



GEEARS
GEORGIA EARLY EDUCATION
ALLIANCE FOR READY STUDENTS



2020 Georgia Voter Guide

on Early Care and Learning





GEEARS

Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization whose mission is to support high-quality early learning and healthy development for Georgia's youngest children, from birth to five, by championing policies, promoting innovative and evidence-based practices, and building public will.

Our vision is that all Georgia children will enter kindergarten prepared to succeed and be on a path to “read to learn” by third grade.

To learn more, visit www.geears.org.

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This election cycle is unlike any that has come before.

Against the backdrop of a global pandemic and widespread unrest surrounding publicized instances of racial inequity, Georgia voters across the state will elect candidates to all levels of government, including the President and the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives.

The winners of this year's elections will be positioned to implement equitable public policies that will directly impact the future development and well-being of Georgia's youngest children.

We have long recognized the importance of the early years to a child's overall development, but now more than ever we must work to ensure our youngest and most vulnerable Georgians can learn and grow in healthy, nurturing environments.

This election provides an opportunity to emphasize the importance of the earliest years of a child's life and hold our public servants accountable to drive change and create positive, equitable outcomes for all our youngest Georgians.

We have created this voter guide in order to empower voters across the political spectrum to make informed decisions at the polls.

WHAT WE KNOW

BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

The first three years of life represent the **most rapid period of brain development**, and experiences during these years critically shape future development. Safe and stable early experiences and relationships can set the foundation for later emotional wellbeing and social competency, which contribute to future success in school, the workplace, and the broader community.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Economic growth depends on smart investments, such as investing in the early learning needs of our youngest and most vulnerable. James J. Heckman, a distinguished economics professor and Nobel Memorial Prize winner, argues that early learning is a powerful and cost-effective investment that helps mitigate poverty's negative consequences on child development and adult opportunity. His research shows that **high-quality, comprehensive early learning programs yield a 13% return on investment** in the form of better education, health, economic, and social outcomes.

Yet many families struggle to afford child care, with the average annual cost of infant care in Georgia exceeding yearly tuition at a four-year public college. Investing in high-quality, affordable child care programs has a two-generation impact, promoting the educational success and economic stability of the whole family.

ENDURING EFFECT ON EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

Research shows that access to **high-quality early learning is one of the most reliable interventions available to drive student achievement**. Children who attend high-quality early learning programs are more likely to read on grade-level by third grade, graduate high school, attend college, and obtain employment. They are also less likely to need behavioral interventions and become involved in the criminal justice system.

FAMILY SUPPORTS

Young children develop in the context of communities and families. Safe, supportive, and stable environments promote healthy growth and development. All Georgia

families, and especially those facing economic instability, benefit from resources that promote their own health and stability and their children's healthy development. Such supports are particularly important during a child's first years of life.

Paid family leave—spanning sick, parental, and medical leave—is critical for allowing families to take time off to care for their child, another family member, or themselves and for supporting parents' continued participation in the workforce. The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) requires some employers to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to eligible employees. Although leaders are increasingly recognizing the importance of paid family leave, **only an estimated 17% of U.S. workers had access to paid family leave through their employer** in 2018. Hourly wage, part-time, and low-wage workers are significantly less likely to have access to paid family leave.

Likewise, evidence-based voluntary home visiting programs give parents the tools necessary to nurture a happy, healthy child. However, **only 20 of Georgia's 159 counties currently has access to a home visiting program.**



THE LANDSCAPE FOR YOUNG CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN 2020

CHILD CARE CHALLENGES IN THE WAKE OF COVID-19

The COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated many of the problems already facing the child care industry. Families have long struggled to access affordable high-quality options, and providers have faced slim margins and precarious financial situations.

When surveyed in late March 2020, 29% of participating Georgia child care providers indicated that they would not be able to survive closing for more than two weeks without significant public investment and support that would allow them to retain staff, pay rent, and cover other fixed expenses. Forty percent of those responding indicated that enrolled families were unable to pay fees or co-pays.

Before the pandemic, child care challenges in Georgia led to at least \$1.75 billion in losses in economic activity annually, according to an analysis by GEEARS

and the Metro Atlanta Chamber. Over a quarter of the parents surveyed reported a significant disruption to their or a family member's employment (quitting, not taking, or changing a job) in the past year as a result of child care challenges. This number will balloon if child care providers are forced to close due to lack of funding and more parents struggle to make ends meet.

Now more than ever, high-quality, affordable child care is a key factor in enabling parents to participate in the workforce. As our country moves through the various phases of recovery and reopening the economy, significant funding is needed to stabilize the child care sector, support the workforce, and ensure that there is a child care system to which families can safely return.

STRUGGLING FAMILIES

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused hardship for young children and their families. According to the Census Household Pulse Survey, families with children have been hit harder financially, with many experiencing lost income and food shortages. Fifty-two percent of Georgians reported experiencing loss in employment income, and 12.4% of Georgians reported experiencing food scarcity as of late June 2020.

In addition, although the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FCCRA) expanded paid sick and family



In 2019, only 31% of third graders who were eligible for free/reduced school lunch scored proficient or higher on the Georgia Milestones English Language Arts assessment.

leave for many employees impacted by COVID-19, many still do not have access to the paid leave they need to lower the risk of spreading of the virus.

Policymakers must prioritize the needs of Georgia's youngest children and their families during this time to prevent profound and long-term effects on children's development.

ONGOING IMPACTS OF RACIAL AND ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

In 2019, only 31% of third graders who were eligible for free/reduced school lunch scored proficient or higher on the Georgia Milestones English Language Arts assessment, compared to 66% of students who were not eligible for free/reduced school lunch. Furthermore, only 27% of Black and 31% of Hispanic third graders scored proficient or higher, compared to 57% of white third graders. Disparities in opportunity begin long before students reach third grade, affecting the youngest Georgians and their families. As the state and nation continue to grapple with long-standing racial and economic inequities, our elected officials must work toward creating lasting change that leads to more equitable outcomes for Georgia's youngest learners—starting from birth.



QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK CANDIDATES

How will you help create safe and stable communities where infants and toddlers thrive, particularly as families face new challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic?

Is high-quality early learning a priority for you? If so, why?

What skills and experiences have prepared you to lead and be a champion for infants, toddlers, and their families?

How will you invest in and champion policies, programs, and services that support all young children and families?

