods Street. Resurfacing/road projects for 1.07 miles. RESURFACING ROADS to include: Meadowcroft Dr., Ashlyn Way, Calfylnn Dr., Tallarah Way, Kari Drive, Candlette Court, Falling-water Lane, Sun Valley Dr., Christopher Ct., Malone Drive, Inabnet Drive, Wind Tree Dr., Sleepchase Drive, Soye Dr., Longbranch Drive, Soye Circle, Bend K Drive, Collis Run Ct., and Cliffhead Court. 12. \$1,000,000—Stadium Road Fire Station. Rebuild the Stadium Road Fire Station. 13. \$1,000,000—Fire Dept. Training Facility. To purchase and install a "Live Fire" training facility to accomplish general firefighter training. 14. \$6,000,000—Federal State Road Construction (Hwy 378). Reconnect the communities and services north and south of the I-95/378 Bypass at Weiskamp and Miller Roads to improve safety for drivers and pedestrians and enhance mobility for all travelers. Funds will be used to leverage State and Federal Transportation project. 15. \$10,000,000—State Road Rehabilitation Match. This project will be used to draw down additional funds from the State Department of Transportation to prioritize and expedite critical state road projects in Sumter County. 16. \$3,250,000—Public Services Building. Renovate and expand Public Services Complex including infra-structure needed to aid in disaster response activities. 17. \$1,500,000—Industrial Property Acquisition. Purchase additional property for industrial growth and economic development. 18. \$2,600,000—Dillon Park Improvements. New rest-room facilities to support athletic events including a restroom to support the 1-mile walking track. Replace six (6) outdated ballfields lighting systems with a brighter, more energy efficient LED system. Renovate Crystal Lakes Golf Course Driving Range to support youth and senior golf participants. 19. \$4,000,000—Community Park Playground Improve-ments. Enhance public parks with infrastructure that adds safety and security, as well as modern playground equip-ment accessible for all children to include Swan Lake, Birnie Center, Crosswell, Catchal-Shaw, Shick, Ruffin Creek, and others. 20. \$1,000,000—Central Carolina Facility Upgrade. Renovation of the Health Center building into class-room space for additional Health Sciences programs. Create walkways to connect the Health Center, Health Science building, and the Annex. 21. \$1,500,000—Mayesville Main Street Revitalization. The commercial mixed-use development will revitalize the economy in Mayesville, create a gathering place with covered seating, eating areas, co-op grocery store, and an upscale farmers market. 22. \$1,200,000—Pinewood Road Paving. New road paving on 1.11 miles of dirt roads to ease public travel and emergency vehicle access- ibility and to improve main-tenance services on other Sumter County roads. Roads to be paved in the downtown area: Railroad Ave., Nelson Street, and McBride Street. 23. \$9,500,000—Dugan St. and Downtown Parking Facility. Connect parking and access from Dugan to Bartlett (parallel to South Main Street). Also provide additional parking infra-structure (parking deck) to support downtown development including a downtown hotel and convention facility. 24. \$1,250,000—Delaune Community Center. Con- struct a new community center for seniors and youth with approximately 4,000 sq. ft. to replace the current center located near the old Delaune School. 25. \$3,000,000—South Sumter Gym. Reconstruction/expansion of the South Sumter Gym. 26. \$1,500,000—Harvin Street Redesign and Street-scape. Improve downtown safety and increase on-street parking capacity. 27. \$300,000—Pinewood Sidewalks. Expands the community sidewalk net-work, providing safe walking connections to neighbor-hoods, schools, parks, and commercial areas. 28. \$3,500,000—Community Sidewalks / Activity Paths. Expand Sumter's sidewalks and activity path networks to allow easier access to work- places, goods, services, and recreation to include Wise Dr., Rast St., Winn St., Mason Rd., South Harvin St., E. Charlotte Ave., Calhoun Dr., Boulevard Rd., S. Sumter St., Miller Rd., Hoy St., Stadium Rd., N. Lafayette Dr., Fulton St., and connection between Strat Pouch Greenway and Palmetto Park. 29. \$1,000,000—Airport Facility Upgrade. Expand portion of terminal, upgrade flooring and other cosmetic improvements. Extend the taxiway on the southwest portion of the tarmac to allow construction of up to four (4) new airplane hangars. 30. \$2,500,000 Community-wide Acquisition of Distressed Structures. To improve the community by acquiring and removing distressed structures that degrade neighborhoods and major corridors. [TOTAL COST OF ALL CAPITAL PROJECTS: \$124,900,000.00] The maximum amount of net proceeds of the Sales And Use Tax which may be applied to the payment of the principal of and interest on the County's General Obligation Bonds (the "Bonds") must not exceed \$46,000,000.00 (based upon expected Sales And Use Tax collections of \$124,900,000.00 less administrative expenses of collection). The not-to-exceed

