

# DEKALB CITIZENS

— ADVOCACY COUNCIL —

November 12, 2019

The Honorable Emanuel Jones  
Georgia State Senate  
District 10  
420-D State Capitol  
Atlanta, GA 30334

The Honorable Karla Drenner  
Georgia House of Representatives  
District 85  
507-H Coverdell Legislative Office Building  
Atlanta, GA 30334

Dear Senator Jones and Representative Drenner:

I am writing on behalf of the DeKalb Citizens Advocacy Council, for which I currently serve as Chair. According to a recent article in the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* you intend to create a task force to address the ethics issue for the 2020 session. We also have seen your joint press release which states “the task force will gather information and provide recommendations on legislation to be introduced that will enhance DeKalb County’s ethics procedures.”

We hope you intend to keep the task force focused on the immediate issue at hand: revising the appointment process. Based on the delegation’s prior experience in trying to revise the 2015 Ethics Act in 2017 and 2019, it appears that going beyond this “fix” is what gets ethics legislation in trouble.

Other issues can be dealt with through the Charter Review Commission and/or in separate legislation. In order to get an ethics board up and running, the board appointment process must be addressed now, and, if it is determined that a referendum must or should be held in this matter, then passing a bill before the March primary election is of paramount importance. Time is of the essence.

As CEO Thurmond stated in his press release, “The current state of affairs is unacceptable.” What makes that so is the lack of a constitutional appointment process. We must focus on that issue alone. The best fix is a simple fix. Your leadership will determine success or failure.

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We respectfully ask that you include a representative of the DeKalb Citizens Advocacy Council on the task force. As the November 5<sup>th</sup> vote demonstrated, citizens will look to us for an opinion on any DeKalb County ethics legislation. We hope to be able to convey to them that the process was transparent and that we are in support of the resulting legislation.

Cordially,

Mary S. Hinkel  
Chair, DeKalb Citizens Advocacy Council, Inc.

cc: DeKalb County House and Senate Delegation Members  
DeKalb Board of Commissioners  
Chief Executive Officer, DeKalb County