46TH

Rank in overall child health, according to the Annie E. Casey foundation

14.8%

Of income-eligible families receiving childcare assistance support.

BOTTOM 10%

Rank for infant mortality, low birthweight, preterm birth, and maternal mortality.

What will you do to support healthy moms, healthy pregnancies, and healthy babies?

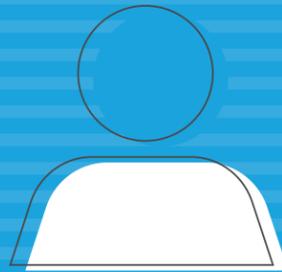
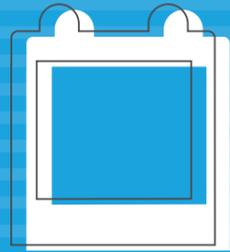
Childcare makes up 40% of a low-income family's budget.

How will you ensure that families have access to affordable childcare, particularly as a growing number of parents are affected by the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic?

What will you do to promote equitable access to resources and services that support infants, toddlers, families, and schools?

What actions will you take to support and inform a comprehensive, well-funded early childhood system that connects health, education, and child welfare?

GENERAL VOTER INFORMATION



2020 GENERAL ELECTION	Where to Register to Vote	My Voter Page
Dates to Remember	Use this site to:	Use this page to check:
October 5 Voter Registration Deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register to vote 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registration information on file with the county office
October 12-30 Early Voting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Edit to current registration record 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See elected officials, and sample ballot for upcoming election
November 3 General election	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check if you are registered to vote 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poll and early voting locations
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voter registration, mail-in application and ballot, and provisional ballot status

Consider Voting Early!
 DATES AND HOURS VARY BY LOCATION. CHECK THE [My Voter Page](#)

ABSENTEE VOTING

Voting as early as possible helps make sure that your vote gets counted. You do not need to provide a reason to vote by absentee ballot in Georgia.

Even if you received absentee ballots for the primary election in June or runoff election in August, you must complete a separate application in order to receive a ballot for the general election in November.***

1. Request your ballot for both elections as soon as possible, as it may take a while to process. Request your absentee ballot online [here](#).
2. Once you receive your ballot, follow the provided instructions. You can submit completed ballots by hand-delivering to your county election office or returning by mail. **Plan ahead! Absentee ballots must arrive at your county election office by election day.**

Use Georgia's [My Voter Page](#) to track your application's and ballot's status. After you log in to My Voter Page, this information can be found by clicking "Click Here For Absentee Ballot Status" in the lower left area of the screen.

***Some counties will be mailing absentee ballot applications to all registered voters ahead of November's general election. Please check to see if your county plans to do so.

[Click here](#) to request your absentee ballot

Please consider voting early or by absentee ballot this unusual election season!



GUIDE TO PUBLIC OFFICES

Elected officials at all levels of government—federal, state, and local—have the power to positively impact early childhood outcomes. Some of these offices are listed below. Offices on the 2020 ballot are described in more detail in subsequent pages.

Federal Government



PRESIDENT



CONGRESS

U.S. SENATORS | U.S. REPRESENTATIVES

State Government



GOVERNOR

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

STATE SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT

The Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and State School Superintendent all serve four-year terms and are not up for re-election until 2022.



GENERAL ASSEMBLY

STATE SENATORS | STATE REPRESENTATIVES

Local Government

MAYOR

CITY COUNCILMEMBERS

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

Note that timelines for local races vary.



President

What **does** the President do?

As the chief executive of the United States, the President has the power to implement and enforce laws written by Congress, veto Congressional legislation, and issue executive orders.

The President appoints the heads of federal agencies and other key federal positions, including the heads of the U.S. Department of Education and the Administration for Children and Families under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which houses the Office of Child Care (*most appointments require U.S. Senate confirmation*).

- Set forth a recommended legislative agenda that expands access to early learning and promotes child well-being via their annual budget request to Congress and State of the Union Address.
- Sign legislation that prioritizes young children and their families; veto legislation that negatively impacts early learning accessibility or child well-being.
- Provide vision and guidance on early learning and healthy development to federal, state, and local agencies.

To expand access to early learning and support the healthy development of Georgia's youngest children ...

What **could** the President do?



Congress

U.S. SENATORS
U.S. REPRESENTATIVES

What **does** a Member of Congress do?

As members of the legislative branch, Senators and Representatives introduce bills and resolutions, vote on pending legislation, offer amendments, and serve on committees.

The Senate is one of Congress' two chambers and is composed of two Senators from each of the 50 states, for a total of 100 Members. Each Senator is elected to a six-year term and represents the entire state.

The House of Representatives is Congress' other chamber, composed of 435 Members that proportionally represent the population of the 50 states. Georgia currently has 14 Representatives in the U.S. House, each representing a distinct geographic district. Serving two-year terms, all U.S. Representatives are up for re-election in 2020.

To expand access to early learning and support the healthy development of Georgia's youngest children ...

What **could** a Member of Congress do?

As policymakers, our U.S. Senators and Representatives can do the following:

- Support legislation to expand and improve supports for families
- Protect and expand investments in young children and families, including:
 - Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), Head Start, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program, Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)



Georgia General Assembly

STATE SENATORS
STATE REPRESENTATIVES

What **does** a State Senator or Representative do?

The legislative branch of the state government is the Georgia General Assembly, which makes the general policies and laws of the state. Like Congress, the General Assembly consists of two chambers, a Senate and a House of Representatives.

Every year beginning in January, the General Assembly meets for its legislative session, which lasts for 40 days, to discuss bills and vote for proposed laws. The General Assembly must determine the state's operating budget, which is the only bill they are constitutionally required to pass. Outside of the legislative session, members of the General Assembly meet in committees, where they discuss proposed legislation in greater detail.

There are currently 56 state senators in the Georgia Senate. The Lieutenant Governor, who is directly elected by Georgia voters, serves as President of the Senate.

There are currently 180 state representatives in the Georgia House of Representatives. The Speaker of the House serves as the chamber's leader and is responsible for assigning representatives to committees.

Serving two-year terms, all members of the General Assembly are up for re-election in 2020.

What **could** a State Senator or Representative do?

As policymakers, our U.S. Senators and Representatives can do the following:

- Support legislation to expand and improve supports for families
- Protect and expand investments in young children and families, including:
 - Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), Head Start, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program, Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

To find your current state legislators, [click here](#).

To find candidates for State Senate, State Representative, or local offices, [click here](#).

