

2026 Hamilton County Republican Primary Election

Voter Guide

501(c)(3) - compliant
and nonpartisan

All Republican Candidates

County Primary Election | 5/5/2026



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MATTERS**

5/5/2026

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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 Republican Primary Election Voter Guide for All Republican Candidates

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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 Republican 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 mostinformed 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 All Republican Candidates 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 All Republican Candidates 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 All Republican Candidates 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 Republican Primary Election
Voter Guide
for All Republican Candidates**

County Mayor

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County Mayor | Survey Questions Index

- 1) **Purpose:** What do you view as the purpose and role of the County Mayor?
- 2) **Candidate's Focus/Expertise/Initiatives:** What are your areas of special focus and/or expertise and what initiatives would you undertake as County Mayor?
- 3) **Budget:** What would be your top three spending, savings, and economic development priorities?
- 4) **Constitutional Liberties:** As the County Mayor, 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:** As mayor, will you continue to enforce speed cameras in school zones and residential areas throughout the county? If so, 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) **Immigration:** What role, if any, do you believe the Mayor's office should have in guiding Hamilton County's cooperation with ICE and federal immigration enforcement?
- 10) **Adult Entertainment:** The Adult Entertainment Act (AEA) in Tennessee restricts certain adult performances, such as drag shows, in front of minors. Do you personally support the AEA, and regardless of your personal views, how would your office ensure its enforcement?
- 11) **Religious Freedom in the Workplace:** How would you ensure that government employees in Hamilton County are treated fairly and not discriminated against based on their religious beliefs, including situations involving workplace policies on gender identity, pronoun use (compelled speech), or related hiring practices?

County Mayor

(In alphabetical order)



Weston Wamp

Independent Survey by





Weston Wamp

Candidate Information

Email Address:	weston@westonwamp.com
Occupation/Vocation:	County Mayor
Years as resident of:	Lifetime
Campaign Website:	westonwamp.com

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

State law defines the County Mayor as the Chief Executive Officer of county government who is responsible for overseeing day-to-day operations and guiding the county financially as its fiscal agent. Practically, the the role is a leadership position that comes with endless opportunities to serve the people of Hamilton County. Sometimes that is as simple as visiting schools and engaging with students and sometimes it is as complex as conducting ongoing diligence of economic development agreements on behalf of taxpayers. Often, the interests of the majority of residents countywide are different than municipalities within the county, so I see the role of County Mayor as speaking for the county as a whole.

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

As a candidate, I promised to focus on expanding career and technical education and promote investments into school facilities and road infrastructure. We have followed through on those promises with \$300+ million in school facility upgrades and nearly \$20 million in road safety improvements. Importantly, we have made these investments while modernizing the operations of county government and protecting taxpayers by cutting waste and proposing balanced budgets at the lowest property tax rate since 1941. I am particularly proud that across Hamilton County, enrollment in vocational education is up dramatically and we are in the process of opening a large career and technical campus in downtown Chattanooga that will carry the spirit of Kirkman into the future.

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

Spending priorities: 1) public education with a focus on vocational education, 2) public safety with a focus on first responder pay, and 3) road infrastructure to alleviate traffic and improve safety.

Savings priorities: 1) sell properties and assets owned by the county that can be better used by the private sector, 2) continue to reduce the number of county employees by promoting efficiency, and 3) continue to negotiate stronger deals with developers and new employers so that tax dollars are not appropriated or abated without strong justification and accountability.

Economic priorities: 1) expanded vocational education, 2) continue to strengthen accountability in PILOTs and TIFs, and 3) focus on recruiting jobs we would want our own children to have.

4) Constitutional Liberties: As the County Mayor, 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?

The First Amendment of the Constitution sets our country apart and must be honored and protected in local government at all times. I will steadfastly protect Constitutional liberties to the extent I am allowed under Tennessee state law.

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?

Over the last few years, Hamilton County has made new, exciting investments in our youngest and oldest citizens. From the Center for Thriving Families, which serves new parents, to our Parents as Teachers in-home counseling program, we are looking for opportunities to support our youngest citizens and their parents. We have also have included new funding in the county budget for organizations supporting teen mothers and victims of domestic and sexual assault. We have honored seniors by doubling the county's match of the senior property tax relief program, and we opened the county's first senior center at the former Harrison Elementary. The county's Homeless Health Care Center continues to set the bar in serving our community's homeless population.

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

The Ten Commandments is an excellent moral framework and the laws of our land should be aligned with the ideals that inspired the founding of our country. That being said, we are a pluralistic nation, not a theocracy.

7) Speed cameras: As mayor, will you continue to enforce speed cameras in school zones and residential areas throughout the county? If so, 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?

I support efforts to curb speeding, particularly in school zones and residential areas -- however, I do not support speed cameras. As an alternative, my office has led efforts to install driver feedback signs on busy roads in the county.

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?

Recently, I announced support for a proposal to create a dedicated county planning department to increase transparency and accountability in planning. The Regional Planning Commission needs to have a broader set of perspectives among its members -- particularly as it concerns how growth will affect public school enrollment.

9) Immigration: What role, if any, do you believe the Mayor's office should have in guiding Hamilton County's cooperation with ICE and federal immigration enforcement?

State law places this authority with the Office of the Sheriff.

10) Adult Entertainment: The Adult Entertainment Act (AEA) in Tennessee restricts certain adult performances, such as drag shows, in front of minors. Do you personally support the AEA, and regardless of your personal views, how would your office ensure its enforcement?

Yes, I support it. However, enforcement would not be within the purview of the County Mayor's office.

11) Religious Freedom in the Workplace: How would you ensure that government employees in Hamilton County are treated fairly and not discriminated against based on their religious beliefs, including situations involving workplace policies on gender identity, pronoun use (compelled speech), or related hiring practices?

Hamilton County is in strong alignment with the State of Tennessee, which has recently passed state laws meant to further protect all citizens from workplace discrimination.

**Hamilton County
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**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. 1

(In alphabetical order)



Gene-o Shipley

Independent Survey by





Gene-o Shipley

Candidate Information

Email Address:	Geneshipleypumbing@comcast.net
Occupation/Vocation:	Plumber
Years as resident of:	Hamilton County / Soddy Daisy Tn for 70 years
Campaign Website:	Gene Shipley political page

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

That we are to set a budget and pass or deny resolutions.

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?

As a county commissioner I have been focused on upgrading schools, working with all body of county government, upgrading roadways and help with youth sport programs.

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

Spending: Roads, Schools and WWTa expansion of sewers.

Saving: The budget is so tight there is little to no room for cuts.

Economic development: I would like to bring more jobs to Hamilton County/ City of Chattanooga where infrastructure is already in place.

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?

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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?

That would be up to the state and federal government.

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

Yes

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?

Speed cameras are there to help protect the children. Everyone has the right to challenge their innocence.

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?

I would like to continue to support the new zoning and planning commission that we are currently working on.

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?

We need slow some of the over build down and give the country government a chance to catch up. We need to catch up on infrastructure and schools.

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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.

Yes, because we are currently put in the same category as City of Chattanooga and the county doesn't have the infrastructure as City of Chattanooga.

Independent Survey by



County Commission Dist. 2

(In alphabetical order)



Chip Baker



Brad Wardlaw

Independent Survey by





Chip Baker

Candidate Information

Email Address: chipbaker58@gmail.com
Occupation/Vocation: Management
Years as resident of: 34
Campaign Website: chipbakercommission.com

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

As the legislative body of the County, our job is to work closely with the executive office to oversee the budget and operations of Hamilton County. With over 40 years in management, I bring a strong business acumen to the Commission, where others do not. Having run hospitals, events, and now teaching management, I bring a strong business perspective.

As a County Commissioner, not only do I oversee the business aspect of the County but I am also a problem solver. When my constituents have issues, my job is to get them resolved. This is a great strength of mine.

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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?

I have spent 40 years in management. With a Master's in Hospital Administration, I spent the first 20 years of my career in that field. My last position, in that field, was the Administrator of Children's Hospital at Erlanger. I changed careers in 1999 and ran the Riverbend Festival (and other events) for the next 20 years. For the past 7 years, I have taught management to our future community leaders. These experiences have allowed me to use my management expertise to lead our County with over a \$1 billion budget. We have a myriad of issues and opportunities (e.g. safety, schools, infrastructure) that allow me to use these skill sets to proactively help Hamilton County

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

I have a strong relationship with the Chamber of Commerce. The greatest opportunity to assist them would be with Enterprise South, Broad Street and the Bend developments. We have spending needs in infrastructure such as roads (\$150 million) and sewers (\$500 million). A better plan needs to be developed by our executive arm. Savings can be achieved through better economies of scale. A current opportunity is how we coordinate between the hotel/motel tax dollars and how we leverage these with opportunities with the Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Board, Convention Center and all associated attractions. This will allow us to better market our community for business and visitors, allowing our hotels and attractions to flourish

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?

Constitutional liberties are paramount to our way of life. We must maintain these liberties in all forms, including freedom of speech, appropriate assembly, and religious freedom. There can be no compromise. For instance, before each Commission meeting, we have a prayer, that anyone has the opportunity to do. I support Sheriff Garrett and what he is doing to keep our community safe. I was integral in the development of Hamilton County jail (eliminating for profit Core Civic) with both Sheriffs Hammond and Garrett.

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?

I was the Administrator of Children's Hospital at Erlanger. My wife, Karlette, and I have 4 children. There is nothing more important than for us, as adults, to protect them. They look to us to take care of them and provide for them. The elderly, similarly, are due our respect and need us to do anything possible to honor their lives. They blazed the trail for us and are worthy of anything we can do to assist them. I worked with Senator Corker on their emphasis on trafficking. Lastly, I have a strong relationship with the City of Chattanooga and the Chattanooga Foundation on how we take care of the homeless population.

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

I am a Christian and believe in the Ten Commandments. To me, it starts with honoring my father and mother who were the best role models I have ever had. I hope and pray that I have been even half of that to our children. I think Karlette and I did pretty well in that category, though! Even though there might be government restrictions, in most cases, it is still possible to let the Ten Commandments prevail in everything we do.

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?

Speed cameras, if done right, can have a positive effect on speeding, particularly in school zones. I live on Signal Mountain and there is a speed gun on Shackelford Ridge Road. Now, this is not an official one but it does show how fast you are going. Does it make an impression on me? Absolutely. Due process is paramount, with official speed cameras, so if this is not the case then corrections should be made to follow due process.

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?

This is a big opportunity. Land rights should be respected but so should the rights of the community. Are sewers available? What about roads and schools? There needs to be a balance between smart development and overdevelopment. There needs to be a better dialogue between developers, realtors, public works (including roads and sewers), the school system, and the community. This does not happen but should be paramount in all development discussions. The County is funded primarily through property taxes so development needs to be done correctly.

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?

We have \$150 million in roads needs and \$500 million in sewer needs. There needs to be a better coordinated effort between builders, roads, sewers, schools, fire, EMS, police/sheriff to make sure that we have all the needed services to sustain the growth we need to remain a strong community. I set up a meeting last year with the RPA, Chamber, Realtors, Homebuilders, Public Works, Schools Administration and others to address this. This cannot be solely driven by the Commission as all other entities need to want to be at the plate. I will not let this need be exhausted by those who do not see the need or care.

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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.

About 80% of the Regional Planning Committees decisions are based on the City of Chattanooga needs. When looking at their Board composition, they are heavily represented by the development/sales/architect community. The Board composition should be more balanced. With only 20% of their decisions based on unincorporated Hamilton County needs, the Board should be more representative of that market. A separate planning commission would help with that disparity.

