

# Georgia insight

Sue Ella Deadwyler  
www.georgiainsight.org  
"She hath done what she could."  
Mark 14:8a  
"...and having done all ... stand."  
Ephesians 6:13c

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## No Perfect Choice? Select the "Less-Bad" Candidate, and Vote!

- In the 1986 race for the U.S. House of Representatives, Arlan Strangeland of Barnesville, MN, defeated Collin Peterson by 142 votes out of 186,320 – *less than one vote per precinct*.
- Pennsylvania 1974 – in a special election in the 12<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, John Murtha defeated Harry Fox by a total of 122 votes. There were 430 precincts in the district and Murtha won by a margin of *one-fourth of a vote per precinct!*
- Presidential Election 1960 – John F. Kennedy defeated Richard M. Nixon by 113,000 votes. That was about *one-half vote per precinct*.
- Texas 1948 – Lyndon B. Johnson was elected to the U.S. Senate by 87 votes out of 988,295 votes cast in 6,000 precincts. That computes to *1/69<sup>th</sup> of a vote per precinct*.
- In 1918, Woodrow Wilson carried the State of California *less than one vote per precinct*. California's electoral vote made the difference and Wilson was re-elected President.<sup>1</sup>

## Know nothing about the candidates? Party Platforms reflect their positions.

### Healthcare

#### Democrat Platform

Move the nation closer to universal nationalized health care financed by the federal government.

#### Republican Platform

Allow all Americans to own their health insurance, including Medical Savings Accounts.

### Second Amendment

Support a long list of regulations on gun ownership and the purchase of guns, plus a "photo license I.D." system.

Support "the constitutional right to bear arms." Oppose gun registration and licensing of gun owners.

### Abortion

Strongly and unequivocally supports *Roe v. Wade* and a woman's right to make decisions regarding her pregnancy, including a safe and legal abortion, regardless of ability to pay. We oppose any and all efforts to weaken or undermine that right.

We affirm that the unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life which cannot be infringed. We oppose using taxes to promote or do abortions or fund organizations that perform or advocate it and will not fund or subsidize health care that includes abortion coverage.

### Family & Morality

"Support the full inclusion of gay and lesbian families" with financial benefits. Punish "hate crimes." Support Affirmative Action.

Support "marriage as the legal union of one man and one woman." Oppose giving sexual preference any "special legal protection or standing in law."

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<sup>1</sup> Source: U.D. Roberts, Brentwood Publishers

<sup>2</sup> Source: *Phyllis Schlafly Report*, Eagle Forum

## ***Calling it “medical marijuana” suggests it’s good for you!***

*“We are concerned about substance abuse. We’re concerned with dispensaries. When dispensaries grow, abuse expands. Black market is already in other states. Control of caretakers and dispensaries is unconstitutional. There are big, big dollars behind this. There’s lots of money involved. Look at the people who are here. They are not children. The term ‘medical marijuana’ is a negative ‘norming’ thing. Since states have passed medical marijuana laws, the number of youths using marijuana has gone up. The message implied is, ‘Since it’s medically good for you, it must be okay to smoke.’”*

– Ellen Gerstein, Gwinnett Coalition for Health, Health & Human Services

Georgia’s Joint Study Committee on Prescription of Medical Cannabis for Serious Medical Conditions<sup>1</sup> met August 27<sup>th</sup> at the State Capitol for an overview of medical marijuana laws. The next meeting on October 1<sup>st</sup> at Georgia Gwinnett College featured law enforcement professionals – police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecuting attorneys, a health coalition director, federal anti-drug abuse agent, and prevention of alcohol and drug use.

Unless the schedule changes, the committee will meet next on October 22<sup>nd</sup> at Georgia Regents University and again on November 12<sup>th</sup> at the Georgia State Capitol. Both meetings are scheduled for 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. and are open to the public.

Statements from the October 1<sup>st</sup> meeting were to-the-point! None want marijuana legalized in Georgia, providing objections/suggestions in great detail. This is the gist of their comments.

**Georgia Sheriff’s Association Executive Director, Sheriff Wiley Griffin of Decatur County**, opposes legalization of recreational marijuana for everyone and was concerned that H.B. 885, which died in the 2014 session, did not include penalties for violators.