CANDIDATE CONTACT INFORMATION

Federal Elections

PRESIDENT

Democrat

Joe Biden

joebiden.com

Republican

Donald Trump (Incumbent)

donaldjtrump.com

U.S. SENATOR REGULAR ELECTION

Democrat

Jon Ossoff

electjon.com
 info@electjon.com
 P.O. Box 450326
 Atlanta, GA 31145

Republican

David Perdue (Incumbent)

perduesenate.com
 P.O. Box 12077
 Atlanta, GA 30355

UNITED STATES SENATOR SPECIAL ELECTION

There will be a special election for Georgia's second U.S. Senate seat due to the retirement of Senator Johnny Isakson in late 2019. In November 2020, Georgians will vote in what is known as a **jungle primary**, which allows any candidate to run for the seat sans a typical primary election. If no candidate wins 50% or more of the votes in November 2020, the two candidates with the most votes will face a runoff in January. The candidates listed below were polling at or above 5% as of July 29, 2020.

Democrat

Matt Lieberman

liebermanforsenate.com
 info@liebermanforsenate.com
 800 Battery Ave SE, Ste. 100
 Atlanta, GA 30339

Republican

Kelly Loeffler (Incumbent)

kellyforsenate.com
 (470) 448-4186
 9755 Dogwood Rd, Suite 340
 Roswell, GA 30075

Ed Tarver

tarverforsenate.com
 (706) 723-8484
 P.O. Box 14518
 Augusta, GA 30919

Doug Collins

dougforgeorgia.com

Raphael Warnock

warnockforgeorgia.com
 P.O. Box 991
 Decatur, GA 30031

CANDIDATE CONTACT INFORMATION

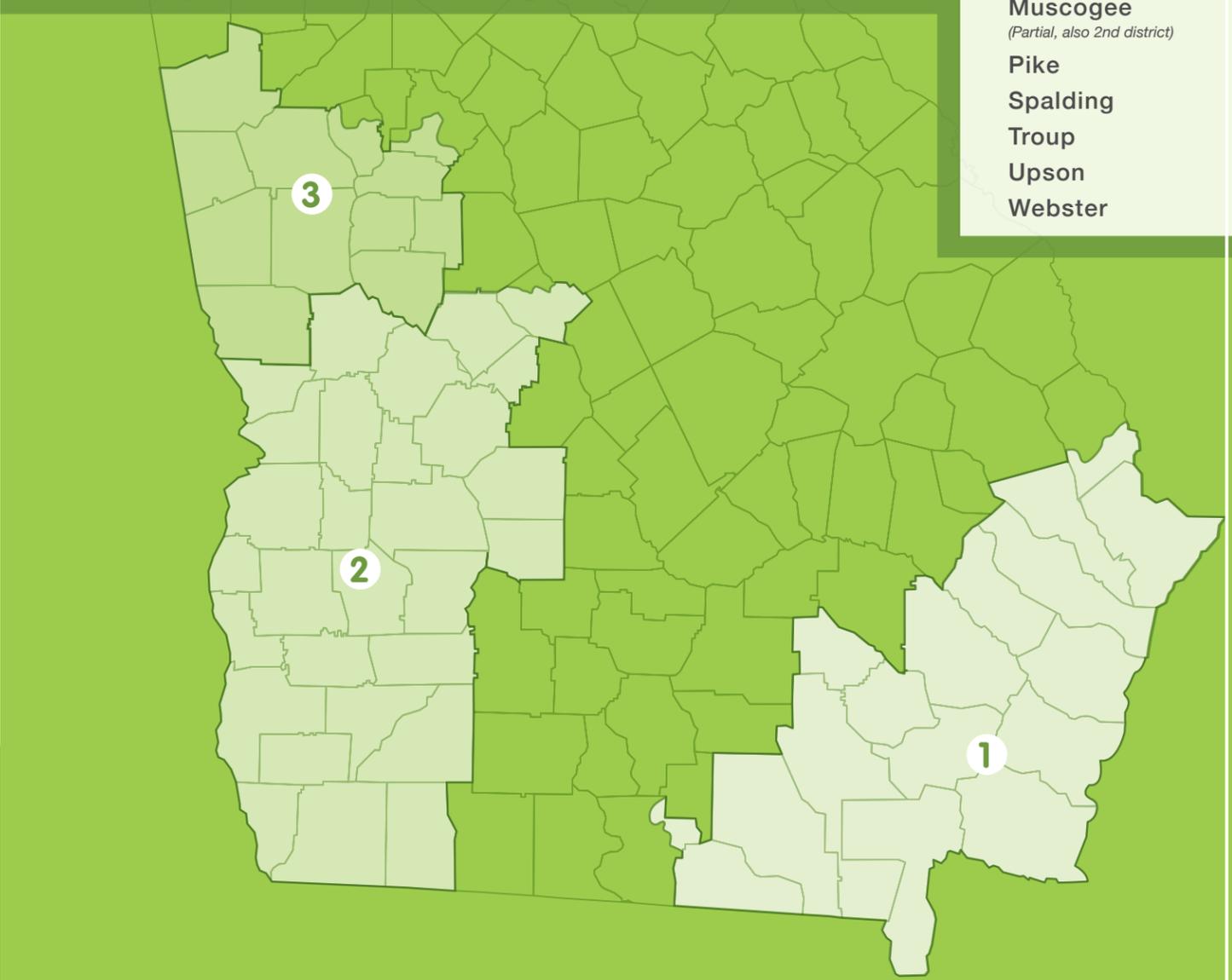
Federal Elections

	Democrat	Republican
DISTRICT 1	<p>Joyce Griggs†</p> <p>†As of publication date, the candidate does not have a public website</p>	<p>Buddy Carter (Incumbent)</p> <p>buddycarterforcongress.com P.O. Box 10570 Savannah, GA 31412</p>
DISTRICT 2	<p>Sanford Bishop Jr. (Incumbent)</p> <p>sanfordbishop.com (229) 446-7411 P.O. Box 909 Columbus, GA 31902</p>	<p>Donald Cole†</p> <p>†As of publication date, the candidate does not have a public website</p>
DISTRICT 3	<p>Val Almonord</p> <p>almonordforcongress.com val@almonordforcongress.com P.O. Box 8554 Columbus, GA 31908</p>	<p>Drew Ferguson (Incumbent)</p> <p>fergusonforgeorgia.com</p>

