



2020 Georgia Federal Candidate  
Questionnaire

Karen C. Handel

*Background Information*

**Education:** Some College

**Where is home?** Roswell, GA

**Do you currently hold a public office? If so, how long have you held your current office?** No

**Past public offices held:** US Congress – GA6 (115<sup>th</sup> Congress), GA Secretary of State, Fulton County Commission Chairman

**Additional background information you'd like to share:**

*Georgia in General*

**Briefly share your qualifications for the office.**

With significant experience in the private sector and in public service, I have the experience to advance the policy measures needed to navigate these difficult times. In Congress, I served on the Judiciary and Education/Workforce Committees, as well as on the Joint Economic Committee. I helped pass the largest tax cuts in decades – that fueled an unprecedented era of economic prosperity. I also was part of the Judiciary Committee team that crafted the immigration reform bill – that included a workable guest worker program to support our agriculture industry. As Secretary of State, I implemented photo ID and successfully oversaw the 2008 presidential election (with record turnout) while also modernizing the agency and cutting spending. As Fulton Commission Chairman, I addressed a \$100M budget deficit without raising taxes.

These are serious times that require a serious leader with a track record of getting things done in difficult situations. I have a record of doing just that.



***Please indicate the reasons you are seeking election and your priorities, overarching policy interests, and any solutions for district-specific challenges.***

I know that representing the people of GA6 and the state of Georgia is NOT about my issues and interests. Rather, it is about being a champion for the issues and interests that affect families in GA6 and across our state. Priorities for the next Congress must be: 1) getting people back to work and rebooting the economy; 2) addressing health care costs and access; 3) immigration



reform that includes a workable Guest Worker Program; 4) reducing our dependence on China for critical pharmaceutical and PPE manufacturing and strengthening the US supply chain (including for food).

### *Farm Bill*

***With commodity prices still hovering at historically low levels and so much uncertainty in the agriculture industry, the farm bill – and the safety net it provides – is as vital as it has ever been for Georgia farmers. While the current farm bill runs through 2023, what do you see as the biggest priorities for Georgia in the next reauthorization? Are there specific programs or policies that you believe should be improved?***

Congress should consider whether a new farm bill is needed prior to 2023 – in light of the negative forecasts for the commodity markets and the continued economic turmoil due to Covid. Key priorities should continue to be export assistance, incentives for research and innovation, adequate crop insurance, and broadband expansion. Additionally, the ability of organizations, like the GA Farm Bureau, to offer health insurance under the “association plans” provisions should be maintained. Further, we need to fight onerous regulatory and unrealistic climate change initiatives, such as the Green New Deal. My commitment is that I will work with your organization and Ag Industry leaders, like Rep. Austin Scott, on the Farm Bill and other issues that impact our Ag Sector and food security.

### *Trade*

***It is no secret that farmers have been negatively impacted by the recent trade disputes with many of our closest trading partners, though trade mitigation efforts like the Market Facilitation Program have helped many weather the tough times. With the finalization of several new trade deals, many Georgia farmers are breathing a sigh of relief. However, the deals must be enforced, and our trading partners must be held accountable for the promises they’ve made. How do you plan to play a role going forward in ensuring that countries like China and Japan follow through with their free trade and agricultural purchases commitments?***

Trade agreements are only as good as the enforcement. The US must be aggressive in holding our trading partners accountable and bringing enforcement cases. With oversight responsibilities, Congress must remain diligent in meeting its oversight



obligations and ensuring transparency. The key is identifying measures to hold China, Japan, Mexico, etc., accountable without adversely affecting American businesses – as tariffs generally do. Also, maintaining a close dialogue with the US Trade Representative is important. Producers in our state know what works and what does not work for them, and it is a Members of Congress' role to communicate that information to the US Trade Representative.



***The USMCA agreement was welcome news for many Georgia farmers. However, as you know, certain Georgia growers remain concerned about the lack of an enforceable remedy in the deal for seasonal and perishable products in antidumping and countervailing duty proceedings. We know that the Georgia congressional delegation worked very hard to extract a commitment from the Trump Administration to address the issue, and we are grateful for those efforts. But work remains on this issue. What is your goal moving forward to deal with the dumping of fresh fruits and vegetables during Georgia growing seasons?***

Indeed, the USMCA is a historic step forward for American businesses, including those in the agriculture sector. However, Mexico's unfair – and illegal -- trade practices continue to have a negative impact on seasonal growers, especially blueberry and vegetable producers here in Georgia. The Trump Administration has pledged to address this gap in the USMCA within the next 60 days, and US Trade Ambassador Lighthizer must make good on this commitment.

Ultimately, the US needs a specific agreement with Mexico to address the unique situation of seasonal vegetable and fruit producers across various geographic regions. In the meantime, the Department of Commerce and International Trade Commission should revise requirements for petitions to investigate illegal subsidies and dumping by Mexico to take into consideration that the harm experienced by vegetable and fruit growers is seasonal and geographic (rather than national and year-round). Lastly, Congress plays a significant role in oversight of federal agencies and activities and must be aggressive in this role.

### *Ag Labor*

***Agriculture jobs are difficult and undesired by many. The working conditions and seasonality of the jobs are not what most Georgians prefer, and agriculture relies heavily on a reliable migrant labor workforce, such as H-2A. How do you intend to balance the enforcement of immigration laws while helping provide access to the workers agriculture needs?***

Your question provides the answer – balance. We must have strong border security and enforce our laws. At the same time, we need to modernize many aspects of our immigration system to meet today's workforce needs. In Congress, while serving on the Judiciary Committee, I supported merit-based immigration and worked to advance immigration reforms such as a practical Guest Worker Program



and modernizations to the H-2A visa system. I will continue to seek practical solutions that support workforce requirements and look forward to working with the GA Farm Bureau on these important issues.