

2026 Hamilton County Democrat Primary Election

Voter Guide

501(c)(3) - compliant
and nonpartisan

County Commission Dist. 11

County Primary Election | 5/5/2026



www.VoteChattanooga.org

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MATTERS**

5/5/2026

Online Voter Registration/Record Updating available until 4/6/2026 at: <https://sos.tn.gov/elections>

Contact Church Voter Guides at: Info@VoteChattanooga.org | Updated 4/6/2026

For other Voter Guides and more information, please go to our website: www.VoteChattanooga.org

Church Voter Guides does not endorse or oppose any candidates for public office or any political party.

The Voter Guide Information contained in this document is provided for informational purposes only. It was obtained directly from candidates and other sources, and we have done our best to convey it to you accurately, but nothing herein has been "fact checked". Utilize this Voter Guide at your own discretion. We take no responsibility for the factual nature of the content, or for publishing errors, etc. To the best of our knowledge, this Voter Guide is 501(c) (3) – and officially nonpartisan, and thereby it does not support or oppose any candidate.

Hamilton County 2026 Democrat Primary Election Voter Guide for County Commission Dist. 11

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Introduction to the Voter Guide

Church Voter Guides is an independent 501(c)(3) faith-based nonprofit organization. We serve the public by providing objective research and education on matters specifically of interest to Christians, primarily through the production and distribution of 501 (c)(3)-compliant, nonpartisan voter guides.

Church Voter Guides does not endorse or oppose any candidates for public office or any political party.

Church Voter Guides, a Chattanooga nonprofit, initially started in Colorado Springs in April of 2021. This new Voter Guide for the 2026 Democrat Primary is being distributed electronically only, both through our interactive website and by downloadable and printable PDF files. We have produced one Voter Guide for each seat that is: (1) conducting an election this year, and (2) for which at least one candidate in that election answered our Questionnaire. Our Voter Guides are being promoted through a wide-ranging network of area churches, faith-based non-profit organizations, mainstream and social media, and other means.

The purpose of our Voter Guides is to educate and inform voters of each candidate's positions on a variety of policy issues that they are likely to address if elected. As a Voter Guide designed to be distributed through Churches, we ask the candidates questions on topics that are of utmost interest to the Christian voter

How to Get the Most Benefit from this Voter Guide

The core information in this Voter Guide comes directly from the County Primary Elections candidates themselves. We asked them questions, they answered (with a 120 word limit), and we have published their responses here. In order to understand and utilize this information to the fullest, so that you may vote in the most informed way, we suggest the following:

1. Pray and ask the Almighty for discernment. The Kingdom of God is all about truth, while politics is a system fraught with compromise. Make sure you consider the candidates' answers with a Heavenly mindset.
2. Ask yourself, "Did the candidate actually answer the question, or rather side-step it, or give a fluff, wishy-washy, and/or 'political' type answer that leaves you not really knowing where he/she truly stands on the issue?"
3. Learn more about the candidates running for County Commission Dist. 11 including their positions on issues we did not cover in our questionnaire, by visiting their official campaign websites (if they have one.) The website URL for each candidate is listed in the Voter Guide.
4. Educate yourself more about the Christian/Biblical perspective regarding many of the subjects covered in our Voter Guide by reading topical articles on our website: www.VoteChattanooga.org
5. Use search engines to find additional information about each candidate, including written articles and videos, other voter guides, and even voting records for those who have served in public office before. You may even want to watch online recordings of the local County Commission Dist. 11 meetings to see how incumbents conduct themselves and vote.
6. Reach out to the candidates themselves through the provided email addresses and other means, in order to ask them questions of personal importance to you. Please make sure to show great respect toward each candidate and his/her time, especially to those with whom you disagree. Running for office is hard, stressful, time consuming work, and these are your fellow citizens who have lives, families, jobs...and feelings (just like you!)

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What makes a Voter Guide 501 (c)(3) - Compliant and Nonpartisan?

Federal tax law permits nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations to develop and distribute materials about political candidates' positions on issues, in order to educate voters impartially and on a nonpartisan basis; meaning that it is free from party affiliation, bias, or designation. The IRS states that 501 (c)(3) organizations may conduct any range of activities to promote voter participation and educate voters so long as it is nonpartisan. But, 501(c)(3) organizations are explicitly prohibited from supporting or opposing candidates for public office.