- 1 COUNTIES**
- | | | | |
|----------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Bacon | Chatham | Glynn | McIntosh |
| Brantley | Clinch | Liberty | Pierce |
| Bryan | Echols | Long | Ware |
| Camden | Effingham | Lowndes | Wayne |
| Charlton | <i>Partial, also 12th district</i> | <i>Partial, also 8th district</i> | |

- 2 COUNTIES**
- | | | |
|---|---|----------|
| Baker | Dougherty | Peach |
| Bibb
<i>(Partial, also 8th district)</i> | Early | Quitman |
| Calhoun | Grady | Randolph |
| Chattahoochee | Lee | Schley |
| Clay | Macon | Seminole |
| Crawford | Marion | Stewart |
| Crisp | Miller | Sumter |
| Decatur | Mitchell | Talbot |
| Dooley | Muscogee
<i>(Partial, also 3rd district)</i> | Taylor |
| | | Terrell |

- 3 COUNTIES**
- Carroll
 - Coweta
 - Fayette
(Partial, also 13th district)
 - Harris
 - Heard
 - Henry
(Partial, also 13th and 10th districts)
 - Lamar
 - Meriwether
 - Muscogee
(Partial, also 2nd district)
 - Pike
 - Spalding
 - Troup
 - Upson
 - Webster



CANDIDATE CONTACT INFORMATION

Federal Elections

Democrat

Republican

4

Hank Johnson (Incumbent)

Johsie Cruze

DISTRICT

hankforcongress.com
(770) 670-8918
4153 Flat Shoals Parkway
Bldg. C / Suite 322
Decatur, GA 30034

johsiecruz2020.com
(678) 789-1579
595 Bonnie Dell Drive
Marietta, GA 30062

5

Nikema Williams

Angela Stanton-King

DISTRICT

nikemawilliams.com
info@nikemawilliams.com
(404) 969-6092
P.O. Box 311913
Atlanta, GA 31131

stantonkingforcongress.com
2970 Clairmont Road, N.E.
Atlanta, GA 30329

6

Lucy McBath (Incumbent)

Karen Handel

DISTRICT

lucyforcongress.com
885 Woodstock Road
Suite 430-528
Roswell, GA 30075

karenhandel.com
info@karenhandel.com
(770) 744-4464
4010 Old Milton Parkway
Alpharetta, GA 30005

7

Carolyn Bourdeaux

Rich McCormick

DISTRICT

carolyn4congress.com
info@carolyn4congress.com
P.O. Box 301
Suwanee, GA 30024

richmccormick.us
P.O. Box 134
Suwanee, GA 30024

Due to John Lewis' death in July 2020, there will be a special election on September 29th to fill the remainder of Lewis' term, which expires in January. The 5th congressional district race listed in this guide refers to the November 3rd election to fill a full two-year term beginning in January 2021.



4

COUNTIES

DeKalb
(Partial, also 6th and 5th districts)

Gwinnett
(Partial, also 7th and 10th districts)

Newton
(Partial, also 10th district)

Rockdale

5

COUNTIES

Fulton
(Partial, see 6th, 11th, and 13th districts)

DeKalb
(Partial, also 4th and 6th districts)

Clayton
(Partial, also 13th district)

6

COUNTIES

Cobb
(Partial, also 11th and 13th district)

DeKalb
(Partial, also 4th and 5th districts)

Fulton
(Partial, also 5th, 11th, and 13th districts)

7

COUNTIES

Forsyth
(Partial, also 9th district)

Gwinnett
(Partial, also 4th and 10th districts)

IN MEMORIAM REMEMBERING JOHN LEWIS 1940-2020

John Lewis, an activist and civil-rights leader, was elected to represent Georgia's 5th District in 1987.