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Brad Wardlaw

Candidate Information

Email Address: bdwardlaw@gmail.com
Occupation/Vocation: Property Management/Home Improvement Contractor/Septic System Installer
Years as resident of: 45
Campaign Website: bradforhamilton.com

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

I believe the primary role of the commission is to serve as a steward and a backstop for the citizens. Commissioners are entrusted with making decisions about how public money is spent, a responsibility that demands careful, transparent, and disciplined leadership. Every dollar should be used wisely, so that taxpayers never have to question our intent or our judgment.

The commission also serves as a safeguard for the community. In many cases, we are the last line of defense when it comes to decisions that impact people's daily lives—including spending, development, or critical infrastructure. That means we have a duty to slow things down when needed, ask hard questions, and make sure the long-term impact is fully considered.

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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?

As commissioner, my initiative would focus on strengthening long-term planning and making sure we are investing in the infrastructure and services needed to support our future—without passing the burden on to the next generation.

I'm committed to ensuring development follows infrastructure. That means using our planning tools the right way and making decisions that prevent overcrowded schools, strained roads, and overextended emergency services.

I believe in protecting taxpayer dollars by prioritizing spending that directly benefits the public. That includes holding departments accountable, reducing unnecessary bureaucracy, and making sure funds are allocated where they make the most impact.

We must ensure our Sheriff's Department and volunteer fire services are properly supported, especially as our county continues to grow.

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

Savings: We must take a hard look at spending and eliminate anything that isn't directly benefiting the public. That includes holding top-heavy school administration more accountable and making sure resources are getting to the classroom, not lost in bureaucracy.

Spending: We must invest where it truly matters. Volunteer fire departments currently receive .3% of the budget, yet they respond to a majority of calls across the county. With continued growth in unincorporated areas, they need sustainable, reliable funding. Public safety isn't optional, it's essential.

Economic Policy: Strong schools and well-planned infrastructure are the foundation for economic growth. If we plan ahead and invest wisely, we position our county to attract jobs and opportunities. If we don't, we risk falling behind.

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?

I believe that the constitution gives all citizens liberties that shouldn't be taken away or silenced. I will always agree that people have the right to speak and be heard by their elected officials as that is a main role in effective governing. Being able to keep religious freedoms and faiths is critical and should always be available to all. These are core principles I would never waiver on.

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?

I support real senior tax relief—from immediate relief to a full phase-down program—so that no senior is ever taxed out of their home. Protecting those who have spent a lifetime building our community should be a priority.

We must also fully support the Sheriff's Department to ensure public safety remains strong across our county. Safety is a fundamental responsibility of government, and it's not something we can afford to compromise.

At the same time, we need to take a smarter approach to homelessness. That means looking at the root causes rather than just spending money without a plan. If we don't address the underlying issues, we won't achieve lasting results.

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

I believe in the Ten Commandments. I also believe our laws should be grounded in broadly shared moral principles like honesty, respect for life, personal responsibility, and respect for others' property—values that are reflected in the Ten Commandments.

The role of government is not to enforce religion, but to protect the rights and freedoms of all citizens. We live in a broad and diverse community. People have many different beliefs so our laws must apply equally to everyone.

Also personally I believe if we followed the golden rule better, we would be in a much better place. Society is seeming to lose respect for other's opinions which must change so that real progress can be made.

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?

I do not support the use of speed cameras. There is a significant difference between issuing a ticket to a vehicle and holding an actual driver accountable. Questions about accuracy, identification, and whether the correct vehicle was cited only add to those concerns.

When it comes to school zones, our focus should be on real safety, not convenience. We should make every effort to have trained law enforcement officers present during arrival and dismissal times. Protecting children should be a top priority, not a budgetary tradeoff.

At the end of the day, enforcement should be fair, reliable, and centered on keeping people safe—not just issuing tickets.

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?

I believe public trust is everything when it comes to zoning and land-use decisions, and that starts with strong transparency and accountability standards.

I would support stricter disclosure requirements.

There must be clear recusal policies. The public should never question whether a decision was influenced by personal gain.

I also support making the process more transparent for citizens. Residents deserve time to review and respond.

Accountability matters. We need consistent oversight and a willingness to enforce these standards, not just talk about them.

We also must ensure we have people with the right skill sets reviewing these plans. Industry knowledge is critical to properly evaluate developments and understand their long-term impact.

Then the commission must use best judgment when approving.

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?

The challenge isn't a lack of tools. The problem is actually using them.

If elected, I would focus on enforcing a clear principle: development must follow infrastructure. That means using these tools to slow down projects when roads, schools, and emergency services can't support them yet. Hamilton County needs to push our Nashville legislative body like other Tennessee counties have in order to use those additional tools for improving growth.

We should be proactive not reactive. The commission has had every opportunity to do that but time and time again they haven't. When we actually use our power as commissioners, we can manage growth responsibly, protect our communities, and avoid passing today's problems on to the next generation.

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 support the recent move to a county-only RPA, and I've been saying for some time that we needed it. Now that it's in place, we have a responsibility to make sure it operates the right way—with a clear philosophy that development should follow infrastructure, not outpace it.

At the same time, I think it's important to be honest about past decisions. Blaming the RPA for every issue overlooks the role commissioners have played. Many of these developments came before the commission, and stronger judgment should have been exercised instead of simply approving them.

This is an opportunity to reset expectations—focusing on thoughtful planning, accountability, and making decisions that truly serve the long-term interests of our community.

County Commission Dist. 3

(In alphabetical order)



Ken Smith

Independent Survey by





Ken Smith

Candidate Information

Email Address:	commissionerkensmith@gmail.com
Occupation/Vocation:	Technology Executive
Years as resident of:	36
Campaign Website:	electkensmith.com

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

The County Commission is responsible for representing residents, setting the county budget, approving zoning and land use decisions, and ensuring taxpayer dollars are used responsibly. Commissioners also provide oversight of county departments and make policy decisions that affect infrastructure, public safety, and county services. In short, the role is to balance responsible growth, fiscal discipline, and quality of life for the people we represent.

Independent Survey by



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 professional background is in engineering and technology leadership, so I bring a strong focus on data driven decision making, transparency, and accountability. My initiatives focus on infrastructure improvements, responsible growth in the unincorporated areas, and making sure county investments, particularly in roads and schools, keep pace with our growing population.

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

First, infrastructure investments, especially roads and public safety, to keep up with growth. Second, responsible budgeting that avoids unnecessary tax increases while protecting core services. Third, supporting economic development that brings quality jobs to Hamilton County while maintaining the character of our communities.

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 constitutional liberties begins with respecting the limits of local government authority. The County Commission should ensure its policies respect the First Amendment rights of speech, assembly, and religious exercise. My focus is making sure county government operates transparently, treats residents fairly, and avoids unnecessary regulation that interferes with those rights.

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?

Many of these issues are addressed primarily at the state and federal level, but counties can support programs that protect vulnerable populations. That includes partnering with law enforcement and nonprofits to combat human trafficking, supporting services for seniors, and working with community organizations that assist those experiencing poverty or homelessness. Local government should focus on practical support and coordination with agencies that provide these services.

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

Our laws are grounded in the Constitution and the rule of law. Many moral principles reflected in religious traditions, including the Ten Commandments, also appear in the broader ethical foundations of our legal system, such as prohibitions on theft or violence. However, government must operate within the framework of the Constitution and respect religious freedom for all citizens.

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, is important, but enforcement must also respect due process and maintain public trust. Any use of automated enforcement should include clear signage, transparency about how citations are issued, and oversight to ensure it is focused on safety rather than revenue generation. These systems should be reviewed regularly to ensure they are fair and effective.

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?

Transparency and disclosure are essential. Members of planning or zoning bodies should clearly disclose financial or personal interests related to development proposals and recuse themselves when appropriate. Public meetings, open records, and clear review processes help ensure land use decisions are made based on the interests of residents rather than private influence.

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?

The county uses tools such as zoning authority, infrastructure planning, and coordination with the planning commission to help manage growth. The key is ensuring that development decisions consider road capacity, public safety access, and school infrastructure. Responsible growth requires aligning development approvals with the ability of infrastructure to support it.

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.

Yes. The priorities and challenges in unincorporated Hamilton County are often different from those inside the City of Chattanooga. A planning structure that better reflects those differences can help ensure residents in the unincorporated areas have a stronger voice in how growth and development are managed in their communities.

County Commission Dist. 7

(In alphabetical order)



Lee Helton

Independent Survey by





Lee Helton

We made multiple attempts to communicate with Lee Helton; however, the Candidate did not complete the survey by the submission deadline.

Independent Survey by



County Commission Dist. 8

(In alphabetical order)



Relect Mike Chauncey

Independent Survey by





Relect Mike Chauncey

Candidate Information

Email Address:	NA
Occupation/Vocation:	Real Estate Broker
Years as resident of:	50
Campaign Website:	NA

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

Similar to my service to the East Ridge City Council but at the County level, balancing legislative and executive roles to manage local services and community growth.

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 fundamental purpose as a commissioner is to translate community needs into actionable policy through the passage of resolutions. I want to act as a bridge between residents and local government.

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

Education and School Facilities, Infrastructure and Road Improvements.

Independent Survey by



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?

The County Commission plays a significant role in upholding Constitutional Liberties by ensuring that local laws, spending, and operations respect the fundamental rights of residents.

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?

My personal views "Protecting Life" as its most essential mandate, often referred to as the responsibility to protect the "health, safety, and welfare" of its citizens.

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

Moral Values is typically viewed through the lens of community standards, ethical governance, and the protection of the family unit.

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?

Commissioners often focus on placing cameras in school zones to protect children from high-speed traffic.

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?

Constitutional Liberties must be protected. They must respect a landowner's right to use their property while protecting the neighbors' right to the "quiet enjoyment" of their own homes.

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?

I support actions ensuring that infrastructure precedes or keeps pace with development.

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.

Plan Hamilton purpose is to implement a newly approved growth plan that balances development with lower density in rural areas (1.5 units per acre on septic) to prevent infrastructure strain while still allowing for expansion.

Independent Survey by



County Commission Dist. 9

(In alphabetical order)



Dr. Steve Highlander



Donna Christian - Lowe

Independent Survey by





Dr. Steve Highlander

Candidate Information

Email Address:	dshighlander@yahoo.com
Occupation/Vocation:	Retired Teacher & Minister
Years as resident of:	72
Campaign Website:	facebook.com/share/1CGEB28Mbf/?mibextid=wwXlfr

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

To serve and meet the needs of my constituents and the entire county with the help of God

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?

Infrastructure (improving roads, schools, and sewers)

Education - giving the best possible education for each student and making sure all parents' values are honored

Finance - striving to be the best steward possible of every taxpayer dollar by being a watchdog for wasteful expenditures

Independent Survey by



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

1. Spending on infrastructure to meet the safety and needs of all citizens
2. Trim/revitalize personnel and/or outdated programs within the budget - some personnel could be redirected to an area where they can be more productive
3. Economic Development - be purposeful in encouraging the development of businesses and industries which will provide reasonable wages for our younger generation

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?

Initiate, attend, and encourage town hall and other public meetings

Make sure that every citizen has the opportunity to have his or her voice heard

Encourage peaceable assembly and take all measures possible to ensure the safety of all in attendance

Free and unimpeded expression of personal religious beliefs is a God given right that we must protect for all citizens.

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?

We need to follow the teachings of Jesus when He said, "Even as you have done to the least of these, you have done unto me." The psalmist said, "Before my bones were formed in my mother's womb, you knew me." We must take every precaution to care for every human being from the mother's womb until God takes that person home. This would include the weak, the disabled, the homeless, the elderly, and those suffering from the horrors of human trafficking.