\$40,000,000.00 principal amount of Bonds to be issued shall be repaid from the net proceeds of the Sales And Use Tax which shall be pledged for the repayment of the Bonds.

- Yes, In Favor of the Question
- No, Opposed to the Question

CITY OF SUMTER GENERAL ELECTION

Mayor, Sumter

- You may vote for One.
- T Frank Adams II (Nonpartisan)
 - Foxy Rae Campbell (Nonpartisan)
 - Reginald Evans (Nonpartisan)
 - David P Merchant (Nonpartisan)

City Council Ward 4, Sumter City Council Dist 4

- You may vote for One.
- Scott Burkett (Nonpartisan)
 - Jimmy Davis (Nonpartisan)
 - Rebecca Lynn Kennedy (Nonpartisan)
 - Lucy Mahon (Nonpartisan)
 - Gene Weston (Nonpartisan)

2024

Vote

CAMPBELL

MAYOR



ESSENTIALLY LOCAL. AUTHENTICALLY SUMTER.

The Sumter Item is the only source of daily local news in Sumter, Clarendon and Lee counties.

We hold the powerful accountable and help you make informed decisions, celebrate your wins and educate your children, all to live your best life. Without us, your stories would often go untold.

the **Sumter ITEM**

Sign up for **The Sumter Item's free email newsletter.**

www.theitem.com/newsletter



Paid for by Foxy Rae Campbell

www.votefoxyrae.com

Invest. Invite. Serve.



FOR REP. MURRELL SMITH SUMTER COUNTY IS PRIORITY #1

Though I am honored to have been elected Speaker of the SC House of Representatives, my first priority is always to the people of District 67. I will never stop working on your behalf to improve our great community.

Here are just a few of our recent legislative achievements that directly affect Sumter County:

ELIMINATED MILITARY INCOME TAX

South Carolina is proud of its military and to enact legislation that eliminates income tax for those who have served our state and nation is the right thing to do.

VETERANS NURSING HOME

Completed funding for the Sumter Veterans Nursing Home that will provide care and facilities for our military service men and women. I am proud to have played a small role in helping these amazing patriots.

LARGEST TAX CUT IN STATE HISTORY

Reducing tax burdens while improving how government services operate is a bedrock policy I take seriously. We passed the largest permanent tax cut in addition to sending money back to taxpayers. We balance our budget every year, and when needs are met, I believe in sending the rest back to you.

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Obtained funding to build trails, install outdoor lighting, re-surface tennis courts and improve community baseball and soccer fields.

SHAW AIR FORCE BASE BUFFER ZONE

Purchased 1000 acres that will help protect the viability and long-term plans for our local base. This acquisition will help limit encroachment and allow Shaw to expand should the need arise.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Increased funding for both USC-Sumter and Central Carolina Technical College.



As Speaker of the SC House of Representatives, it will be my goal to improve our state infrastructure, education system, tax code and access to healthcare. And there is no limit to how much we can do in attracting and retaining good paying jobs for our residents!

Thank you for allowing me to work on your behalf and fight for these goals.

VOTE MURRELL SMITH FOR SC STATEHOUSE

▶ **CONSERVATIVE** ▶ **COMMITTED** ▶ **PROVEN LEADERSHIP**

PLEASE VOTE ON TUESDAY, NOV. 5TH



MURRELL SMITH

REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT 67

Paid for by Murrell Smith for SC House