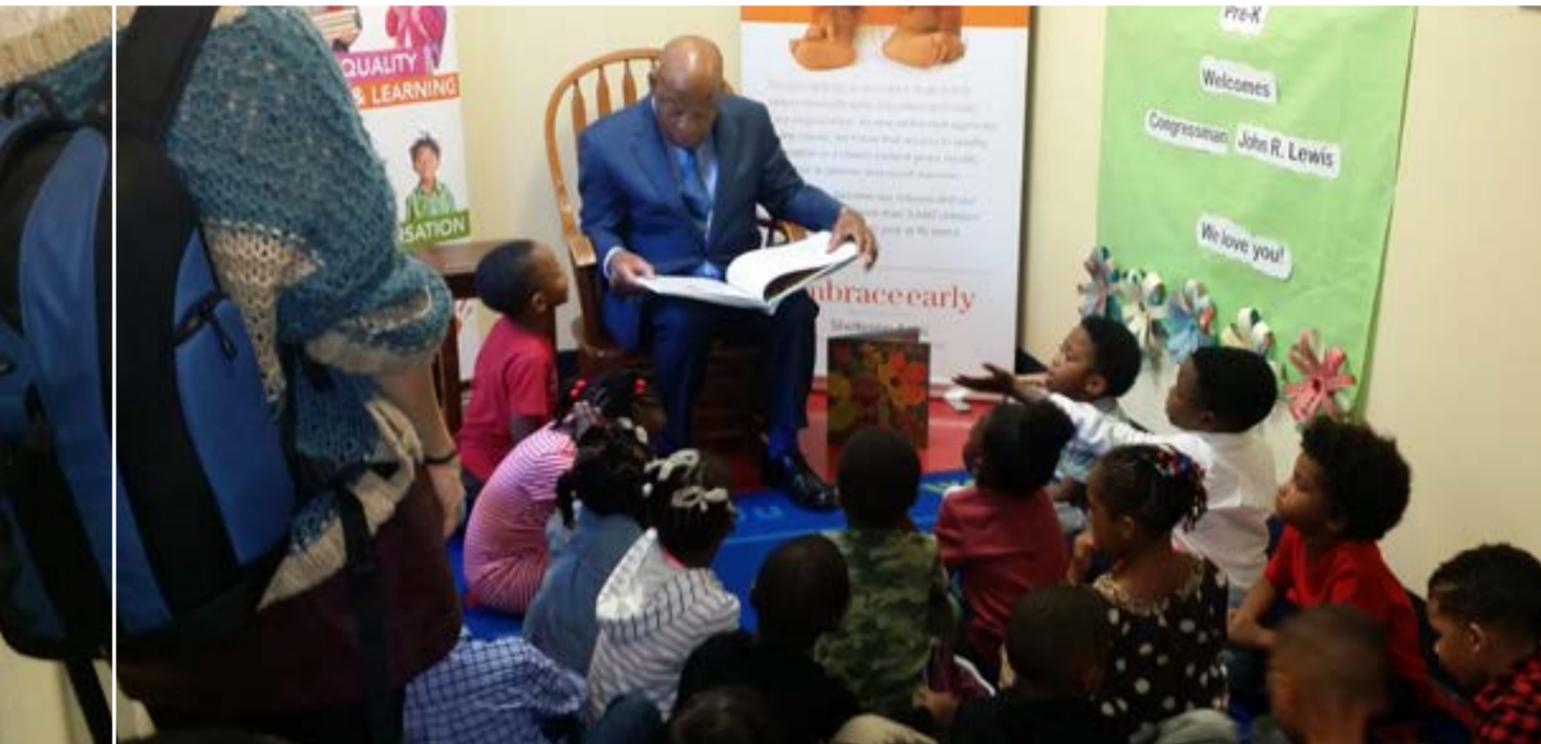
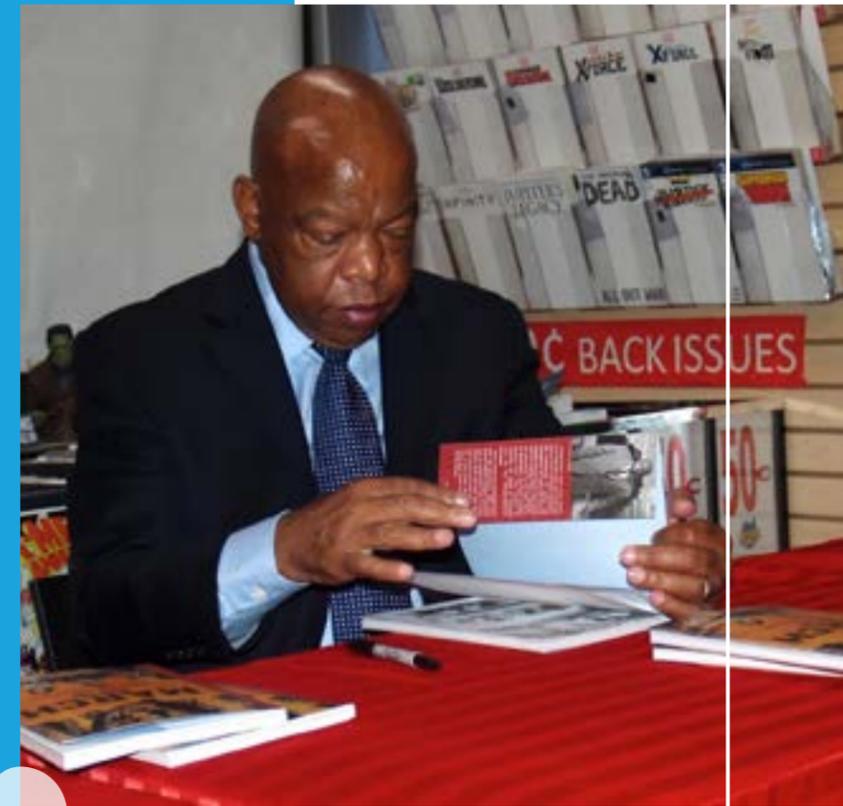
Dubbed the "Conscience of the Congress," Mr. Lewis fought tirelessly for equality and basic human rights for all.

Lewis was a steadfast champion of initiatives serving children and families, including Head Start, which he described as "an important innovation of the civil rights movement."

A native of Alabama, Mr. Lewis loved his adopted home of Atlanta, and served our state until his passing from pancreatic cancer on July 17th, 2020.



“So I say to you, walk with the wind, brothers and sisters, and let the spirit of peace and the power of everlasting love be your guide.”



(Clockwise from top left: Representative Lewis's official portrait; Lewis signing copies of March Book One (2013), the first volume of his graphic novel autobiography, at Midtown Comics in Manhattan © Luigi Novi / Wikimedia Commons; Lewis reading to children at Sheltering Arms Early Education and Family Centers.

“Do not get lost in a sea of despair. Be hopeful, be optimistic. Our struggle is not the struggle of a day, a week, a month, or a year, it is the struggle of a lifetime. Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble.”

CANDIDATE CONTACT INFORMATION

Federal Elections

Democrat

Republican

8

Lindsay Holliday†

Austin Scott (Incumbent)

DISTRICT

scottfor.ga.com
P.O. Box 2530
Tifton, GA 31793

†As of publication date, the candidate does not have a public website

9

Devin Pandy

Andrew Clyde

DISTRICT

devinpandyforcongress.com

clyde4congress.com

8

COUNTIES

Atkinson
Ben Hill
Berrien
Bibb
(Partial, also 2nd district)
Bleckley
Brooks
Colquitt
Cook
Dodge
Houston
Irwin
Jones