Some of the activities 501(c)(3) nonprofits *MAY* perform: Conduct or promote voter registration; educate voters on the voting process; distribute nonpartisan sample ballots, candidate questionnaires, and **voter guides**; organize "get-out-the-vote" activities; encourage and help people to vote; educate the candidates on issues important to their organization; and continue to do issue advocacy during an election.

So, first and foremost: **Church Voter Guides** does **NOT** endorse or oppose any candidates for public office or any political party.

Second, all of our staff and volunteers are required to act in a nonpartisan manner when working for or representing the organization and the creation of the Voter Guide.

Third, we do not edit, revise, or editorialize candidate responses to our Questionnaire. We do not even correct typos. **Candidate answers are published verbatim**, ensuring that their responses accurately represent their positions and perspectives on these issues. We then simply share this information through the Voter Guide, and you decide whom you believe to be the best candidate.

To be fair and impartial, we reached out by email, text, and phone when determined necessary, to all registered candidates running for County Commission Dist. 11 throughout Hamilton County for their 2026 elections, inviting them to answer our questionnaire. Candidate information is presented in alphabetical order by **last name**. If a Candidate did not respond at all, or did not choose to participate, or did not choose to respond to certain answers in the questionnaire, then it is noted where applicable. If there were not enough candidates running, then we did not produce a Voter Guide for that seat.

Join Our Growing Grassroots Coalition of Citizens, Churches/Nonprofit Organizations, and Media Partners Committed to Promoting the Voter Guide throughout Our Region

Let's get the word out!

It's simple. Just share our website URL all around the Hamilton County region:

www.VoteChattanooga.org

Tell your friends and neighbors, post on social media, and ask your Pastors to promote it to your congregation (we'll even provide you /them with the announcement info and the slide deck.)

Please contact us for any reason, we'd love to collaborate with you: Info@VoteChattanooga.org

The "Small Print": The information contained in this document is being provided for informational purposes only. It was obtained directly from candidates and other sources, and we have done our best to convey it to you accurately, but nothing herein has been "fact checked". Utilize this Voter Guide at your own discretion. We take no responsibility for the factual nature of the content, or for publishing errors, etc. To the best of our knowledge, this Voter Guide is 501(c)(3)-compliant and officially nonpartisan, and thereby it does not support or oppose any candidate

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**Hamilton County
2026 Democrat Primary Election
Voter Guide
for County Commission Dist. 11**

**County
Commission**

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County Commission | Survey Questions Index

- 1) **Purpose:** What do you view as the purpose and role of the County Commission?
- 2) **Candidate's Focus/Expertise/Initiatives:** What are your areas of special focus and/or expertise and what initiatives would you undertake as County Commissioner?
- 3) **Budget:** What would be your top three spending, savings, and economic development priorities?
- 4) **Constitutional Liberties:** As County Commissioner, what measures will you champion to protect the individual Constitutional liberties of all Hamilton County residents, such as freedom of speech, peaceable assembly and exercise of religion?
- 5) **Protecting Life:** What legal means, if any, would you support to protect the most vulnerable in our county, including the lives of the unborn, the trafficked, the poor and homeless, and the elderly?
- 6) **Moral Values:** Should government laws, ordinances, regulations, etc. follow the moral principles of the Ten Commandments? Why, or why not?
- 7) **Speed cameras:** How would you address the use of automated speed cameras within the county (including those in school zones)? What oversight and transparency measures should be required to maintain public trust? Do speed cameras contradict constitutional protections within drivers' rights such as due process and the right to confront one's accuser?
- 8) **Zoning/Planning:** What policies would you support to prevent and disclose potential conflicts of interest between developers and members of Hamilton County's zoning and planning committees, and how would you ensure that land-use decisions are made transparently, ethically, and in the best interest of residents rather than private interests?
- 9) **Managing County Growth and Infrastructure:** What strategies and/or resources does the county currently have to better pace growth in Hamilton County so infrastructure, roads and emergency services can keep up with development? How would you use these tools to address this issue?
- 10) **Planning for Unincorporated Areas:** Do you support having a separate planning commission for the unincorporated areas? Please explain your reasoning, and if applicable, what steps you would take.

