

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Stephanie Gatewood Memphis City Council District 1**

1. Please describe your background and your qualifications for this position? What experiences caused you to run for this office? What unique qualities would you bring to this position and what differentiates you from other candidates in your race?

I am the only candidate in district 1 who has experience as an elected official. (Not to mention that my constituency as a council person would mirror the same electorate as my current school board position.) I had the opportunity to serve the community; since 2004. Being elected to the City School Board has been an experience that has enabled me to further assist my community. I have obtained additional responsibilities since being elected to the board. These responsibilities will enable me to be more effective on the council (see attached bio) my background is in marketing, and customer service. The qualifications that I bring to this position will allow me to serve my constituents more effectively. I have recently obtained a degree in Public Administration; hence allowing me to use practical knowledge and practices as decisions are made. Working at the University of Memphis, in the center for research has allowed me to bring the research model and methodology in my current role, allowing me to make data driven decisions on important issues. This research component will certainly benefit the council. (Using best practices to collaborate with other large municipalities)

A unique quality that defines me is my ability to work with all people, Republicans and Democrats, African American and Caucasian. As a leader I practice the model "leading by example." I believe that ALL people should have equal representation and opportunity. I am also unique in my approach in problem solving; in that I focus on the solutions to the problem while compromising with dignity.

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2. What is your vision for the City? How would you use this office to achieve the vision? My vision for the city is to attract a more diverse population while recruiting world renowned businesses to the city. Partnering with Stakeholders such as the chamber of commerce etc is vital to the economic development of our city. As a Councilman we are responsible for setting the tax rate, and establishing other lawful taxes and fees necessary to secure adequate revenues to the city. By collaborating with fellow colleagues both in the city and around the nation, this vision will be accomplished.

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3. How do you plan on insuring that there is diversity, (including race, age, gender and socio-economic) represented in the development of public policy and government? I would support the creation of a volunteer advisory council that would include all segments of the community. (By way of introducing an ordinance) Especially having community advocating organizations, for often these organizations are familiar with the concerns firsthand. The Advisory Council could then meet in coordination with the Personnel, Intergovernmental and Annexation committee. This would provide an additional layer of oversight, while encouraging community participation.

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4. What are the three greatest issues facing the City of Memphis today and during the future?

Crime

Flight (except for downtown)

Economic Development within the communities

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5. What role should the City of Memphis government play in promoting the economic development for the community? What specific initiatives or actions would you promote and/or support? **The City of Memphis Government is ultimately responsible for promoting the economic development; the council would ultimately be responsible for approving the budget for programs and initiatives that support economic development. I would support all programs that encouraged businesses to move in the communities where businesses are declining. I would also support a program that targeted individual community economic development (such as encouraging citizens to patronize their district for a period of time.) I would strongly support the funding for research to be conducted as related to economic development and the impact it could have on a community. (Using local subjects) I would also encourage the support of programs such as "Teach for America" and "New Leaders for New Schools" as oftentimes with national programs such as these, not only do they increase the potential to produce academically well rounded students which in turn create well rounded, tax paying citizens; then national spotlight is placed on Memphis as being able to attract such talent. The new citizens certainly would have an effect on our tax rate etc.**

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6. How would you strengthen and support existing neighborhoods that are within the urban core and what barriers to community redevelopment do you see in these areas today? How do you propose to address the current blight in many of these areas?

I would strengthen and support the communities by offering incentives for the re-creation of the neighborhood watches. The current barriers that are currently in place are the fact that businesses do not want to move in the inner core because they don't feel safe. Citizens/Businesses who can afford to move out do, and it causes insufficiency of critical services that you generally will see in more affluent neighborhoods such as frequent public transportation, delivery drivers, police, and other critical services. As renters are evicted, the home owner is hard to track down, and it is the community who is forced to deal with the dilapidated home; this causes not only blight for the neighborhood, but it creates a crime haven for criminals, gangs, prostitutes, drug dealers etc. I would support the Memphis City Beautiful initiatives, and encourage training sessions for the community on how to identify crime havens, blight, and ways to address them. Recently I led a group of collaborative group that came in and assisted with an area of blight behind a local high school. (14 acres of land) this lead to the area commonly known as "The Cut" to become cut down, while we have shined a light on the issue, there are many other areas of concern. Community education is critical in addressing blight.

