

# GEORGIA CHAMBER

SECRETARY OF STATE QUESTIONNAIRE

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# GEORGIACHAMBER

Visionary leadership is critical for the future of our state. Georgia's elected officials must prioritize free enterprise and strengthening Georgia's top business rankings and economic opportunity by focusing on the following priorities:

**1**

**BUSINESS  
CLIMATE**

**2**

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

**3**

**PROSPERITY  
& DIVERSITY**

**4**

**WORKFORCE**

**5**

**TRADE  
& COMMERCE**

**6**

**HEALTH  
CARE**

**7**

**RURAL  
GEORGIA**

**8**

**ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
& INNOVATION**

The following open-ended questions represent the eight overarching priorities for the Chamber in 2018. These priorities are equal in importance and are essential for all candidates to address. Your responses will not be graded or scored. Upon completion, each Questionnaire will be published for the general public to access at [www.8for18.com](http://www.8for18.com). We ask that you address each question with as much specificity as possible.



*Georgia's general business climate consistently ranks near the top in national surveys, but we rank 36th in the Distressed Communities Index and our legal environment ranking has dropped. We must prioritize being in the Top 20 of these rankings, while maintaining our top job creation ranking.*

## **1. What is your plan to improve business climate in Georgia?**

Please address the following within your answer: corporate filings and professional licensure processes.

Georgia small businesses are the backbone of our economy, and they provide the lion's share of new jobs in our state economy. They depend on the Secretary of State for registering corporate filings and administration of professional regulations. Corporations and regulated professionals pay for the regulatory services they generate, but they're not getting the level of service that they're paying for. This office requires a delicate balancing of two priorities: preventing fraudulent or illegitimate businesses from taking advantage of consumers, and the needs of legitimate businesses following the rules. We shouldn't unnecessarily burden professionals and businesses. At the same time, we recognize that many of them are actually asking to be regulated in order to keep out bad actors.

Everywhere I go throughout the state, folks complain about the level of attention that the current Secretary of State gives, especially with respect to the corporations and licensing divisions. People pay their hard-earned dollars to the state for the regulation, inspection, and registration services that they require. They should get the level of service that they're paying for. As Secretary of State, I will be their advocate to the General Assembly for the resources to provide the services my office is required to provide.

The Secretary of State does not have the power to do this all alone. Our constitution requires that the coordinate branches of government work together to accomplish these goals. But the Secretary isn't alone: In order to persuade the other responsible agencies of state government to work together on these goals, the Secretary of State can and should work with the various constituencies served by that office to advocate for the policies and resources necessary for the Secretary of State to get the job done. There is strength in numbers, and there are far more customers to be served by the Secretary than there are elected officials who are responsible for these issues. As Secretary of State, I will work with my constituents so as to advocate for them and with them. That's the only way to break the inertia that too often characterizes government at all levels.

I believe that those who bear the burden of paying for regulatory service should get the service that they're paying for. Working together we can do that; in fact, it's the only way we can do that.



**PRIORITIES FOR  
GEORGIA**



*Georgia needs to continue its efforts to cultivate a skilled workforce because “talent” is the defining factor driving where businesses choose to locate or expand. Elected officials must support the state’s efforts to develop a world class talent and leadership pipeline.*

## **2. What is your plan to support Georgia’s economy for small business success?**

Please address the following within your answer: preparing GA for industries of the future and small business access to capital.

Small businesses keep our economy going and create good jobs. But they can’t thrive unless they have the access to the capital that they need to be the businesses of the future. I’ll cut red tape and make it easier for businesses to open and grow.

In Congress, I was proud to have voted for landmark legislation intended to encourage funding of small businesses in the United States by easing many of the country’s securities regulations. As Secretary of State, I will continue to support small business access to capital, especially to women- and minority-owned businesses. In fact, it’s this access to capital that will create the businesses of the future.

Likewise, Georgia can’t continue to be a business leader while continuing to neglect its responsibilities in preventing Wall Street abuses. Cracking down on scam artists not only protects the most vulnerable, it diverts that income into honest channels of commerce, and thereby increases the volume of business conducted by honest businesses. I’ll work with entrepreneurs to increase access to capital, while at the same time coming down hard on those who seek to prey on our elderly and vulnerable populations.





*For Georgia to continue to experience sustainable growth, a balance must be achieved between human needs, population, resources, and talent development. We must be intentional about reducing our poverty ranking if we are truly committed to improving the quality of life for all Georgians.*

### **3. What is your plan to support the growth of diverse and thriving communities?**

For as long as I can remember, Georgia led the nation in growing diverse and thriving communities. That growth relied on our citizens having faith in their leaders, and our leaders having faith in our citizens. The South has led the nation, and Georgia has led the South. One of the key reasons for our success has been effective state leadership that put the interests of the business community over the interests of partisan politics. In our present political climate, we're not doing as good a job at that as we used to.

Everywhere I go throughout the state, folks complain that their vote doesn't count. The outcome of our elections are determined in advance. In too many cases, the lack of competition that is by design and not neglect. This lack of competition may be good for the politicians but not for the voters. In the business world, a lack of competition may seem to be good for those who have a monopoly on the business, but it's bad for the customer and ultimately bad for business. So, too, in the political market place.

I'll also advocate for representative districts where elected officials have to compete in order to serve — and not in primary elections dominated by the most partisan voters, but in general elections where the largest number of moderate, pro-business voters participate. If it seems dispiriting that our most important elections are a race to the bottom, it's no wonder: the only competition in today's political market place is at the extremes. What we need is real competition, in the final rounds, where most moderate and independent voters participate, not in the preliminary rounds where only the most partisan voters choose to play.

As Secretary of State, I'll fight to make sure that everyone who is eligible can exercise the right to vote — and that no one can commit fraud in our elections. And I'll fight to provide the voters with new election machinery that they trust: hand-marked paper ballots with optical scanners.

It ought to be our policy in Georgia that it is as easy for all eligible citizens to register to vote as it is for any citizens to register, as easy for all voters to stay registered as it is for any voter to stay registered, and as easy for all voters to cast their ballots as it is for any voter to cast their ballots — and for those ballots to be counted exactly as they were cast.



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Thank you for your participation.

For questions, please contact  
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