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County Commission Dist. 11

(In alphabetical order)



Montrell Besley

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Montrell Besley

Candidate Information

Email Address:	montrell@montrellbesley.com
Occupation/Vocation:	Local Business Owner/ Entrepreneur
Years as resident of:	44
Campaign Website:	MontrellBesley.com

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1) Purpose: What do you view as the purpose and role of the County Commission?

County Commission exists to represent the people and ensure county government works for them, not the other way around. Its role is to set responsible policy, approve budgets, and provide strong oversight so taxpayer dollars are invested where they matter most: safe communities, strong schools, reliable infrastructure, and real opportunities for families.

But the Commission should be more than a voting body, it should be a voice for the community. Commissioners must listen, ask tough questions, and challenge decisions that don't serve the public interest.

For too many residents, government feels distant or unresponsive. That must change.

The role of a County Commissioner is simple: Show up, Speak up, and Make sure EVERY Neighborhood has a Seat at the Table.

2) Candidate's Focus/Expertise/Initiatives: What are your areas of special focus and/or expertise and what initiatives would you undertake as County Commissioner?

My areas of focus are youth opportunity, community engagement, and strengthening neighborhoods that have historically been overlooked. Through my work mentoring young people, supporting families, and building partnerships across our community, I've seen how the right investments can change the trajectory of a neighborhood.

As County Commissioner, I would prioritize expanding youth development programs, workforce pathways, and mentorship opportunities so more young people can see a future for themselves right here in Hamilton County. I'm also committed to increasing transparency and improving communication between county government and residents.

My goal is simple: Create pathways to opportunity while ensuring every neighborhood in District 11 has a STRONG voice in county government.

3) Budget: What would be your top three spending, savings, and economic development priorities?

My top priority is ensuring county resources are invested in ways that create long-term opportunity and strong communities. First, I support strategic investments in youth development and workforce pathways, including partnerships with schools, mentoring programs, and job training that connect young people to real careers in our region.

Second, I believe in responsible budgeting and transparency. Taxpayer dollars should be spent efficiently, with regular reviews to ensure programs produce measurable results and reduce waste.

Third, I support economic development that reaches every part of the county, especially historically underserved neighborhoods; by supporting small businesses, encouraging entrepreneurship, and improving infrastructure that attracts investment and quality local jobs.

STRONG communities and a STRONG economy go hand in hand.

4) Constitutional Liberties: As County Commissioner, what measures will you champion to protect the individual Constitutional liberties of all Hamilton County residents, such as freedom of speech, peaceable assembly and exercise of religion?

Protecting the Constitutional rights of every resident is one of the most fundamental responsibilities of government. As County Commissioner, I will support policies that uphold the freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution, including freedom of speech, peaceful assembly, and the free exercise of religion. These liberties are not partisan, they are American values.

Government should never silence voices, discourage civic participation, or interfere with lawful expressions of faith and belief. My role will be to ensure county policies are applied fairly, consistently, and with respect for the rights of all residents.

A strong community is one where people feel free to Speak, Gather, Worship, and Participate in civic life WITHOUT FEAR.

5) Protecting Life: What legal means, if any, would you support to protect the most vulnerable in our county, including the lives of the unborn, the trafficked, the poor and homeless, and the elderly?

As a County Commissioner, I believe the strength of our community is measured by how we protect those who cannot always advocate for themselves. I support a comprehensive approach to safety and dignity:

The Trafficked: Funding specialized law enforcement task forces and survivor support services.

The Elderly: Strengthening elder abuse protections and public guardianship programs.

The Poor and Homeless: Prioritizing "Housing First" initiatives and workforce development to break the cycle of poverty.

The Unborn: Expanding access to maternal health resources and prenatal care to support both mothers and children.

By using our budget and local ordinances to shield the vulnerable, we ensure Hamilton County remains a place where every life is valued and protected.

6) Moral Values: Should government laws, ordinances, regulations, etc. follow the moral principles of the Ten Commandments? Why, or why not?

The moral principles reflected in the Ten Commandments; values like honesty, respect for others, and community have influenced ethical thinking for generations and guide many people in their personal lives. At the same time, our system of government is built on the Constitution, which protects both freedom of religion and freedom from government establishing any one religious tradition.

As County Commissioner, my responsibility would be to ensure laws and policies are rooted in fairness, justice, and equal protection for all residents. Those values often overlap with many faith traditions, but government must serve people of every background and belief.