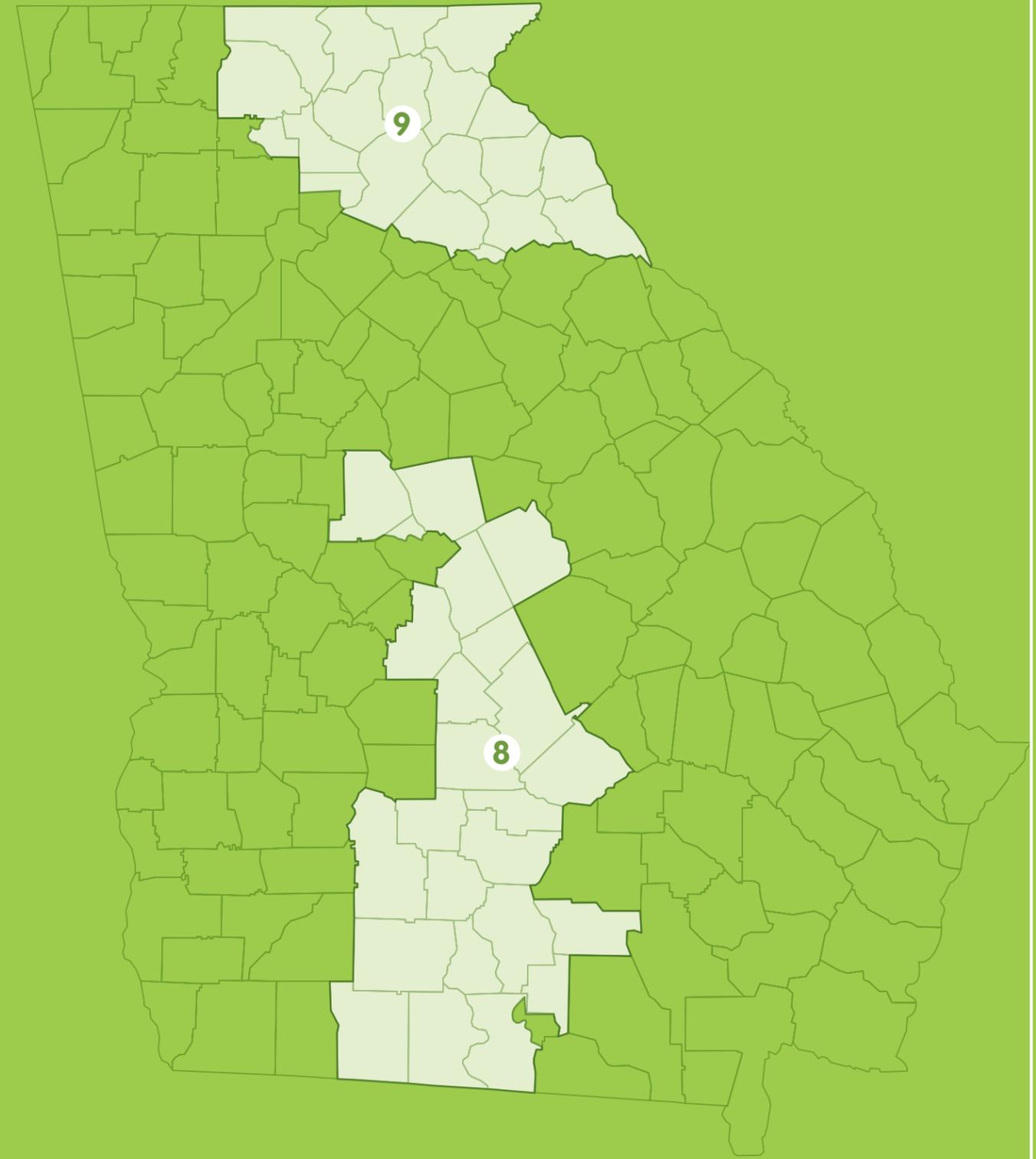
Lanier
Lowndes
(Partial, also 1st district)
Monroe
Pulaski
Telfair
Thomas
Tift
Turner
Twiggs
Wilcox
Wilkinson
Worth

9

COUNTIES

Banks
Clarke
(Partial, also 10th district)
Dawson
Elbert
Fannin
Forsyth
(Partial, also 7th district)
Franklin
Gilmer
Habersham
Hall
Hart

Jackson
Lumpkin
Madison
Pickens
(Partial, also 14th district)
Rabun
Stephens
Towns
Union
White



CANDIDATE CONTACT INFORMATION

Federal Elections

Democrat

Republican

10
DISTRICT

Tabitha Johnson-Green†

Jody Hice (Incumbent)

†As of publication date, the candidate does not have a public website

jodyhice.com
jody@jodyhice.com
P.O. Box 586
Monroe, GA 30655

11
DISTRICT

Dana Barrett

Barry Loudermilk (Incumbent)

