

For Immediate Release

DeKalb Ethics Board Issue Highlights Importance of Voter Education

[DeKalb County, GA]—As a follow up to last year’s successful voter education campaign to inform DeKalb County voters on the deeply flawed ethics referendum on their ballot, the DeKalb Citizens Advocacy Council (DeKalb Citizens) issued a questionnaire to all candidates who qualified to run for a seat as a member of the DeKalb County legislative delegation. The nine-question survey asked candidates to state their positions on reconstituting the ethics board, which has been without a quorum since a State Supreme Court decision in 2018.

“We believe that it is more important than ever to know about who and what is on your ballot,” states Mary Hinkel, Chair of DeKalb Citizens. “Given the record number of mail-in ballots expected for the June election, voters have a unique opportunity to become informed on a candidate’s position while sheltering in place.”

The questionnaire was sent via email, with follow-up communication to assure the highest response rate possible. Twenty-one of the 46 registered candidates completed the questionnaire. The vast majority of responding candidates, which included incumbents, agree that:

- a bill should be passed that remedies the appointments to the Board of Ethics in order to allow the board to get up and running as soon as possible;
- the Board of Ethics should be completely independent and have sole authority over the Ethics office and operations, including its policies and procedures; and
- direct access to the Ethics office is the most appropriate path for employees to express concerns about ethics violation.

These results are consistent with the strong message sent by DeKalb voters when they supported by 92% the establishment of the independent ethics board in 2015 and rejected by 61.3% the gutting of that same board in 2019.

“We appreciate the candidates who took the time to respond to this questionnaire and for the thoughtfulness of their responses, and we encourage all voters to view these results on our website,” concluded Hinkel. “As stated in the 2013 DeKalb County Grand Jury Special Report on Ethics, ‘Ethics provides the roadmap for behavior that promotes essential public trust in government’. Citizens of this county want an independent functioning ethics board.”

###

For more information, visit www.dekalbcitizens.org.
About DeKalb Citizens Advocacy Council

The DeKalb Citizens Advocacy Council (DeKalb Citizens) is registered as a nonprofit corporation in the state of Georgia and has filed an application for recognition of exemption under IRS Section 501(c)4. DeKalb Citizens Advocacy Council is a group of community members from throughout DeKalb County, Georgia, that formed a ballot committee to defeat the revised ethics act, which was on the ballot for the November 5, 2019 general election. DeKalb Citizens’ mission is to educate the citizens of DeKalb County about county governance issues and to advocate for informed citizen engagement. The organization’s members research topics, including filing open records requests and seeking out best practices from other jurisdictions. The organization does not endorse candidates. The goal is for DeKalb County to model excellence in citizen engagement and county responsiveness to citizen concerns. DeKalb Citizens does not endorse candidates. www.dekalbcitizens.org.

Media Contact:

Mary Hinkel
maryhinkel@comcast.net
(404) 312-8646

Martha Pacini
marthapacini@gmail.com
(404) 285-7042