My focus will be policies that reflect shared civic values: Integrity, Responsibility, and Care for our Neighbors.

7) Speed cameras: How would you address the use of automated speed cameras within the county (including those in school zones)? What oversight and transparency measures should be required to maintain public trust? Do speed cameras contradict constitutional protections within drivers' rights such as due process and the right to confront one's accuser?

Public safety, especially in school zones, must always come first. If automated speed cameras are used, their purpose should be to slow traffic and protect children, not generate revenue. Their use must include strong oversight, clear signage, and transparent reporting so residents know where cameras are located, how violations are reviewed, and how revenue is used.

Drivers also deserve fair due process, including a clear appeals process and consistent enforcement. Technology can support safety, but it should never replace accountability or constitutional protections.

My focus is ensuring any traffic safety program prioritizes safety, fairness, and transparency for the public.

8) Zoning/Planning: What policies would you support to prevent and disclose potential conflicts of interest between developers and members of Hamilton County's zoning and planning committees, and how would you ensure that land-use decisions are made transparently, ethically, and in the best interest of residents rather than private interests?

Public trust in land use decisions depends on transparency, accountability, and strong ethical standards. I support clear conflict-of-interest policies requiring full disclosure of financial ties, campaign contributions, or business relationships between developers and planning officials. When conflicts exist, officials should recuse themselves from discussions and votes.

The public also deserves greater transparency, including clear notice of proposed developments, accessible meetings, and meaningful opportunities for input before decisions are made.

Land use decisions shape our future, so they must be guided by what's best for residents, not private interests. As County Commissioner, I will champion open government, ethical leadership, and community driven planning.

9) Managing County Growth and Infrastructure: What strategies and/or resources does the county currently have to better pace growth in Hamilton County so infrastructure, roads and emergency services can keep up with development? How would you use these tools to address this issue?

Hamilton County has tools to pace growth responsibly, including the planning and zoning process, subdivision regulations, infrastructure planning, and coordination with municipalities and regional partners. These allow the county to review development, assess infrastructure needs, and guide where and how growth occurs.

As County Commissioner, I would ensure these tools are used more strategically by considering infrastructure like roads, utilities, and emergency services early in the development process. Growth should not outpace our ability to provide safe roads, quality schools, and reliable public safety.

I would also promote stronger collaboration across departments and partners to support long-term sustainability and quality of life.

Smart growth protects both our communities and our future.

10) Planning for Unincorporated Areas: Do you support having a separate planning commission for the unincorporated areas? Please explain your reasoning, and if applicable, what steps you would take.

I do not support creating a separate planning commission for unincorporated areas of Hamilton County. While residents in those areas deserve to be heard, adding another planning body could create unnecessary bureaucracy, inconsistent decisions, and a fragmented approach to growth.

Land use planning works best with countywide coordination so infrastructure, transportation, housing, and economic development decisions stay aligned. Splitting the process would make it harder to maintain a clear, long-term vision for responsible growth.

Instead, the focus should be on strengthening transparency, improving public engagement, and ensuring the current planning process fairly represents residents in unincorporated areas.

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An advertisement for a training program. It features a blue checkmark icon with a red and white striped banner above it. The text reads: "HOW TO RUN FOR OFFICE AS A CHRISTIAN CONSERVATIVE". Below this, it says "Comprehensive Campaign Training with a Biblical Worldview" and lists the target audience: "For Current and Prospective Candidates, Campaign Consultants and Managers, Candidate Families, Pastors, Campaign Volunteers, and All Citizens who Wish to Serve Our Nation by Glorifying God through Government". A photo of Pastor Bill Redmond is shown with the text "Instructed by Pastor and Former U.S. Congressman Bill Redmond". The slogan "Winning Back America ... One Candidate at a Time!" is written in a script font. At the bottom, the website "www.RunForOffice.training" is displayed in red and blue.

The logo for "choices" features a blue heart icon inside a speech bubble shape, followed by the word "choices" in a lowercase, blue, sans-serif font.

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An advertisement for "july 2 life .com". The text "july 2 life .com" is written in a colorful, cursive font. To the right is a small American flag icon. Below the text, it says "3 million letters to end abortion" in a bold, sans-serif font. The background is a photograph of the United States Capitol building.

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