electdanabarrett.com
info@electdanabarrett.com
P.O. Box 19085
Atlanta, GA 31126

loudermilkforcongress.com
P.O. Box 447
Cassville, GA 30123

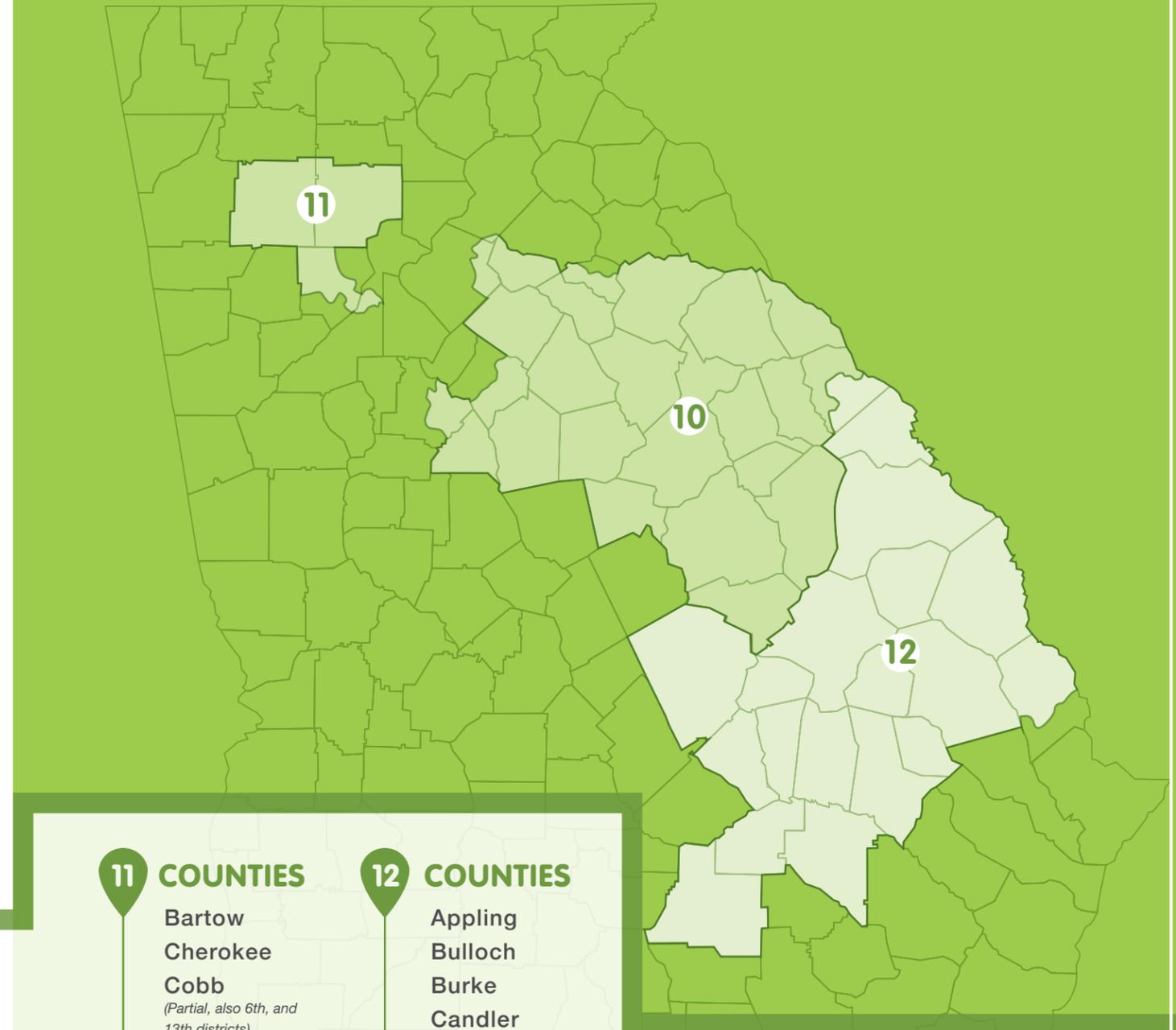
12
DISTRICT

Liz Johnson

Rick Allen (Incumbent)

lizjohnsonforcongress.com
elect@lizjohnsonforcongress.com
27 Hill Street
P.O. Box 1404

rickwallen.com
P.O. Box 338
Augusta, GA 30903



10 COUNTIES

Baldwin
Barrow
(Partial, also 9th district)
Butts
Clarke
(Partial, also 9th district)
Columbia
(Partial, also 12th district)
Glascok

Greene
Gwinnett
(Partial, also 7th and 4th districts)
Hancock
Henry
(Partial, also 3rd and 13th districts)
Jasper

Jefferson
Johnson
Lincoln
McDuffie
Morgan
Newton
(Partial, also 4th district)
Oconee

Oglethorpe
Putnam
Taliaferro
Walton
Warren
Washington
Wilkes

11 COUNTIES

Bartow
Cherokee
Cobb
(Partial, also 6th, and 13th districts)
Fulton
(Partial, see also 5th, 6th, and 13th districts)

12 COUNTIES

Appling
Bulloch
Burke
Candler
Coffee
Columbia
(Partial, also 10th district)
Effingham
(Partial, also 1st district)
Emanuel
Evans

Jeff Davis
Jenkins
Laurens
Montgomery
Richmond

Screven
Tattnall
Toombs
Treutlen
Wheeler

CANDIDATE CONTACT INFORMATION

Federal Elections

Democrat

Republican

13 **David Scott** (Incumbent)

Becky E. Hites

votedavidscott.com
P.O. Box 960821
Riverdale, Georgia 30296

hitesforcongress.com

14 **Kevin van Ausdal**

Marjorie Taylor Greene

kevinvanausdal.com

greene2020.com

DISTRICT

State Elections

To find candidates for your State Senate and House district, please visit: mvp.sos.ga.gov

13 COUNTIES

Clayton
(Partial, also 5th district)

Cobb
(Partial, also 6th and 11th districts)

Douglas

Fayette
(Partial, also 3rd district)

Fulton
(Partial, also 5th, 6th, and 11th districts)

Henry
(Partial, also 3rd and 10th districts)

14 COUNTIES

Catoosa

Chattooga

Dade

Floyd

Gordon

Haralson

Murray

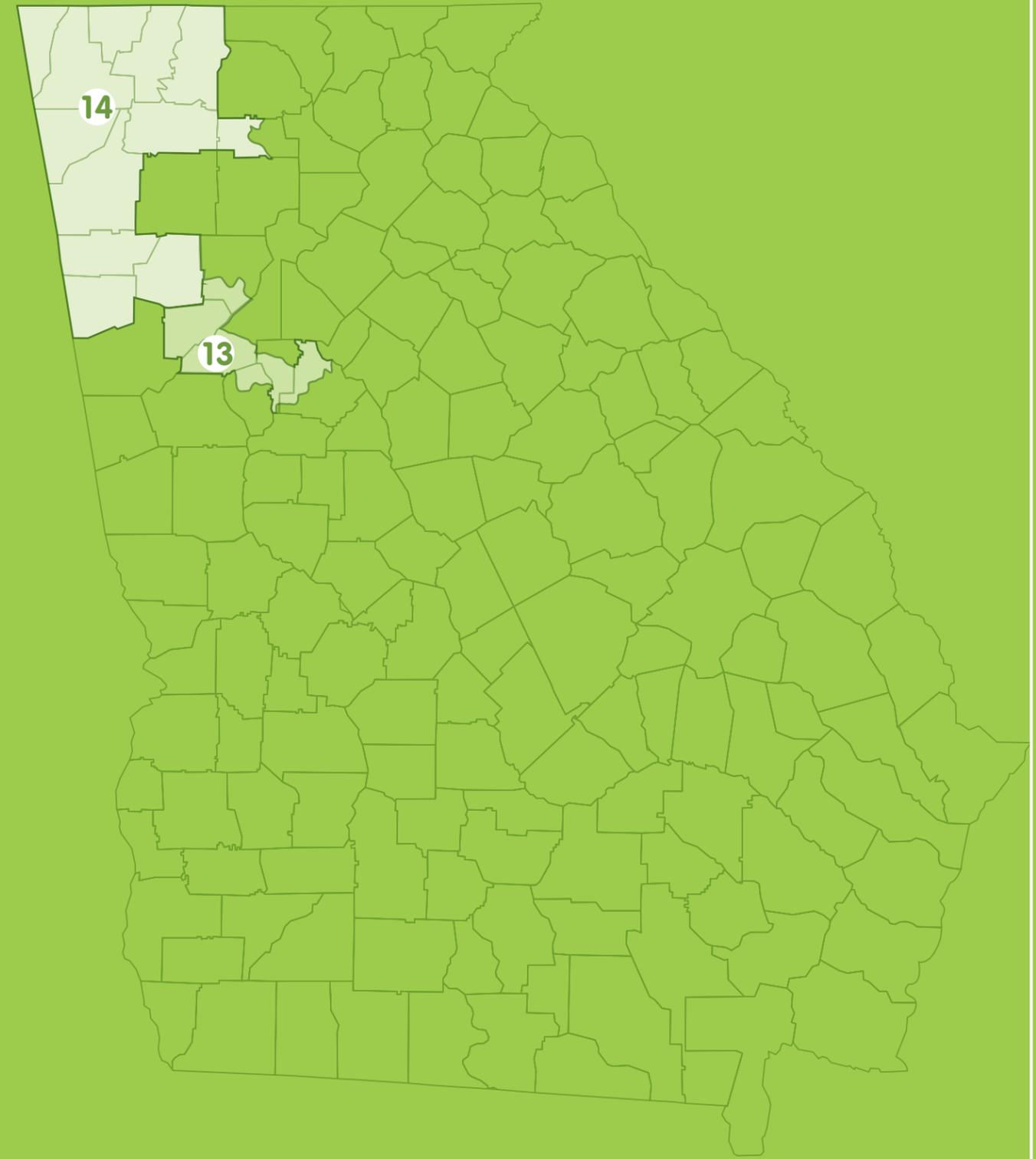
Paulding

Pickens
(Partial, also 9th district)

