



2020 Georgia State House & Senate Candidate Questionnaire

Joe Reed

*Background Information*

**Education:** Bachelor's Degree from Georgia State University in Early Childhood, Master's Degree from Georgia State University in Special Education, Education Specialist Degree from Georgia State University in School Administration and Supervision

**Where is home?** Jackson, GA

**Do you currently hold a public office? If so, how long have you held your current office?** I have never held elected office.

**Past public offices held:** None

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

My wife and I have five children and five grandchildren. I have been a public-school teacher and principal for 35 years and a GED teacher for five years in Burruss prison and the Technical College of Central Georgia.

*Georgia in General*

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

I am a United States and Georgia citizen and have lived in Georgia for 52 years. I have benefitted from the policies and practices of the State of Georgia and I very much want to make my own contribution to future generations. I refuse to accept any donations for my campaign.



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

I am running as an Independent to be a State Representative for House District 129 because both parties have failed to work together in the best interests of their constituents. I am specifically interested in cost-effective, quality education, internet accessibility particularly for rural Georgia, rural healthcare and overall support for families.

### *Agriculture & Rural Georgia*

***What do you think are the three greatest issues facing Georgia agriculture?***

- a. Finding employees at peak times
- b. Changing business climate as the population makeup in a community changes
- c. Internet availability to support modern business practices

***What is your position on the Conservation Use Value Assessment (CUVA) for property taxes and the Georgia Agriculture Tax Exemption (GATE) program for exemption from sales tax for input costs? Do you support these programs? Do you believe any changes to the programs are necessary? If so, what and why?***

CUVA is a reduction of the ad valorem tax approved by the local county to “conserve” property as the county determines. It benefits large landholders and some corporate farmers. It seems to be indicative of tax favoritism and a form of corporate welfare. If a county chooses to grant this tax relief to certain property owners, it’s their business. But they should not complain about a reduced tax base.

GATE is a sales tax exemption for the purchase of farm equipment. It benefits farmers and the equipment manufacturers and their sales offices. When we pick different entities to benefit from reductions in taxation, we are practicing corporate welfare. Why should another business or taxpayer have to pick up the slack for the lost revenue from this sale that is not taxed?



***House Bill 545, also known as the Right to Farm Bill, was supported by all of the major agricultural organizations in the state throughout the 2019-2020 Legislative Biennium. Does traditional agriculture and our state's right to farm laws deserve protection, and what role do you think the State should play in such protections?***

Is this a solution in search of a problem? Are there nuisance lawsuits against farmers in Georgia? How many? Why? What have been the verdicts? I need more information before I can respond appropriately to this question. I know land use practices change as metropolitan areas expand. Usually in those cases landowners can benefit by selling their land for more lucrative purposes. In rural Georgia the opposite is happening as some counties are losing population.

***Animal agriculture is a significant part of Georgia's economy. Animal rights groups are enacting laws around the country to regulate animal husbandry practices. Do you support the laws being enacted, which posture animal rights equal to human rights, or do you see these laws as threats to Georgia's agriculture interests?***

Ethical and healthy treatment of animals is important; however, animals do not have equal rights to people.