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

The root of American constitutional law is based on the principles of the Ten Commandments. Whether someone accepts the religious principles therein or not, no better moral code can be codified.

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?

Safety is paramount, especially in school zones. If a government agency chooses to use speed camera, that government agency must provide a means for the citizens to see the accuser and rebut the charges when necessary.

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?

People making decisions or recommendations or rulings on planning and zoning should not constitute the majority of any board. Direct personal interest must bring about a recusal. It is positive to have those with building knowledge but not as a majority.

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?

Partially, with my encouragement, the mayor has instituted an unincorporated roads fund. It is a major concern for me that we need to develop infrastructure before and along with major development. Massive growth before infrastructure planning and implementation is dangerous for our citizens. We cannot afford to "kick the can" down the road any longer.

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.

While I see major benefits for an unincorporated planning commission, current state law makes it very difficult to achieve. The state legislature, every municipality, and the current planning commission must all approve the move. Your current county commission voted to institute a planning department for the county which will offer plans based on the needs of county residents as opposed to urban desires.



Donna Christian - Lowe

Candidate Information

Email Address:	Donna@electdonnalowe.com
Occupation/Vocation:	Human Resources & Radio Media Personality
Years as resident of:	22 years in district 9
Military Background:	None
Campaign Website:	electdonnalowe.com

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

The County Commission serves as the legislative body of county government. Its role is to represent the people, adopt responsible budgets, set policy, and provide oversight of county departments and services. I believe a commissioner must be a true voice for their district—representing the people who elected them, not personal agendas, while staying grounded in strong principles. It requires balancing growth with protecting the character and quality of life in our communities. The role also includes listening to residents, ensuring transparency, and working collaboratively with municipalities, schools, businesses, and community organizations. At its core, it is about being a wise steward of taxpayer dollars, the position, and the people we are elected to serve.

Independent Survey by



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 background is in human resources, workforce development, organizational leadership, and media, with over a decade in radio and community engagement. I currently serve as Board Chair for the Tennessee Youth Court and the Harrison Bay Future Ready Center, working with businesses, employees, teachers, churches, and community organizations to solve problems and build strong teams. Throughout my career, I have consistently brought people together across different perspectives to find common ground and move initiatives forward. As County Commissioner, I will focus on responsible growth, workforce development, and strengthening partnerships between government, business, and education, while remaining accessible, visible, and committed to solutions that serve our entire community.

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

My top priorities are targeted infrastructure investment, responsible budgeting, and strategic economic development. First, we must invest in critical infrastructure—roads like Highway 58, Snow Hill, Hunter Road, and surrounding areas—to support safety and growth. Second, we must spend wisely while supporting essential services, including strong schools, public safety—fire, police, and emergency services—and exploring ways to ease financial burdens on seniors, especially related to housing and everyday costs. Third, economic development should focus on strengthening small businesses and expanding workforce training so residents—both students and adults—have access to good-paying jobs. Growth must be intentional and protect our quality of life while building a financially stable future for the next generation.

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 constitutional liberties is one of the most important responsibilities of public officials. As County Commissioner, I will support policies that protect freedom of speech, religion, and the right to peaceably assemble for all residents, regardless of background or beliefs. The government must respect these rights while ensuring public safety and fairness. I believe true leadership requires listening to and engaging with all perspectives—not just those we agree with—because constitutional freedoms apply to everyone equally. Transparency, open meetings, and public access to information are essential to protecting these rights. The role of government is to protect individual freedoms, not unnecessarily restrict them, and to ensure that every resident is treated fairly under the law.

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?

Protecting life requires leadership, compassion, and real solutions. I am pro-life and believe we should value and protect life, while also recognizing that real-life situations can be complex and require thoughtful, responsible leadership. At the local level, our role is to take action—combating human trafficking, strengthening solutions that move individuals from homelessness to stability, and protecting seniors from abuse and neglect. That means leading and partnering with law enforcement, the community, and faith-based organizations to ensure resources are used effectively, and people are truly cared for. My focus is not rhetoric—it is making sure the most vulnerable in our community are supported, protected, and not overlooked.

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

The Ten Commandments reflect moral principles that have shaped our culture—values like honesty, respect for life, and personal responsibility. Those principles guide me personally and align with what helps build strong communities. However, the government must respect religious freedom and cannot impose any one set of religious beliefs. Laws should be grounded in protecting human dignity, promoting justice, and supporting the well-being of all people. I believe strong leadership means applying shared values such as integrity and accountability in a way that respects our community's diverse beliefs, without becoming extreme in either direction.

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—is critical, but the use of automated speed cameras must be transparent, fair, and accountable. Many residents have valid concerns about due process, accuracy, and financial incentives. I believe any use of these systems must include strict oversight, regular independent audits, and full transparency on how they operate and how revenue is used. Safety—not revenue—must be the priority. Drivers should have clear, accessible ways to challenge citations to ensure their rights are protected. If these standards cannot be met, then their use should be reconsidered.

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?

Transparency and accountability are essential in zoning and land-use decisions. I support conflict-of-interest policies requiring disclosure of financial or business ties, along with clear recusal standards when conflicts exist. Meetings must remain open, with decisions easily accessible to the public. I strongly support protecting property rights while ensuring development is responsible and aligned with long-term community interests. Public input must be meaningful, not procedural. I absolutely support working with developers, real estate professionals, and all involved, because growth must be intentional and requires collaboration. It takes leadership to bring all sides together and ensure each district is treated based on its unique needs—not a one-size-fits-all approach.

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 planning tools such as zoning regulations, growth plans, and infrastructure planning, but they must be used more effectively and with accountability. In many areas, including District 9, growth is outpacing roads, infrastructure, and emergency services. As commissioner, I will advocate for stronger coordination between planning, transportation, and public safety, and ensure decisions are based on real data and impact. Just as important, each district must have a strong voice at the table—leaders willing to engage the community and ensure growth reflects local needs. Growth is inevitable, but it must be paced responsibly so infrastructure and services can keep up while protecting quality of life.

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.

With the County Commission's recent decision to establish a separate planning department for unincorporated areas, the focus now must be on doing it right. This is an opportunity to improve transparency, accountability, and data-driven decision-making—especially regarding infrastructure, roads, and schools. Growth is inevitable in many areas, but it must be smart, intentional, and community-driven—not directed by outside interests. District 9 is diverse, and a one-size-fits-all approach will not work. We must plan thoughtfully with community input and ensure growth is responsible, balanced, and aligned with both district-specific needs and the county's long-term strategy.

County Commission Dist. 10

(In alphabetical order)



Jeff Eversole



Tonya Sadler

Independent Survey by





Jeff Eversole

Candidate Information

Email Address:	j.eversole@gmx.com
Occupation/Vocation:	Business Management
Years as resident of:	30 Years
Campaign Website:	VoteJeffEversole.com

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

The County Commission exists to serve the people of Hamilton County. Our job is to listen to our constituents, represent their interests, and make decisions that improve the quality of life across the county. Every action we take should reflect the needs of our residents and be handled responsibly and transparently.

Independent Survey by



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?

I've focused much of my first term on managing responsible growth in Hamilton County. We've already lowered the number of homes allowed per acre from seven to three, and I plan to keep pushing for responsible development that protects our communities. I'm also working to create the Unincorporated Hamilton County Planning Department so people living outside the city limits have a voice and better resources when it comes to planning decisions in their areas. In my second term I am committed to fulfilling and completing these ongoing initiatives

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

As Chairman of the Finance Committee, I take stewardship of taxpayer dollars seriously. My priorities are:

1. Spending wisely on infrastructure needs like roads and bridges, public safety, and emergency services that directly benefit residents.
2. Finding efficiencies and savings wherever possible to make government run better for less.
3. Supporting smart economic development that brings livable wage jobs, strengthens local businesses, and balances growth with the county's infrastructure without tax increases.

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?

I'm committed to protecting the Constitutional rights of every resident, whether it's freedom of speech, the right to assemble peacefully, the right to bear arms and the ability to practice one's faith. County policies should always respect these fundamental liberties, and I'll make sure that's a priority in every decision we make.

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?

I believe it's our responsibility to protect those who can't protect themselves. I support laws and programs that defend the unborn, fight human trafficking, and help the elderly, homeless, and economically disadvantaged get the care and resources they need. I'll continue to be an advocate for the right to life initiatives and for those who are most vulnerable in our community.

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

Yes. The Ten Commandments give us a moral framework for how to live as God's children. I recently implemented commissioner led prayers at the beginning of each commission meeting. As a leader, it's my responsibility to reflect those principles in government decisions, promoting honesty, respect, and integrity in everything we do.

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?

I support using speed cameras only to improve safety, especially around schools. But transparency is key. Residents should know where cameras are, how they're used, and have a fair process to challenge any ticket. Speed enforcement must respect due process and drivers' rights, and I'll make sure those protections are always upheld.

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?

It's critical that planning and zoning decisions are ethical and transparent. I support requiring full disclosure of any relationships or financial ties between developers and committee members. I also back public hearings and resident input for every zoning decision, so decisions are made for the good of the community—not just 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?

The biggest step right now is creating the Unincorporated Hamilton County Planning Department. This department will help guide growth responsibly, making sure residents' voices are heard, and that infrastructure, roads, and services keep pace with development. My goal is to balance growth with quality of life for everyone.

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.

Yes—I authored the resolution to make it happen. Residents in unincorporated areas deserve just as much say in planning decisions as those in more developed parts of the county. A separate commission ensures fair, responsible growth that benefits all of Hamilton County, not just certain areas.



Tonya Sadler

Candidate Information

Email Address:	Tonya@VoteTonyaSadler.com
Occupation/Vocation:	Vice Mayor of Collegedale
Years as resident of:	39 years; Moved to Virginia for 18 months for my husband's employment.
Campaign Website:	votetonyasadler.com

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

The County Commission serves as the legislative body responsible for the county's purse strings. The board's primary role is to ensure fiscal stewardship by overseeing the budget, and providing the infrastructure (roads, schools, and public safety) necessary for Hamilton County residents to thrive. I see the Commission as the bridge between our local community and the resources needed to enjoy a civilized life. As your next Commissioner, I will work to ensure that District 10 receives its fair share of reinvestment of our property tax dollars.

Independent Survey by



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?

One of the largest side effects of our county's lagging infrastructure is the simultaneous neglect of our school system. For decades developments were pushed through without any regard for school capacity or zoning and transportation logistics. Now we are reading headlines about students being bussed further away from their homes because the closest schools are at capacity. I will work to initiate an annual summit where for the first time ever the entire school board and the complete county commission will come together in a publicly accessible workshop. Until our leaders are collaborating with one another, this county will continue to flounder on how to move forward in the most sensible ways.

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

Regarding spending, I will prioritize road construction and maintenance, properly funding our school system, and explore improving fire service coverage in the unincorporated parts of the county. I will work towards a government that becomes more efficient by seeking out redundant administrative costs. As a county we must increase our efforts to attract high-skill, high-wage industries that allow residents to live and work here, instead of just commuting through it.

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?

I will continue to champion transparency in all Commission dealings to protect free speech and assembly. I'm excited with the progress of two meetings a month being moved to 5 PM, but this is just a start. Next, the county commission needs to resume meeting every week in order to preserve the public's ability to access them on public record in a regular cadence. Committee meetings should also be live-streamed on YouTube just as the agenda and regular sessions are. In some instances, conversations had in the committee meetings are more informative than the voting meeting that is made available online.

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?

I support policies and initiatives that value the sanctity of life at all stages. I believe in offering a hand up rather than just a handout to our homeless community. If we strengthen our initiatives towards mental health and addiction recovery, we will make a more profound impact on the root causes that contribute to homelessness and repeat incarceration.