He said, “Cultivation is our biggest concern, growing is the problem. If cultivation becomes a fact and it’s regulated, we want the area agency to be authorized to go in and look at any time.”

**Monroe County Sheriff John Bittick and Frank Rotondo, Executive Director, Police Chiefs Association**, were the next speakers. Mr. Rotondo said, “H.B. 885<sup>2</sup> was not well crafted. We were not extremely pleased with the last version.” He explained that his board is deeply opposed to the bill and suggested continued investigation. [Since H.B. 885 died, a new bill may be written for 2015.]

He continued, “The marijuana of the 70s is not the marijuana of today.” He wants the THC level kept low and the product available as injectable only, not transferrable from one to another. The real concern is a segue of medical marijuana into recreational marijuana. It should be administered only for chronic pain and it must be limited. If legislation is introduced, it must define “chronic pain” and place strict control on specialist doctors. Background checks must be in the bill and required by the bill. There must be NO legalization of marijuana. The level for DUI must be firmly set.

Police chiefs would like local control and insist on careful vetting of caretakers of marijuana users. He reminded the committee that Colorado is seeing a black market for marijuana.

**Jack Killorin, Director of the Atlanta High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) Program, GBI**, said “The number of dispensaries is a problem. Authorizing for a year is too long. Colorado may be sending cannabidoil to other states. What is the scope of production to be required, the means of production? Reduce the THC. What do we do with high THC? What about edibles? The respiratory symptomology was alarming. Street marijuana is running 12.7%. The term ‘medical marijuana’ says government sanctions it, messaging, ‘It’s okay.’”

***“We cannot accept a law that causes us to violate our oath of office.”***

– Danny Porter, District Attorney, Gwinnett County

**Chief Dennis Bell, Georgia Peace Officers Association (75 Members)** asked, “What will we do with the federal law? Throw it out? If so, it’s unethical, not acceptable to use medical marijuana. We know a lot about morphine, but what do we know about marijuana? If we open this up, it should be only the oil. It would be Pandora’s Box. What will the cultivation law be? It should be grown indoors under strict supervision.

**Dr. Gregg Raduka, Director of Prevention, Council on Alcohol & Drugs, Georgia Marijuana Abuse Prevention Collaborative,** wants the committee to draw a distinction between medical and recreational marijuana and narrow the medical. Legal marijuana revenue is \$3 billion in the U.S., projected to double by 2018. For every dollar of alcohol and tobacco revenue, the social cost is \$10. California, Colorado and Washington have gone from narrow medical use to recreational. Amendment 2 in Florida means defacto legalization. Anyone of any age can use marijuana for medical use.

**Danny Porter, Gwinnett County District Attorney, Prosecuting Attorney’s Council,** said immediately, “Don’t use the term ‘medical marijuana.’ It’s a mistake to say that. We offer the New York solution. A strict control of a medically approved substance strictly controlled in limited quantities. We support *legitimate* medical care.

“What you are contemplating is a violation of federal law, a certain amount of walking a high wire, fine line, or loss of certification. This is not the end. This is only the beginning. We are stepping off the first step. Colorado increased the rate of DUI and emergency room visits increased. For an example, video poker started with entertainment [now look what it is].

“In Colorado, individuals with prescriptions can choose the kind of marijuana they want. Colorado has privately operated dispensaries to choose strengths of marijuana oils, vaporizers. There is no standard for DUI. There’s conflict with Colorado medical marijuana and federal employment law. No immunity from liability is given in a dispensary. No level of THC is given to determine impairment. The Washington bill sets a THC standard for impairment.

“We cannot accept a law that causes us to violate our oath of office. Caregivers should be carefully defined. The manufacturing process must be secured. What is the dosage strength? Private product must be banned and conditions limited. Ban off-the-books. Limit cannabis to certain health conditions. Make it criminal to abuse. Make it a predominantly medical issue given to children. Law enforcement is a separate issue.”