Polk

Walker

Whitfield



EARLY CHILDHOOD IN GEORGIA 101

KEY CHILD-SERVING AGENCIES IN GEORGIA

Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL): DECAL licenses, monitors, and provides support for child care providers throughout the state. The agency also administers Georgia's Pre-K program.

Georgia Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS): DFCS oversees public child welfare in the state. DFCS responds to reports of abuse and neglect against children, as well as oversees foster care placement and adoption services.

Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH): DPH takes the lead in preventing disease, injury and disability; promoting health and wellbeing; and preparing for and responding to disasters from a health perspective. DPH funds and collaborates with Georgia's 159 county health departments and 18 public health districts. DPH works in the area of maternal and child health by administering the Georgia Home Visiting Program as well as the early intervention service Babies Can't Wait.

Georgia Department of Community Health (DCH): DCH oversees the administration of the statewide Medicaid program, as well as PeachCare, Georgia's need-based children's health insurance program.

Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE): GaDOE oversees public K-12 education throughout the state. GaDOE ensures that laws and regulations pertaining to education are followed and that state and federal money appropriated for education is properly allocated to local school systems.

Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD): DBHDD serves people living with mental health challenges, substance use disorders, and intellectual and developmental disabilities by operating state hospitals and providing for community-based services across the state through contracted providers.

Legislative District Profiles

The GEEARS Readiness Radar is a suite of tools that allows users to explore a range of data relevant to early childhood and school readiness in Georgia. Early childhood education and health statistics are available for all of Georgia's 236 state legislative districts and 14 congressional districts on easy-to-understand profiles.

Click [here](#) to access your district's profile.

KEY EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS AND STATISTICS

CAPS (Childcare and Parent Services): DECAL manages CAPS, Georgia's child care scholarship program utilized by low-income working parents/caregivers of children under 13 years of age. The need-based program is primarily federally funded through the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF).

Georgia's Pre-K: Georgia has a universal (i.e., not need-based) lottery-funded Pre-Kindergarten program that serves approximately 60% of the state's four-year-olds. The program operates on a mixed delivery system, with classrooms in both private child care centers and public schools.

Head Start and Early Head Start: Administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Head Start is a federal program that provides comprehensive services, including early learning, to low-income children ages 3-5 and their families. Early Head Start programs serve infants and toddlers under the age of 3, as well as pregnant women.

Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV): MIECHV is a federal grant awarded to states in order to implement evidence-based home visiting programs for at-risk pregnant women and young children. The Georgia Home Visiting Program is operated by DPH.

Quality Rated: DECAL manages Georgia's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), Quality Rated, which systematically assesses and communicates the quality of child care providers in the state. Quality Rated assigns a star rating—one, two or three—to programs that go above and beyond the licensing requirements to meet a set of defined program standards.



15%

Percent of income-eligible children who receive CAPS scholarships, primarily due to limited funding

79%

of eligible providers are participating in Quality Rated

60%

Approximate percent of four-year-olds who attend Georgia's Pre-K Program

49%

of eligible providers are Quality Rated



EARLY CHILDHOOD FACTS AND FIGURES



Georgia
3rd graders
performing at
a proficient
reading level

27%
Hispanic
or Latino

31%
Black or
African
American

57%
White

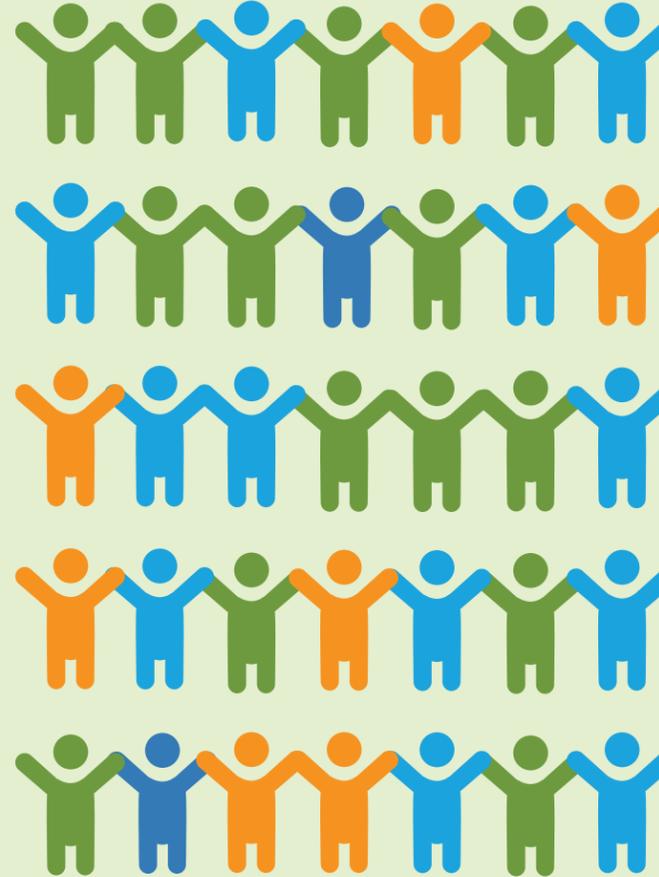
66%
Not
Eligible
for Free/
Reduced
Lunch

31%
Eligible
for Free/
Reduced
Lunch

42%
Total

657,414

Children ages 0-4 in Georgia



43%
White

33%
Black or
African
American

16%
Hispanic
or Latino



10%

of babies born
in Georgia are
considered
low-birthweight

15%
Black or African
American

7%
Hispanic or
Latino

7%
White



7%

of Georgia's
children under
age 6 are
uninsured

31%
Black or
African
American

30%
Hispanic
or Latino

12%
White

21%

children ages 0-5 live in poverty



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