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

I believe our legal system is rooted in the same moral framework of the Ten Commandments, which emphasize honesty, respect for life, and property rights. While our government must remain neutral regarding specific religious denominations, I believe that our laws are most effective when they reflect these foundational principles.

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?

As a former reserve police officer and clerk of court, I view automated speed cameras with heavy skepticism regarding due process. Speed cameras are more often used as revenue generators rather than safety tools. I believe in the right to confront one's accuser, and if you're being cited it should be handed to you by a law enforcement officer that witnessed the alleged infraction. If the true purpose of a speed camera is to correct or curb risky driving behaviors, that lesson is better applied by a police officer at the time of the infraction rather than an envelope in the mail a month later.

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?

I believe all committee members should be subject to filing an annual public financial disclosure. Members should recuse themselves from any vote where they have a direct financial tie to a project or subject matter. Zoning meetings should be held at times and locations that allow for maximum resident participation.

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?

The public, and the county, have invested a tremendous amount of time to create Plan Hamilton. I feel that we must give it a chance to see how it impacts growth. I also feel that we have to start evaluating development on a broader scale and distance for its impact. Areas with multiple proposed developments need to be analyzed for their impact as a whole, not individually.

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.

The split of the planning commission into separate urban and rural boards is a risky move that echoes the 1919 bankruptcy of James County. While rural frustration with city-centric planning is valid, isolationism threatens regional infrastructure and economic growth. Instead of a costly planning island, I support a unified board through specific reforms that include: geographic quotas mandating representation for unincorporated districts, expert-citizen balance mixing technical professionals with local residents, rural impact assessments formally evaluating how developments affect agricultural land, decentralized hearings with meetings held with the affected communities, and inter-agency transparency ensuring coordinated planning for roads and schools.

Independent Survey by



County Commission Dist. 11

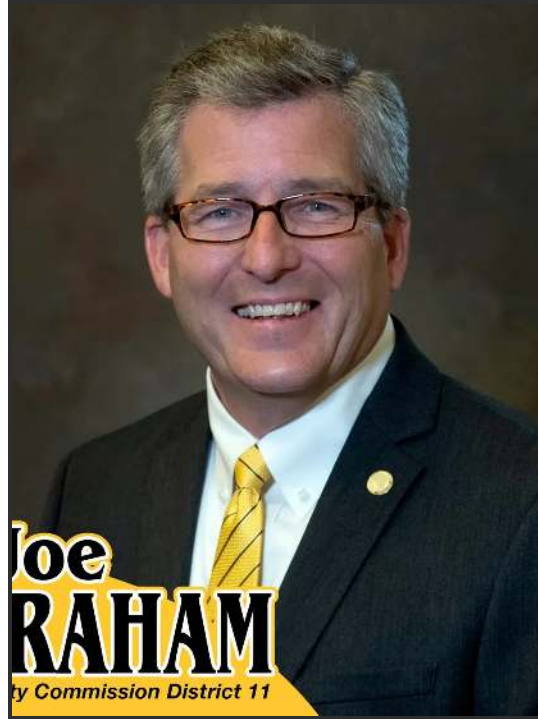
(In alphabetical order)



Joseph "Joe" Graham

Independent Survey by





Joseph "Joe" Graham

Candidate Information

Email Address:	jgraham@accentprintinginc.net
Occupation/Vocation:	Small Business Owner
Years as resident of:	48 years in the same community, which is now district 11, only candidate that actually lives in the district
Campaign Website:	votejoegramham.com

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

We are the legislative body, one of three branches of Government.

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?

I am the current sitting Commissioner for district 11. I am involved in all of the neighborhood associations that are contained in District 11. I go to all of the neighborhood meetings, clean up days, school functions, and I am in constant contact with the neighborhood presidents. I am a founding member of the neighborhood association in the community that I grew up in. A community that I raised my family in, have businesses in, I am a leader in, volunteer in, and still live in.

Independent Survey by



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

Education, safe schools and safe neighborhoods. Keeping a watchful eye on our budget and always looking for ways to save. Keeping taxes low and workforce development high to attract new industries.

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?

Our Constitution is very clear, as a sworn Constitutional Officer of the United States and the state of Tennessee, I took an oath that I take very seriously to uphold and protect these rights.

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?

I will follow the law to protect and serve all of the Hamilton County citizens.

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

I will always follow the law and all it protects.

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?

I will always follow the law, and protect ones constitutional rights from students to seniors.

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?

Fight for smart growth, and protect property owners rights.

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?

When a developer begins a project, make that developer put in the necessary infrastructure needs. Then the tax payers do not have to pay for the necessary infrastructure needs, the developer will. Make available the equipment our first responders and personnel need to keep up with the growth.

Independent Survey by



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.

No, we all need to come together with all 11 districts. We need to plan our long term future together, no working in silo's. We are all one county.

Independent Survey by



**Hamilton County
2026 Republican Primary Election
Voter Guide
for All Republican Candidates**

Sheriff

Independent Survey by



Sheriff | Survey Questions Index

- 1) **Purpose:** What do you view as the purpose and role of the Sheriff?
- 2) **Candidate's Focus/Expertise/Initiatives:** What are your areas of special focus and/or expertise and what initiatives would you undertake as Sheriff?
- 3) **Moral Values:** Should government laws, ordinances, regulations, etc. follow the moral principles of the Ten Commandments? Why, or why not?
- 4) **County Citizen:** If an agency of the Federal Government violated the due process rights of a citizen in Hamilton County, what would you do?
- 5) **Immigration Enforcement:** As Sheriff of Hamilton County, how would you approach cooperation with federal immigration authorities?
- 6) **Building a Strong and Trusted Police Force:** Law enforcement hiring and staffing can be challenging. What policies or strategies would you implement to attract, hire, and retain the best candidates while ensuring community trust and public safety?
- 7) **Interpreting the Constitution:** Do you consider the U.S. Constitution to be a living document that evolves over time, or a fixed framework? Please explain your reasoning.
- 8) **Handling Cases Involving Undocumented Individuals:** When encountering a situation involving an illegal immigrant, such as a DUI or other legal matters, what procedures will you follow before involving ICE?

Independent Survey by



Sheriff

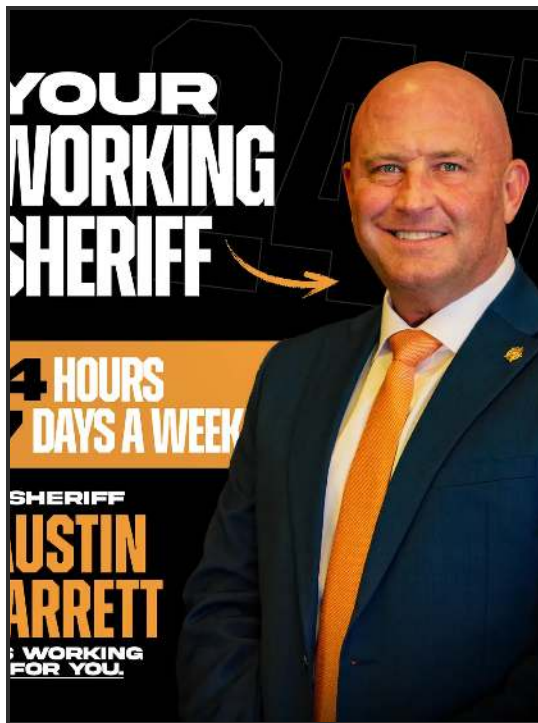
(In alphabetical order)



Sheriff Austin Garrett

Independent Survey by





Sheriff Austin Garrett

Candidate Information

Email Address:	info@austingarrettsheriff.com
Occupation/Vocation:	Sheriff
Years as resident of:	N/A
Campaign Website:	austingarrettsheriff.com

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

As a constitutionally elected Sheriff, it is my duty to ensure the efficient and effective delivery of law enforcement services to the citizens of Hamilton County.

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

With nearly 33 years of law enforcement experience, including command and executive-level responsibilities, and most recently serving Hamilton County as your Sheriff, we have cast a clear vision and have transitioned to an intelligence-led policing philosophy in the deployment of personnel and resources. This is an approach I will continue to lead, as it supports the efficient and effective delivery of law enforcement services. My continued focus is on reducing overall crime and improving the quality of life for the citizens of Hamilton County.

Independent Survey by



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

Yes. Our nation was founded on Judeo-Christian values that are reflected in and carried through our Constitution. Laws, ordinances, and regulations that align with the Constitution are grounded in the moral principles of the Ten Commandments.

4) County Citizen: If an agency of the Federal Government violated the due process rights of a citizen in Hamilton County, what would you do?

Follow the law. I would adhere to the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of Tennessee for which I am sworn. I believe one of the highest responsibilities of a Sheriff is to act ethically, morally, and within the law.

5) Immigration Enforcement: As Sheriff of Hamilton County, how would you approach cooperation with federal immigration authorities?

As Sheriff, I have visited our southern border with Senator Bill Hagerty. I was also one of the first Sheriff's Offices in Tennessee to sign on to the 287(g) program.

6) Building a Strong and Trusted Police Force: Law enforcement hiring and staffing can be challenging. What policies or strategies would you implement to attract, hire, and retain the best candidates while ensuring community trust and public safety?

Your Hamilton County Sheriff's Office is nationally recognized for strategic recruitment and retention of deputies in both corrections and law enforcement. This is directly linked to our agency brand founded on professionalism, customer service, and innovation.

7) Interpreting the Constitution: Do you consider the U.S. Constitution to be a living document that evolves over time, or a fixed framework? Please explain your reasoning.

I firmly uphold my oath and obligation to the United States and Tennessee Constitutions.

8) Handling Cases Involving Undocumented Individuals: When encountering a situation involving an illegal immigrant, such as a DUI or other legal matters, what procedures will you follow before involving ICE?

Your Hamilton County Sheriff's Office follows the law. Please see question 8.

**Hamilton County
2026 Republican Primary Election
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**Criminal Court
Clerk**

Independent Survey by



Criminal Court Clerk | Survey Questions Index

- 1) **Purpose:** What is the purpose and role of the Criminal Court Clerk, and what values and expertise should the candidate possess?
- 2) **Candidate's Focus/Expertise/Initiatives:** What are your areas of special focus and/or expertise and what initiatives would you undertake as Criminal Court Clerk?
- 3) **Moral Values:** Should government laws, ordinances, regulations, etc. follow the moral principles of the Ten Commandments? Why, or why not?
- 4) **Community Impact:** Describe why this position should be taken seriously by voters, how it meaningfully impacts the integrity and effectiveness of the criminal justice system, and what you believe voters may misunderstand or overlook about its importance.
- 5) **Fiscal Responsibility:** How can the management of the Criminal Court Clerk's office save taxpayer dollars or, if mismanaged, result in unnecessary costs?
- 6) **Balancing Transparency and Justice:** Do you agree with public posting of those arrested in local news sites or publications as a deterrent to criminal activity? Explain the pros and cons of such a policy.
- 7) **Interstate Probation Tracking:** How should probation records be shared between states and jurisdictions to ensure individuals on probation are effectively monitored if they relocate?
- 8) **Addressing Delinquent Fines:** Should asset confiscation or other measures be considered for individuals delinquent in paying criminal fines? Please explain your reasoning.
- 9) **Efficiency through Technology:** How can technology be used to reduce costs and improve efficiency in managing records and documentation for criminal proceedings?

Independent Survey by



Criminal Court Clerk

(In alphabetical order)



Archie Scott Currence



Vince Dean

Independent Survey by





Archie Scott Currence

Candidate Information

Email Address:	none
Occupation/Vocation:	Career Court Staff
Years as resident of:	Hamilton County for 35 years (Lived 21 years in Atlanta).
Campaign Website:	votecurrence.com

1) Purpose: What is the purpose and role of the Criminal Court Clerk, and what values and expertise should the candidate possess?