**ACTION – (a) Ask the committee NOT to create a marijuana bill WITHOUT incorporating these law enforcement suggestions. (b) Ask your senator and representative to vote NO on a cannabis bill WITHOUT SUCH restraints.**

**Did you know?** HHS claims it’s perfectly legal to use food stamps to buy marijuana. Senator Sessions of Alabama said, “I intend to introduce legislation to address this problem ... [follow up with HHS and take steps] to stop this dangerous misuse of taxpayer-funded benefits.”

**Georgia.** In 2012 the Georgia General Assembly passed H.B. 861 to establish drug testing for each person applying for TANF, which is temporary welfare assistance to needy families. Teen parents must personally comply with the required drug test, if they don’t live with their parent, legal guardian or other caretaker who is an adult relative. Would this law be changed?

<sup>1</sup> Senators Renee Unterman, 45<sup>th</sup> and Representative Allen Peake, 141<sup>st</sup>, Co-Chair; Members: Senators Dean Burke, 11<sup>th</sup>; Butch Miller, 49<sup>th</sup>; Curt Thompson, 5<sup>th</sup>; Representatives Micah Gravley, 67<sup>th</sup>; Rich Golick, 40<sup>th</sup>; Margaret Kaiser, 59<sup>th</sup>

<sup>2</sup> H.B. 885 was introduced in the 2014 legislative session but did not pass. It would have legalized medical marijuana.

## *Questions on the November 4<sup>th</sup> Ballot*

### **Two Proposed Constitutional Amendments, One State-wide Referendum Ballots may contain additional questions pertinent to local residents.**

H.B. 788 authorized a state-wide referendum to give an ad valorem tax exemption for property owned by the University System of Georgia, but operated by a third party. Such arrangements would not constitute special franchises. If approved the following would become law:

*“All interests in property on a campus of the Board of Regent of the University System of Georgia primarily used for student housing or parking held by a private party that is contractually obligated to operate such property primarily for the use or benefit of a public college or university shall be considered to be public property within the meaning of this paragraph, provided that such interest of the private party resulted from a competitive procurement.”* [H.B. 788 passed the Senate 44-7 on 3-18-14. The House passed it 166-5 on 2-26-14.]

#### *Question on the Ballot*

YES      “Shall property owned by the University System of Georgia and utilized by  
 NO      providers of college and university student housing and other facilities  
continue to be exempt from taxation to keep costs affordable?”

S.R. 415 proposes an amendment to the *Constitution of the State of Georgia* to prohibit the General Assembly from increasing the maximum state income tax rate. If a majority of ballots cast approve, the State Constitution would be amended with the following paragraph:

*“Paragraph IV. Increase in state income tax rate prohibited. The General Assembly shall not increase the maximum marginal rate of the state income tax above that in effect on January 1, 2015.”* [S.R. 415 passed the Senate 42-13 on 3-20-14. It passed the House 119-54 on 3-18-14.]

#### *Question on the Ballot*

YES      “Shall the Constitution of Georgia be amended to prohibit the General  
 NO      Assembly from increasing the maximum state income tax rate?”  
[NOTE: Reportedly, Georgia has the highest maximum marginal tax bracket in the U.S.]

H.R. 1183 proposes an amendment to the *Constitution of the State of Georgia* to provide that the General Assembly by general law may impose additional penalties or fees for the offense of reckless driving and may allocate such additional penalties or fees to the Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund to meet any and all costs, or any portion of the costs, of providing care and rehabilitative services to citizens of this state who have survived neurotrauma with head or spinal cord injuries. Current Georgia law allows, but does not require, judges to impose these additional fines for driving under the influence (DUI) of alcohol or drugs.

*If passed by a majority of voters the words “or reckless driving” would be added to the current law concerning penalties and fees for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.*

[NOTE: H.R. 1183 passed the House 147-6 on 3-18-14. The Senate passed it 49-4 on the same day.]

#### *Question on the Ballot*

YES      “Shall the Constitution of Georgia be amended to allow additional reckless  
 NO      driving penalties or fees to be added to the Brain and Spinal Injury Trust  
Fund to pay for care and rehabilitative services for Georgia citizens who have survived  
neurotrauma with head or spinal cord injuries.” [Underlining provided by the editor.]

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