

Jennifer Hulse

State House District 16 Candidate

Question 1: What is your assessment of health care in rural Georgia and what are your plans to improve health care of the citizens in rural Georgia?

Health Care is not where it should be. There is a false narrative that having insurance means you are getting all needed care, which in reality is not true. High deductibles are forcing patients to skip their primary care doctor for preventive care leading to serious health conditions. Too many rural hospitals have closed in the last several years leaving many Georgians living in rural areas at a loss for good healthcare. Increasing health coverage will provide Georgia hospitals with an increase in revenue and a lower burden of uncompensated care. Closing that coverage gap could keep the hospitals open in rural communities. We need to get out of this single plan system. People should have more options. We must find ways to offer more choices because more choices will lead to more people being covered and more people covered will lead to more revenue for the healthcare providers.

Question 2: The state has taken previous measures to help find a path forward on rural broadband. What further steps should we take to implement a widespread rollout of better connectivity across rural Georgia?

Georgia took the step to identify the areas that are under served for broadband connectivity. The main issue now is the cost of telecom companies attaching to existing right of way poles. An agreeable number needs to be worked out between the telecom companies, Georgia Power, and the EMCs (Electric Membership Corporations). The final agreement cannot have a negative impact on existing customers of EMCs, and it cannot make broadband service cost prohibitive to the customers. Cost mandates will result in additional costs to the consumers, and that does not need to happen. Rural communities in other states have done it. I think this should be resolved quickly.

Question 3: What more can we do for educators as their importance has been highlighted during this pandemic?

One thing that has become very apparent is that broadband connectivity is essential, and it is extremely limited in this district as well as many rural areas across Georgia. With all the technology and advances, we still have major issues. This in turn causes problems for teachers to get resources to students. Connectivity needs to be a primary goal for our school systems, county, and state. The state needs to back the teachers by getting school systems materials teachers need to do their jobs. These include broadband connectivity in our rural communities.

Most importantly, before sending teachers and students back to any traditional setting, the school systems need a set of procedures and safety gear to safeguard teachers and students.

Question 4: With record unemployment and the state facing a continued economic crisis in regard to COVID-19, what steps do you think we need to take to ensure the state's economic viability but also keep its recognition to be one of the best states in which to conduct business?

In this unprecedented time for our country it is imperative that we get all businesses up and running 100% as quickly and as safely as possible. That proactive step will show companies in states with restrictive leadership that Georgia is the best state to relocate. Along with that we all need to tighten our belts and the state government should not be exempt. We need to look at all areas of government expenditure and see where we can lighten the burden on the taxpayer.

r.

Question 5: Our state still faces a crisis in the number of healthcare workers we have on the front lines, in what ways do you think the state should work towards finding more people willing to come to provide healthcare in Georgia?

We need to expand training to develop additional front-line workers in the state, especially in the skill sets that are most in need. We need to work with university and college presidents to increase the enrollment level in disciplines most needed in the health care field. In addition, work with businesses to recruit co-ops from universities and colleges outside our state while encouraging those co-ops to relocate to the areas in Georgia where their skills are most needed.

Question 6: Georgia has taken great steps forward in ensuring that our citizens are safe, but crime rates continue to remain an issue at the forefront of our states more critical issues to tackle first. What further steps can the state take to make Georgia a safer place?

The COVID -19 pandemic has increased this size of this challenge. People with good jobs tend not to opt for a life of crime. President Trump and Governor Kemp's policies have kept unemployment to record low levels and that has helped keep much crime down. We need to get the economy back up to 100% as quickly and as safely as possible to continue that positive effect. At the same time, we need to evaluate all the efforts to combat crime such as the Polk Against Drugs opioid mapping program. We need to continue those programs that are most effective and expand them where necessary while eliminating those programs that are no longer effective.