The Criminal Court Clerk serves as the official record keeper of the court and is responsible for ensuring the accurate documentation, processing, and preservation of criminal case records. The office supports judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, law enforcement, and the public by maintaining reliable records and managing court costs, filings, and case documentation. A candidate for this role should possess strong organizational skills, attention to detail, and a deep understanding of court procedures. Equally important are values such as integrity, professionalism, accountability, and a commitment to public service. Experience within the court system and the ability to lead an office that supports the administration of justice are essential to maintaining accuracy, efficiency, and public trust.

Independent Survey by



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

For over 20 years, my areas of expertise included court cost calculation, procedural documentation, and operational workflow within various court environments. I have written manuals for court procedures ranging from receipt processing to appellate filings and employee training which helped standardize processes and improve efficiency. My professional focus has consistently been on improving court operations through technology and process design. I would continue to identify opportunities to refine automated processes. As Criminal Court Clerk, I would focus on restoring automated court cost calculations to ensure accuracy and real-time reporting of account receivables. I would also prioritize documenting all operational procedures to strengthen training, consistency, and continuity within the office.

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

I agree. The principles reflected in the Ten Commandments such as honesty, respect for life, and personal responsibility have shaped moral and ethical traditions in Western society. Conservative philosophy believes human beings are governed by an enduring moral order that reveals both moral limits and the need for restraint. However, the commandments' ultimate purpose is not to make us good, because none of us is inherently good, nor can we make ourselves good. As Psalm 14:3 states, "There is none who does good, not even one." Rather, the commandments reveal our sinful nature in contrast to God's holiness. Yet, as Romans 5:8 declares, God demonstrates His love in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

4) Community Impact: Describe why this position should be taken seriously by voters, how it meaningfully impacts the integrity and effectiveness of the criminal justice system, and what you believe voters may misunderstand or overlook about its importance.

The Criminal Court Clerk's office plays a critical role in maintaining the integrity and reliability of the criminal justice system. Accurate court records ensure that judges, attorneys, law enforcement, and the public can rely on the documentation of criminal proceedings. When records are managed properly, cases move efficiently and legal decisions are supported by accurate information. If the office is mismanaged, errors or delays can disrupt court operations and undermine confidence in the system. Voters may sometimes overlook this position because it operates largely behind the scenes. The effectiveness of the entire criminal justice process depends heavily on the clerk's office.

5) Fiscal Responsibility: How can the management of the Criminal Court Clerk's office save taxpayer dollars or, if mismanaged, result in unnecessary costs?

Effective management of the Criminal Court Clerk's office can save taxpayer dollars by improving efficiency and reducing costly errors. Accurate calculation and collection of court costs and fees ensures that funds owed to the county and state are properly accounted for and collected. Clear procedures and well-trained staff reduce mistakes that can require time-consuming corrections or legal review. Technology and automation can also streamline record management and reporting, minimizing manual work and duplication of effort. Conversely, poor management can lead to inefficient processes and increased administrative costs that ultimately fall on taxpayers.

6) Balancing Transparency and Justice: Do you agree with public posting of those arrested in local news sites or publications as a deterrent to criminal activity? Explain the pros and cons of such a policy.

Yes, but with some reservations. Public reporting of arrests can promote transparency and keep communities informed about law enforcement activity. However, the legal presumption is that a defendant is innocent unless proven guilty in a court of law, and an arrest does not equal a conviction. Publicizing arrests can result in reputational harm to individuals who are not convicted and can create a lasting digital footprint, with mugshots and news coverage lingering online. A balanced approach should recognize the public's right to information while also respecting the presumption of innocence. The deterrent effect on future criminal activity may be negligible. A related concern is the cost to taxpayers of providing data to for-profit websites.

7) Interstate Probation Tracking: How should probation records be shared between states and jurisdictions to ensure individuals on probation are effectively monitored if they relocate?

Typically, most jurisdictions have probation offices separate from the court clerk's office. Probation supervision across state lines is governed by the Interstate Compact for Adult Offender Supervision, which Tennessee and all other states follow. This system establishes standardized procedures for transferring supervision and ensures that probation conditions remain enforceable when an individual relocates.

8) Addressing Delinquent Fines: Should asset confiscation or other measures be considered for individuals delinquent in paying criminal fines? Please explain your reasoning.

Tennessee law already provides a structured and balanced approach for addressing unpaid fines, costs, and litigation taxes. Under Tennessee Code Annotated § 40-24-105, unpaid fines may be enforced in the same manner as a civil judgment, and the court may use contempt proceedings if it determines a defendant can pay but willfully refuses. Assets in Tennessee can only be confiscated when they are connected to criminal activity either as proceeds of a crime or tools used to commit a crime and the state successfully proves this through a criminal forfeiture or civil forfeiture process. The key difference is that asset forfeiture is tied to criminal activity, while the collection of fines, costs, and litigation taxes is treated as debt collection.

9) Efficiency through Technology: How can technology be used to reduce costs and improve efficiency in managing records and documentation for criminal proceedings?

In 1995, I researched the laws and resolutions governing court cost calculations, developed a comprehensive written summary, and served as the subject matter expert to IT staff who reprogrammed the software to automatically calculate costs based upon my summary and court dispositions. This improved collections and audits. Technology can significantly improve the efficiency and accuracy of court record management. Automated systems can calculate court costs, generate reports, and track accounts receivable. By investing in reliable technology and well-documented procedures, the Criminal Court Clerk's office can reduce administrative costs, improve transparency, and ensure long-term preservation and accessibility of court records.

Independent Survey by





Vince Dean

Candidate Information

Email Address:	votevinedean@gmail.com
Occupation/Vocation:	Criminal Court Clerk
Years as resident of:	67 years
Military Background:	27 yrs Law enforcement and 9 years in the Legislature
Campaign Website:	Vote Vince Dean on Facebook

1) Purpose: What is the purpose and role of the Criminal Court Clerk, and what values and expertise should the candidate possess?

The role of the Criminal Court Clerk is multi-faceted. The clerk is charged as the keeper of the records for all criminal court cases, both at the Session's level and the State Criminal Courts. He or she is also charged with collecting the fees and fines, as ordered by the court. The clerk oversees as well as manages the \$5 Million annual budget, as well as the 60 Deputy Clerks. It is essential that the Criminal Court Clerk shows competent leadership skills and also has the ability to manage a budget.

Independent Survey by



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

Since taking office, I have used my leadership skills to assemble a team of some of the best deputy clerks this county has ever seen. In rare occurrences we have found it necessary to sever ties with deputy clerks that did not adhere to our standards. We have done that without apology, as we recognize that we serve the public. We have managed our budget and stayed within the confines of our "letter of agreement" with the Mayor's office each year since taking office. We created a payment center making it easier and more convenient for citizens that owed court fines in both the Session's and State Criminal Offices. We did the same thing with our expungement center.

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

Absolutely! the Ten Commandments were given to Moses at Mount Sinai and should be the foundation for all laws and ordinances. More than anything I am a firm believer that this would be a wonderful world if all citizens would adopt the Ten Commandments as guide for their lives.

4) Community Impact: Describe why this position should be taken seriously by voters, how it meaningfully impacts the integrity and effectiveness of the criminal justice system, and what you believe voters may misunderstand or overlook about its importance.

While the majority of voters will never set foot in any of our offices or even in any of our courts, their tax dollars certainly can. It is imperative that the Criminal Court Clerk has a history of being able to manage funds both personally and professionally. It is also vital to have a good leader that can discern good employees from bad. An effective leader must be able to separate the wheat from the chaff. Then they must be able to rise above the criticism of those whose employment is terminated. I must be able to lay my head down each night and I certainly can.

5) Fiscal Responsibility: How can the management of the Criminal Court Clerk's office save taxpayer dollars or, if mismanaged, result in unnecessary costs?

Poor fiscal responsibility can lead to funds being diverted from the general fund (taxpayer dollars) to the budget of this office. Very simply, if the Clerk cannot manage the budget, the taxpayers are left to make up the difference. It is also vital that the clerk choose the right employees and be able to recognize their talents and place them in the most productive positions. There are many different jobs to be performed in this office and not everyone is suited for every job. Strong leadership skills ensure strong job performances by the appropriate deputy clerks.

6) Balancing Transparency and Justice: Do you agree with public posting of those arrested in local news sites or publications as a deterrent to criminal activity? Explain the pros and cons of such a policy.

While I may have my own personal opinion about this, that is exactly what it is: my personal opinion. My office does not provide or own any mugshots. Those are property of the Sheriff's Office. We do maintain the arrest records, which are public record. Whether I believe the publication of such is a deterrent is irrelevant. The law says that such information can be published and local media outlets make the determination as to whether or not they are published. Again any change to such would need to be done by the Tennessee General Assembly. We are charged with following the law.

7) Interstate Probation Tracking: How should probation records be shared between states and jurisdictions to ensure individuals on probation are effectively monitored if they relocate?

My office does not handle probation issues. They are handled by The State office of Probation for the State Court cases and by Hamilton County probation office for Session's court cases.

8) Addressing Delinquent Fines: Should asset confiscation or other measures be considered for individuals delinquent in paying criminal fines? Please explain your reasoning.

There are many schools of thought on this. In some smaller counties, asset confiscation has been used. However, in a county our size it would be almost impossible to utilize this measure. When I first took office we tried to garnish employment pay. We quickly found that when a defendant was garnished at Wendy's they would quit and go work at McDonalds. We have had good success with our collection agency. We also work closely with defendants to be on a payment plan and retain their drivers license. A large number of our customers are indigent, as determined by the court. They frankly don't have any money. We deposit around \$6 million per year. More than our budget.

9) Efficiency through Technology: How can technology be used to reduce costs and improve efficiency in managing records and documentation for criminal proceedings?

Our office has been on the cutting edge of this issue. We developed an APP for the judicial system in Hamilton County. Citizens can find court dates, dispositions and most of our records that are public. We partnered with V.I.N.E. (Victim Notification Everyday) where defendants and interested parties are notified of upcoming court appearances. V.I.N.E. has helped reduce our FTA (Failure to Appear) drastically, thus reducing the number of defendants arrested and incarcerated until court. We have developed a QR code to allow defendants with cases dismissed to apply for expungement without coming into our office. Electronic submission of court requirements ordered by a judge is now available. More that 120 words don't permit.

**Hamilton County
2026 Republican Primary Election
Voter Guide
for All Republican Candidates**

**County School
Board**

Independent Survey by



County School Board | Survey Questions Index

- 1) **Purpose:** What do you view as the purpose and role of the County School Board?
- 2) **Candidate's Focus/Expertise/Initiatives:** What are your areas of special focus and/or expertise and what initiatives would you undertake as a County School Board member?
- 3) **Moral Values:** Should government laws, ordinances, regulations, etc. follow the moral principles of the Ten Commandments? Why, or why not?
- 4) **Parental Rights:** What is the best way to involve parents in the student's education? Who do you believe is the most important stakeholder in a student's education?
- 5) **Finances:** Education is the largest budget item in Hamilton County. In what areas do you see room for improvement in its management, and how would you address these challenges?
- 6) **Preventing School Violence:** In the aftermath of the 2023 Covenant School tragedy, Tennessee has strengthened school safety laws, but many parents continue to express concern in this area. What additional strategies or policy changes would you support in Hamilton County to prevent school shootings, foster community well-being, and protect the rights of students and staff?
- 7) **Sex Ed Instruction:** How should the Hamilton County school district select and source materials for sex education? Should this instruction be provided in schools, strictly at home, or a combination of both? Which organizations, if any, do you believe should be restricted from providing materials, and what is your rationale?
- 8) **Racial equity:** How should the school district approach teaching racial equity, and what role, if any, should diversity, equity and inclusion play in the curriculum?
- 9) **Instruction of LGBTQ Issues within Schools:** How should Hamilton County schools approach teaching topics related to LGBTQ issues?
- 10) **Gender Identity Instruction:** Should Gender Ideology be taught or encouraged within the public school system? Why, or why not?
- 11) **Immigration Status:** How should the school districts address enrollment concerning children of illegal immigrants? Is this a strain on our system that takes away opportunities from citizens and those with legal immigration status? Should additional documentation be required beyond the basic proof of address we have now?

Independent Survey by



County School Board Dist. 3

(In alphabetical order)



Ashley R. Dillon

Independent Survey by





Ashley R. Dillon

Candidate Information

Email Address:	Ashleydillon4hamiltoncoschools@gmail.com
Occupation/Vocation:	Licensed Professional Counselor and small business owner
Years as resident of:	17
Campaign Website:	facebook.com/people/Ashley-Dillon-For-School-Board-District-3/61588307505894

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

The purpose and role of the county school board is to advise, hire, and, if necessary, fire the superintendent; establish the budget for county schools; and make the policies that govern them. Practically speaking, this means helping to identify and establish goals and a vision for countywide education. The school board acts as a liaison between the community and the school administration on matters of policy. It listens to and communicates suggestions from community members to the administration. The school board also provides accountability for the public school system.

Independent Survey by



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

My area of expertise is mental health care for children, adolescents, and families. I am a mother of three children, two of which are current Hamilton County students. I intend to work actively to increase communication and transparency between the schools, parents, and myself as a future board member. As a licensed professional counselor, I am trained to consider safety from both a physical and mental health perspective. As a mom, I have a vested interest in ensuring our schools are the best they can be. Our schools directly impact families in our area for years to come. I intend to work diligently to help students achieve by focusing on essential academic subjects creating future effective and educated citizens.

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

Whether or not government laws, ordinances, and regulations are intended to follow the moral principles of the Ten Commandments, they often reflect them due to the foundation of our country being rooted in biblical principles. Removing the influence of the Ten Commandments would mean disregarding many of the ideas that helped shape our nation's founding. The Ten Commandments are foundational to both Christian and Jewish traditions around the world. They have helped establish consistent moral expectations across cultures for thousands of years. To remove the moral principles of the Ten Commandments from society would create a void that would be filled with potentially less beneficial ideas.

4) Parental Rights: What is the best way to involve parents in the student's education? Who do you believe is the most important stakeholder in a student's education?

The best way to involve parents in their students' education is to increase clear consistent communication across the county. Some teachers excel at communication through Remind messages and PowerSchool updates. Requiring parents to sign off on assignments, memos, and classroom communications ensures that they have at least seen what is happening at school. Increasing volunteer opportunities could further strengthen relationships with parents and boost engagement. When parents feel invested in the school, they are more likely to stay involved. Offering events at a variety of times allowing for differing guardian schedules. The most important stakeholder in a student's education is the student. If a student is not invested in their education, there is only so much a parent can do.

5) Finances: Education is the largest budget item in Hamilton County. In what areas do you see room for improvement in its management, and how would you address these challenges?

One area for improvement in budget management is evaluating which administrative positions are essential and making thoughtful decisions about reducing roles at the central office. We need competitive pay to attract and retain high-quality employees, along with clear expectations for each role and regular performance reviews. Substitute teachers should receive fair hourly wages. Teachers provide the greatest value within a school, and funding should demonstrate this. Decreasing individual principal-level spending autonomy, while increasing district-wide standardization, could help ensure that all Hamilton County students have equal access to educational opportunities. By making strategic choices about technology—focusing only on tools that genuinely enhance students' ability to become effective citizens—we can minimize unnecessary expenses and improve overall efficiency.

6) Preventing School Violence: In the aftermath of the 2023 Covenant School tragedy, Tennessee has strengthened school safety laws, but many parents continue to express concern in this area. What additional strategies or policy changes would you support in Hamilton County to prevent school shootings, foster community well-being, and protect the rights of students and staff?

Students and teachers should be able to expect safety in the classroom. All threats of violence should be taken seriously, whether they are written, verbal, or physical. All staff should be trained in standard safety protocols. Parents should be informed whenever protocols are enacted. School safety can be improved by allowing schools to enforce discipline effectively from the first offense. Returning to behavioral systems with clear, consistent, and tangible expectations and consequences can help students develop appropriate behavior from a young age. Consequences should be proportional to the offense and serve as a deterrent to repeated behavior while requiring parental involvement. Self-harm threats should receive mental health support facilitated by parent action to ensure the safety of all.

7) Sex Ed Instruction: How should the Hamilton County school district select and source materials for sex education? Should this instruction be provided in schools, strictly at home, or a combination of both? Which organizations, if any, do you believe should be restricted from providing materials, and what is your rationale?

I do not believe that sex education should be taught in Hamilton County schools beyond basic anatomy and physiology. Sex education should begin at home at a young age by teaching children the correct names for their body parts. As children grow, these conversations should continue in an age-appropriate way, guided by parents or guardians. Each family's perspective on healthy boundaries and sexuality is unique, making it difficult for schools to teach this subject in a way that fully respects those differences. For families who need support in this area, public health topics—such as abuse prevention, STI prevention, and healthy relationships—can be addressed by providing resources for parents to review and discuss with their children at home.

8) Racial equity: How should the school district approach teaching racial equity, and what role, if any, should diversity, equity and inclusion play in the curriculum?

Many students already live lives filled with diversity of thought, race, and gender. We should teach civil rights history in history classes and strive to respect others on all occasions. No amount of formal DEI instruction is going to change a person's heart, but loving every student well and ensuring that each student is taught and treated with respect implicitly models the concepts that formal DEI instruction aims to promote. To formally teach DEI without living a life that respects all individuals as uniquely created for a purpose on purpose is a disservice to all students. Formal DEI instruction can sometimes create a culture of shame and stereotyping, disregarding individual uniqueness. Everyone is entitled to basic human rights.

9) Instruction of LGBTQ Issues within Schools: How should Hamilton County schools approach teaching topics related to LGBTQ issues?

LGBTQ issues should not be addressed in Hamilton County Schools. There is no nationally agreed-upon consensus on all topics related to LGBTQ issues, which means that teaching these topics runs the risk of encroaching on parental liberty and instructing individual students in ways that may be counter to their families' belief systems. School systems also lack the time and resources to adequately teach the basics and are not equipped to handle the complexity associated with LGBTQ issues. Until every student is reading and succeeding academically, there is simply no time to teach controversial social issues.

10) Gender Identity Instruction: Should Gender Ideology be taught or encouraged within the public school system? Why, or why not?

No, gender ideology should not be taught or encouraged within the public school system. Schools are under so much pressure to perform academically that we simply do not have time to teach gender ideology. Belief systems are matters of family, culture, and individual thought—not something any public system has the right or authority to teach.

11) Immigration Status: How should the school districts address enrollment concerning children of illegal immigrants? Is this a strain on our system that takes away opportunities from citizens and those with legal immigration status? Should additional documentation be required beyond the basic proof of address we have now?

School districts should require formal legal identification and proof of residency for access to services designed for citizens of that district. Acceptable forms of identification may include a birth certificate, visa, family green card, or foreign exchange student status, among others. Illegal immigrants may choose to homeschool or pursue other forms of education, but schools funded by the citizens of a community should serve only the citizens of that community. While in some cases illegal immigrants may place a strain on the system, in other cases they may not. Regardless, government-funded education is primarily designed for citizens. There are numerous educational opportunities in and around the community that do not require legal citizenship, such as public libraries and other organizations.

Independent Survey by



County School Board Dist. 6

(In alphabetical order)



Cindy Fain

Independent Survey by





Cindy Fain

Candidate Information

Email Address:	electcindyf@gmail.com
Occupation/Vocation:	Small business owner & Parent
Years as resident of:	16 years
Campaign Website:	votecindyfain.com

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

The board's purpose is to hire and hold accountable one person, the Director of Schools (Superintendent). They ensure the schools reflect the specific needs and values of the tax paying community. Board members are the fiduciary stewards and approve the multi-million dollar budget ensuring every dollar is tied to student achievement. The board draft and adopt policies that the Superintendent and staff must follow. I view the School Board as the direct link between our families and the government. Its purpose is not to co-parent our children, but to provide the professional and moral infrastructure that graduates students as independent thinkers who have the character and skills to thrive in the real world.

Independent Survey by



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

As a parent and business owner, I understand that accountability is the cornerstone of any successful organization. My focus is Radical Fiscal and Curriculum Transparency. Fiscal transparency means scrutinizing the district budget like a private business—ensuring every TISA (Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement) dollar directly impacts student outcomes rather than administrative overhead. Curriculum transparency ensures parents are empowered partners with frictionless access to all classroom materials. My expertise lies in replacing bureaucratic ambiguity with clarity and trust, ensuring our schools prioritize the families they serve and the taxpayers who fund them.

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

As a conservative parent of two daughters and a business owner, I believe our laws and schools must reflect the foundational moral principles that built our nation. Values like honesty, integrity, and respect—the core of the Ten Commandments—are not just religious; they are the bedrock of a stable society and a successful business. My commitment is to Fiscal and Curriculum Transparency. I will ensure your tax dollars are managed with business-like accountability and that parents have access to all classroom materials. I believe the school's role is to reinforce the traditional values we teach at home, not replace them. I am running to protect parental rights and return common-sense accountability to our board.

4) Parental Rights: What is the best way to involve parents in the student's education? Who do you believe is the most important stakeholder in a student's education?

The best way to involve parents is through Radical Transparency. Parents shouldn't have to "hunt" for what their children are learning; I advocate for frictionless access to all lesson plans and reading lists. When parents know the "what," they can finally support the "how" at home. The Parent is the most important stakeholder. While teachers and boards serve for a season, parents are the constant, holding the ultimate moral and legal responsibility for their child's future. However, transparency requires mutual accountability. We must hold the system accountable for what it teaches, but we must also hold students and parents accountable for their actions and engagement. True success happens when the school provides the tools and the family provides the standard.

5) Finances: Education is the largest budget item in Hamilton County. In what areas do you see room for improvement in its management, and how would you address these challenges?

Education is Hamilton County's largest budget item, yet it remains "top-heavy" while starting teacher salaries (roughly \$40,000–\$44,000) lag significantly below the national average. I will implement a "Classroom First" mandate, requiring 65–70% of all new revenue to fund teacher salaries and supplies before any new administrative roles are created. Additionally, inflationary pressures have turned deferred maintenance into a "money pit." Instead of simply asking for more taxpayer money, I would call for a Third-Party Efficiency Audit to find savings in procurement and vendor contracts. Through Radical Fiscal Transparency, I will ensure TISA funds directly impact student outcomes, prioritizing our children's proficiency over bureaucratic growth.

Independent Survey by



6) Preventing School Violence: In the aftermath of the 2023 Covenant School tragedy, Tennessee has strengthened school safety laws, but many parents continue to express concern in this area. What additional strategies or policy changes would you support in Hamilton County to prevent school shootings, foster community well-being, and protect the rights of students and staff?

In Hamilton County, parents are no longer satisfied with "compliance"; they want visible, proactive protection. I fully support the 2024 state law allowing for highly trained, transitioned SROs or vetted staff members to be armed, provided they undergo rigorous, ongoing tactical and psychological training. No school should ever be a "gun-free zone" that leaves children defenseless. Fostering community well-being requires trust, which is broken when security measures infringe on student privacy or staff rights. I would propose that each school has a dedicated Safety Liaison whose only job is to communicate safety protocols to parents. Parents should not be left in the dark, they should be partners in the safety plan.

7) Sex Ed Instruction: How should the Hamilton County school district select and source materials for sex education? Should this instruction be provided in schools, strictly at home, or a combination of both? Which organizations, if any, do you believe should be restricted from providing materials, and what is your rationale?

Hamilton County should source materials through Radical Transparency, ensuring all curriculum is vetted by the Board and fully accessible to parents online. I believe sex education is primarily a sensitive, moral conversation that belongs at home. While schools can provide basic, medically accurate biological instruction, it must remain an "opt-in" model, respecting the Parent as the most important stakeholder. I believe organizations with political or ideological agendas, should be restricted from providing materials or instruction. The rationale is simple: public schools must focus on objective academics, not social engineering. By removing outside activists and providing transparency, we hold the system accountable and empower parents to remain the constant authority in their children's lives.

8) Racial equity: How should the school district approach teaching racial equity, and what role, if any, should diversity, equity and inclusion play in the curriculum?

In Hamilton County, my approach is Equality of Opportunity, not Equity of Outcome. As a parent with a bi-racial daughter, I flatly refuse any curriculum that suggests she should be held to a lower standard or viewed through the lens of victimhood. Our schools must focus on Merit-Based Excellence, teaching the full, honest history of our nation without assigning collective guilt or "divisive concepts" prohibited by Tennessee law. Through Radical Transparency, I will ensure parents have digital access to all materials to verify that we are graduating independent thinkers judged by the content of their character. DEI frameworks that prioritize group identity over individual accountability have no place in our classrooms; we must demand the highest standards for every student.

9) Instruction of LGBTQ Issues within Schools: How should Hamilton County schools approach teaching topics related to LGBTQ issues?

Hamilton County Schools should be advocating for classroom time to be spent on core academic subjects—math, reading, and science—while leaving sensitive social and sexual topics to the home. There should be privacy and safety for all students. I support the maintenance of sex-segregated private spaces (bathrooms, locker rooms, and overnight field trip accommodations) based on biological sex to ensure the comfort and security of the student body. Tennessee law (SB 1810 / HB 2169) now mandates a high level of transparency regarding a student's gender identity. The school should never withhold information about a child's mental or emotional well-being from their parents.

10) Gender Identity Instruction: Should Gender Ideology be taught or encouraged within the public school system? Why, or why not?

There are several reasons I oppose teaching gender ideology in the curriculum. First, I believe that questions of identity, morality, and sexuality are the sole domain of the family. When schools "encourage" specific gender ideologies, they are overstepping their role and effectively "co-parenting" with the government. Second, many families hold deeply religious or traditional views on biology. Introducing gender ideology as "settled fact" creates a hostile environment for students who hold differing beliefs, violating the school's duty to remain ideologically neutral. Schools are not clinical environments. Encouraging children to question their biological sex without full parental involvement is a liability for the school and a risk to the child's long-term well-being.

11) Immigration Status: How should the school districts address enrollment concerning children of illegal immigrants? Is this a strain on our system that takes away opportunities from citizens and those with legal immigration status? Should additional documentation be required beyond the basic proof of address we have now?

The school districts must prioritize the citizens and legal residents it is primarily tasked to serve. Increasing enrollment of children with illegal status creates a significant strain on teachers, who are often forced to manage overcrowded classrooms and high-needs language barriers without additional support. This diversion of resources inevitably takes away opportunities from our legal students. While federal law currently limits documentation requirements, I believe we must explore every legal avenue to verify residency and status. We owe it to our families to ensure that taxpayer-funded resources are not being stretched thin at the expense of our own children's education.

County School Board Dist. 8

(In alphabetical order)



Sabrina Daniel



Sterling DuPré

Independent Survey by





Sabrina Daniel

Candidate Information

Email Address:	sabrinadaniel657@gmail.com
Occupation/Vocation:	teacher
Years as resident of:	15 years. raised in and went to East Ridge schools. current residence 2 years.
Campaign Website:	sabrinadaniel.com

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

The purpose of the school board is governance. They have 3 primary responsibilities: Hire and evaluate the performance of the Superintendent, set the budget to be presented to the Hamilton School Board for approval, and set policy. all 3 of these require a majority vote of 6 members. I believe the role should be to equip students with the knowledge to THRIVE in life. The primary focus is academics. However, students must possess qualities beyond academics: problem-solving, effective communication, cultural inclusivity, and resiliency.

Independent Survey by



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

My expertise is education. I have taught for 17 years locally every grade prek4-5th. I have a Masters and a specialist in School Administration. My platform includes: enhanced character education, classroom management, reading literacy, safe schools, examining mental health choices, and parental/guardian involvement.

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

Yes. Everyone can agree these commandments make life work, whether they are believers in Jewish or Christian faiths. Not all, but Most of Founding fathers looked to Scriptures when forming key documents. Most of parents/guardians would want their students to have exposure to The Ten Commandments. No one makes another human being believe anything. Historical facts should be taught: nation was founded because people wanted to worship God freely and the Founding Fathers relied on Scripture to guide important documents---Declaration, Constitution. Our students need to be taught the truth about History and the Ten Commandments are a part of that. FYI: Tennessee state law says that public school classrooms may hang The Ten Commandments, Declaration, and Constitution on their walls.

4) Parental Rights: What is the best way to involve parents in the student's education? Who do you believe is the most important stakeholder in a student's education?

Communication. Parent/teacher conferences. Short notes of information to parents via backpacks, parents who will volunteer, and general availability when parents have questions/issues they need to discuss. Depending on the parent, you might want another colleague to join the conversation. Kind truth spoken in love is the key to good parental relationships. The saying, "no one cares how much you know until they know how much you care." It is really, really true. In terms of stakeholders, the student is the first stakeholder followed by the parents/guardians, then teacher, and all of the community. We need an educated citizenry for America to thrive.

5) Finances: Education is the largest budget item in Hamilton County. In what areas do you see room for improvement in its management, and how would you address these challenges?

Our education budget is \$600,000,000 in Hamilton County Schools. That is a lot of money to steward for the tax-payers. I believe in examining our current budget for unneeded positions and programs. "The unexamined life is not worth living." The unexamined budget leads to positions that we do not need and programs that we don't know whether they are working or not. I would look carefully at the number of Central Office personnel. Are they all necessary? Students and teachers first. I choose to live within my means and I believe our school system should, too. We steward a reasonable budget and are mindful of the needs of tax-payers.

6) Preventing School Violence: In the aftermath of the 2023 Covenant School tragedy, Tennessee has strengthened school safety laws, but many parents continue to express concern in this area. What additional strategies or policy changes would you support in Hamilton County to prevent school shootings, foster community well-being, and protect the rights of students and staff?

Metal detectors are being tested at Soddy Daisy. Seem to be working. I would check cost and if reasonable, have a one way door into the school through a metal detector. police or resource officer packing and available to escort to the office when the metal detector goes off. Examine the item that set off the alarm and follow protocol, hopefully to taken to juvenile. All doors locked from the inside. Never ever have an outside door propped open. Safety drills regularly with students. Code color announced over the intercom when intruder or shooter is in building. Teachers follow established protocol.

7) Sex Ed Instruction: How should the Hamilton County school district select and source materials for sex education? Should this instruction be provided in schools, strictly at home, or a combination of both? Which organizations, if any, do you believe should be restricted from providing materials, and what is your rationale?

Traditional values regarding sex education. It should be a combination. Primarily parental responsibility. but since this doesn't always happen, our school system should teach the basics. No indoctrination of LGBTQ life choices.

8) Racial equity: How should the school district approach teaching racial equity, and what role, if any, should diversity, equity and inclusion play in the curriculum?

All people are equal and should be treated as such. We acknowledge that we are diverse with strength and weaknesses, treated equally, and include everything in the process.

9) Instruction of LGBTQ Issues within Schools: How should Hamilton County schools approach teaching topics related to LGBTQ issues?

They should not teach on these topics.

10) Gender Identity Instruction: Should Gender Ideology be taught or encouraged within the public school system? Why, or why not?

No. This is totally out of our lane of teaching academics.

11) Immigration Status: How should the school districts address enrollment concerning children of illegal immigrants? Is this a strain on our system that takes away opportunities from citizens and those with legal immigration status? Should additional documentation be required beyond the basic proof of address we have now?

Require same info as everyone. Does take away from our children. Many don't speak English.



Sterling DuPré

Candidate Information

Email Address:	sterling@voteforsterling.com
Occupation/Vocation:	News Analyst
Years as resident of:	5 years in East Ridge, Lifelong in the area
Campaign Website:	voteforsterling.com

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

The purpose of any county School Board is to manage the county's needs and resources to achieve the best educational outcome for the students and to safeguard taxpayer funds. The role of individual board members is to educate themselves about the challenges the county faces, educate their constituents about those challenges, and represent their district's concerns to the best of their ability.

Independent Survey by



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

Awareness of national political and cultural issues is my special skill, trained for years as a news analyst. Understanding deceptive language and determining the hidden meaning of policies is a special interest. I will undertake to root out cultural Marxism and America-hatred in our classrooms and administrations. My focus will be on producing classically educated, patriotic graduates who are poised to thrive in the world they enter as adults. One initiative I would like to undertake is to build a more comprehensive system to explain board issues to the community in plain language and enable community members to easily share concerns with their representative online.

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

Our laws, ordinances, and regulations do follow the moral principles of the Ten Commandments as a matter of course. The Decalogue is the foundation of the rule of law. The first, sixth, and tenth commandments have especially come under attack and must be reinforced. The God of the Bible is the only God that should be honored in the USA. Murder, even of babies in the womb, must be outlawed, and the encouragement of covetousness seen in phrases like "Eat the rich" must be resisted.

4) Parental Rights: What is the best way to involve parents in the student's education? Who do you believe is the most important stakeholder in a student's education?

Students themselves are the most important stakeholders in their own education. Those who are motivated to succeed can overcome difficulties and hardships, but those without motivation cannot be forced to succeed. "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink." Thankfully, good teachers can inspire students to find their motivation. Parents should be involved in every step of their child's education. The home will always be the most important learning environment. Parents should be assisted in ensuring that the classrooms their children are required by law to attend uphold the values of the home and the family.

5) Finances: Education is the largest budget item in Hamilton County. In what areas do you see room for improvement in its management, and how would you address these challenges?

Central office jobs are necessary but can be streamlined. In the past, schools operated with many fewer administrators. We can work towards a streamlined education administration again. Teachers are the most important school employees. Teacher shortages are the most critical issue to address. That can best be done by reducing other areas of the budget and paying teachers more. \$692 million is already a tremendous amount. Avoiding budget increases is my goal.

6) Preventing School Violence: In the aftermath of the 2023 Covenant School tragedy, Tennessee has strengthened school safety laws, but many parents continue to express concern in this area. **What additional strategies or policy changes would you support in Hamilton County to prevent school shootings, foster community well-being, and protect the rights of students and staff?**

The rollout of metal detectors in Hamilton County Schools is ongoing. Many will see this with dismay. Some correctly point out that external threats are hardly the main issue for most students day to day; students need to be protected from bullies inside the schools as well. However, the simple fact is that the unthinkable does occur. Brave School Safety Officers willing to stand between our children and those who would do them harm are the best protection. The best way to stop a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun.

7) Sex Ed Instruction: How should the Hamilton County school district select and source materials for sex education? Should this instruction be provided in schools, strictly at home, or a combination of both? Which organizations, if any, do you believe should be restricted from providing materials, and what is your rationale?

Sex education is best left to parents to decide when their child is ready to know the facts of life and what details are appropriate to share. For students whose parents do not inform them of the facts, our schools do include sex education, and that will continue. In that case, schools should share the clinical facts of life with abundant parental notification and consent. Any course that aims to teach a student to "explore their sexuality" should be banned without exception.

8) Racial equity: How should the school district approach teaching racial equity, and what role, if any, should diversity, equity and inclusion play in the curriculum?

Equity means ensuring equality of outcome. This is the philosophy that whoever trains the hardest and prepares the best for the marathon should finish at the exact same time as a non-athlete who walks the entire way. This philosophy has no place in our schools or our culture. Adults throughout history have failed to handle racial differences in a proper, Godly way; until they do, schools should focus on teaching academics: Math, Science, Reading, Writing, and History. DEI is a cultural rot that does not belong in our schools.

9) Instruction of LGBTQ Issues within Schools: How should Hamilton County schools approach teaching topics related to LGBTQ issues?

LGBTQ issues have no place in our curriculum.

10) Gender Identity Instruction: Should Gender Ideology be taught or encouraged within the public school system? Why, or why not?

No, it should not. God created man. Male and female, He created them. Children, especially those going through puberty, experience rapidly changing bodies and discomfort in those changes as a matter of universal human experience. Ideologically-compromised teachers who suggest that a student may have been born in the wrong body are scientifically nonsensical and dangerous. Gender ideology is a lie from the pit of hell.

Independent Survey by



11) Immigration Status: How should the school districts address enrollment concerning children of illegal immigrants? Is this a strain on our system that takes away opportunities from citizens and those with legal immigration status? Should additional documentation be required beyond the basic proof of address we have now?

In practice, our schools are required by state and federal law to enroll students regardless of immigration status. Hamilton County schools should comply with those laws. English as a Second Language classes should be offered as a mandatory course until students are competent enough to test into an ordinary grade. School board members, however, should not be complacent. Citizen students are having opportunities and resources redirected away from them and towards illegal immigrants. School board members must go above and beyond to raise the issue at the state and federal levels to change the law and ensure taxpayer funds are used to support American citizens, not illegal immigrants.

Independent Survey by



County School Board Dist. 9

(In alphabetical order)



Gary Kuehn



James B. Walker

Independent Survey by





Gary Kuehn

Candidate Information

Email Address:	garykuehnd9@gmail.com
Occupation/Vocation:	Retired
Years as resident of:	49 years Hamilton Co.
Military Background:	two sons that participated, Marines and Army
Campaign Website:	Garykuehnforschoolboard.com

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

By description, the county school board person represents their district stakeholders in creating and revising educational policy as the educational environment changes.

They also are tasked with budget oversight making sure dollars are used effectively for student learning and appropriate district operations.

Thirdly, hiring, evaluating, and working with the director of schools regarding operations.

However, it is much more than these three things if done correctly. It is about being a community liason between schools and the public if needed, helping provide equity and compliance with policy and law. It is also a position of service, to the school administrators, teachers, and especially students.

Independent Survey by



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

Currently as chairman of the Facility Committee for the past two years, I have worked diligently with the operations and maintenance departments of the school system to provide \$60 million dollars of renovations and repairs to all of our schools in the system. I would continue to work on this challenge faced by the MGT report/action plan provided to the school system and county government. I would also work with the CTE and Future Ready department to add more opportunities not only for our district 9 students but all students in the system for more post-graduate options for their future. Lastly, I am working with other board members to reduce testing time and allowing more teaching time.

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

I do believe currently that many of our government laws were inspired by the Ten Commandments. As a Christian, I try to follow this moral code. As a member of society, I value not only my religious liberty but preserving those of others. I believe in the right to pray in school but that freedom goes out to all regardless of religion. I believe we should teach and expect morality including honesty, respectfulness, and "The Golden Rule" to name a few. I believe it is important for our governing body to continue with democracy and maintain moral liberties and guidance for all.

4) Parental Rights: What is the best way to involve parents in the student's education? Who do you believe is the most important stakeholder in a student's education?

The best way to involve parents in the student's education is to let them help their students make more choices.

We should be creating more and better communication between schools and parents, especially at early ages. Sending home via paper or electronically, clear information of programs, speakers, and especially messages that they will share is important. Give parents the opt in choice rather than the opt out choice. Allow more visitation into schools. Share more about why they are learning something as much as what they are learning.

Both home and school shape the child so the importance of partnership between parents and schools/teachers must be given more time together through teacher selection and school planning.

5) Finances: Education is the largest budget item in Hamilton County. In what areas do you see room for improvement in its management, and how would you address these challenges?

Our budget, last year involved a large cut in many areas of the Budget. As we approach the new budget season we are already looking at where there might be room to reduce dollars so that those dollars can be added in other needed areas. We have found that allowing administrators at each school to have more autonomy in their budget of running their school can save overall millions of dollars. Individual school staff infrastructure decisions can make a huge impact in savings. The need to close facilities or combine facilities is an option that we will need to look at also to save big dollars.

Finally, the cut in some technology in early years will save dollars.

Independent Survey by



6) Preventing School Violence: In the aftermath of the 2023 Covenant School tragedy, Tennessee has strengthened school safety laws, but many parents continue to express concern in this area. What additional strategies or policy changes would you support in Hamilton County to prevent school shootings, foster community well-being, and protect the rights of students and staff?

The addition of SRD's or SSO's in all of our schools has been hugely impactful, but the need for a SRD AND a SRO is a need in all secondary schools due to the restrictions placed on the different type of security officer in daily events.

Improved software, not cameras, can help make our schools safer.

Also better more current equipment such as those used in athletic and entertainment events can also help. There are federal and private grants available for both equipment and software for systems. Improved lighting in all areas including parking lots and other facilities will help.

7) Sex Ed Instruction: How should the Hamilton County school district select and source materials for sex education? Should this instruction be provided in schools, strictly at home, or a combination of both? Which organizations, if any, do you believe should be restricted from providing materials, and what is your rationale?

Sex education in schools is a topic that needs to be continued because of the importance it plays on reducing and preventing sexually transmitted diseases, lowering sexual violence, and adolescent pregnancy. It is a topic that should be covered both at home and in school, but if a parent feels uncomfortable about having their child participate or do not feel their child is ready then they do not have to participate.

With regards to selection and sources of materials to be used, a selection committee of health services, teachers, and parents should review and select for the various age groups in our system. Improved and updated curriculum and training is a need for our state curriculum.

8) Racial equity: How should the school district approach teaching racial equity, and what role, if any, should diversity, equity and inclusion play in the curriculum?

The district should continue the approach they have taken with regards to racial equity. The curriculum of a course should include different and multiple perspectives. It should include various areas of oppression, achievements, and acceptances by all multiple cultures. It should not reopen division of culture that was created years and years ago to point blame at any other race, culture, or religion. This curriculum should be left in college level institutes where it is optional to take and those taking it have a more developed understanding of society.

9) Instruction of LGBTQ Issues within Schools: How should Hamilton County schools approach teaching topics related to LGBTQ issues?

NO, this is a topic that should not be taught in school but discussed in the home. However, I believe all individuals should be treated with respect.

10) Gender Identity Instruction: Should Gender Ideology be taught or encouraged within the public school system? Why, or why not?

NO, this is a topic that should not be taught at school but should be discussed in the home. However, I believe all individuals should be treated with respect.

11) Immigration Status: How should the school districts address enrollment concerning children of illegal immigrants? Is this a strain on our system that takes away opportunities from citizens and those with legal immigration status? Should additional documentation be required beyond the basic proof of address we have now?

The addition of non-English speaking immigrant students has put a strain on our education system due to the need of many more ENL (English New Language) than previous. However, these ENL students are not all illegal immigrants. Many have entered legally and must be educated. Currently the amount of dollars to determine illegal vs legal immigration in our system is greatly higher than just educating all that enter our schools. If we can identify those that are not legally in our country, we should, but the benefits of educating all is greater than not with regards to our juvenile system, and SNAP. Yes, more proof is needed to enter our schools but once in, we educate them.

Independent Survey by





James B. Walker

Candidate Information

Email Address:	electjameswalker@gmail.com
Occupation/Vocation:	Sales Manager
Years as resident of:	59
Campaign Website:	N/A

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

To be a Voice for the Students, Parents and Teachers across the County but specifically District 9!

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

Special Focus will be on Transparency for all "stakeholders". This includes Students, Parents, Employees of HCDE and all taxpayers in Hamilton County.

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

Yes! Whether you are Christian or not, the Ten Commandments provides a firm foundation for all!

Independent Survey by



4) Parental Rights: What is the best way to involve parents in the student's education? Who do you believe is the most important stakeholder in a student's education?

I believe Parents should be invited to visit during school hours. A number of parents don't feel welcome during the day. I understand we can't have parents "come and go" as they please but, I feel like there should be an easy way to schedule family visits.

5) Finances: Education is the largest budget item in Hamilton County. In what areas do you see room for improvement in its management, and how would you address these challenges?

HCDE seems to be "proud" of only having 8% of their employees at Central Office. These 8% account for 30% of Salaries. I believe we should look for ways to get more funds to the classroom level that directly affects our students.

6) Preventing School Violence: In the aftermath of the 2023 Covenant School tragedy, Tennessee has strengthened school safety laws, but many parents continue to express concern in this area. What additional strategies or policy changes would you support in Hamilton County to prevent school shootings, foster community well-being, and protect the rights of students and staff?

There is no "magic" answer for this area! I believe HCDE has done an admirable job in the area of Safety!

7) Sex Ed Instruction: How should the Hamilton County school district select and source materials for sex education? Should this instruction be provided in schools, strictly at home, or a combination of both? Which organizations, if any, do you believe should be restricted from providing materials, and what is your rationale?

Health Classes can be used to provide age-appropriate information on anatomy and reproductive health. All other Sex Education should be discussed at home.

8) Racial equity: How should the school district approach teaching racial equity, and what role, if any, should diversity, equity and inclusion play in the curriculum?

Tennessee enacted laws in 2025 to eliminate DEI practices in public schools. HCDE must follow these laws.

9) Instruction of LGBTQ Issues within Schools: How should Hamilton County schools approach teaching topics related to LGBTQ issues?

There is no place in Public Education to discuss Sexuality of any kind with minor children.

10) Gender Identity Instruction: Should Gender Ideology be taught or encouraged within the public school system? Why, or why not?

Absolutely not! There are two sexes, Male and Female. We should not teach our children to "pretend" anything else!

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11) Immigration Status: How should the school districts address enrollment concerning children of illegal immigrants? Is this a strain on our system that takes away opportunities from citizens and those with legal immigration status? Should additional documentation be required beyond the basic proof of address we have now?

I believe every child should be given an opportunity to learn; however, it must be done the correct way. It is definitely a "strain" on our resources. I would be willing to work to set up a "program" that would help these students get prepared to enroll in public schools while their parents are working toward gaining citizenship. This "prep" school could help these students learn to communicate with teachers and students by becoming more familiar with English language. The "prep" school could also teach Civics so that these children could understand how Our Government works.

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An advertisement for a training program. It features a 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.

An advertisement for the "choices" organization. It features the logo "choices" with a heart icon. Below the logo, it says "Saving and transforming lives since 1985". There are three bullet points: "VISIT TEAM.CHOICESCHATTANOOGA.ORG", "FOLLOW TEAM.CHOICESCHATT" with Facebook and Instagram icons, and "GET INVOLVED!". A photo of two young children sitting back-to-back is shown at the bottom.

An advertisement for "july 2 life .com". It features the website name in a colorful, cursive font. To the right is a small American flag icon. Below the name, it says "3 million letters to end abortion" with a background image of the U.S. Capitol building.

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