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7. What do you regard as the greatest obstacle or barrier to growth in the City today? The greatest barrier for the city to overcome is an unprepared workforce, low expectations among communities. Economic Development opportunities will not come to the city if they feel that they do not and will not have the adequate manpower to run their companies. Therefore we need to support the mantra "every child, every day, college bound, (job, trade school, bound) what this is really saying is that we believe that everyone should have goals, the students in high school are now the role models for their parents, we are raising a generation of independent leaders. The future of our city depends of the forward thinking of this generation to accept the challenge.

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8. Give us your thoughts on the Charter Commission. What are the main issues that should be taken into consideration by this group and what items in the City Charter should be considered for change? Please comment specifically on your ideas around consolidation and/or a metropolitan government. **(OK YOU ASKED)**

Definitely there needs to be a proper and equitable balance of power between the City Council and the Mayor. The roles are conflicting and overlapping. It is the role of the City Council to set policy and approve funding. It is the role of the Mayor to administer and implement policy within the prescribed budget. Council should review, fund and approve major contracts and leases before Mayor signs off on them. This level of approval (say \$50,000) should be reviewed annually when the budget is reviewed to account and adjust for inflation and other factors.

Major divisional Mayoral appointees should be expressly named in the Charter; only direct reporting staff should be allowed as additional appointees. Mayor should not be allowed to change classification status from a non-appointed to an appointed position without approval of the Council

Tighten ethics rules in the Charter, not just as a City Council ordinance. Ordinances can be rescinded by the Council at any time. The ethics rules should never allow an elected or appointed official from holding another job or contract in any way connected to local government from which they would benefit.

All appointed quasi-governmental bodies such as the Airport Authority, Land Use Control Board, Industrial Development Board, Center City Development Commission, etc. should be required to produce an annual report on their actions and if given public money, how that money was used to further the goals of the City of Memphis. No appointees to said bodies should be allowed to remain on these boards for more than two consecutive terms. Many have served for more than a decade. Additionally, appointees of the boards should reveal all business interests and if an inherent conflict exists (such as a major developer on the Land Use Control Board or a recipient of PILOTs on the IDB or CCC) the nominee should not serve on that particular body.

The Charter commission should focus on the clarity of the charter. Currently the charter is very unclear to most. (Ex: latest issue with who can run for office)

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### **Stephanie Gatewood cont. from question 8.**

**On Consolidation:** I would strongly support Strategic Consolidation. (I do understand that a task force was assembled to determine if this was feasible) The community needs to have a buy in for this to be effective. There needs to be extensive research to the benefits, (Regionalism is one benefit). This particular term applies to the ability of two forms of government to act collaboratively and cooperatively, to achieve the same goals; ultimately it is for the greater good. What are the challenges? What would our government look like as a consolidated government? Is it feasible if not, Why? Does our community have the infrastructure to maintain such a decision? Where has this been done successfully? And finally this should not be a volunteer board. It is critical that it is a professional service, (as they are the experts, they have experienced first hand how to research cities that have become successful) I am sure the chamber would make a good partner in this effort. The funding could become a joint shared responsibility from the city, county, and private investors. I strongly feel that Strategic consolidation is more methodological as you delve into the facets of the plan; it gives you more direction and benchmarks that specifically spell out where you should be in the process. We should approach it by major functional area, one or two at a time before we attempt a complete consolidation of governments. For instance, I would support consolidating City and County engineering departments, real estate departments and housing/revitalization agencies as a good first step. I believe larger functions like fire, police,(I know the council is currently considering this) sanitation and general services would take much more time due to the vast differential in salaries and the consideration of unions.

Complete and total consolidation in one fell swoop is not a panacea and takes many years, upfront costs and citizen education to reap positive rewards.

Louisville-Jefferson County is finding that out right now. One would have to ask the question of how the suburban municipalities would get along without the financial support of Shelby County and the tax subsidies currently channeled from Memphis taxpayer to support their towns? Also, we should examine the structure of our school systems. Again, what about the suburbs? Nashville-Davidson County has two levels of property tax, one for the urban area and one for the fringe. Would we consider that option, or not? Would we provide urban level services throughout the consolidated jurisdiction, such as fire and police or provide differential services based on density? Providing the level of fire and police services that the citizens of Memphis now benefit from would be costly and inefficient in the rural areas of our County considering the low density of development and the rural road conditions.

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9. What is the role of this office? What do you think about the relationship between the City Mayor/City Council and other legislative bodies, Shelby County, Memphis City Schools, MLG&W, Chamber, Center City Commission, etc. [The role of the City Council is to approve the Budget of the city; proposed by the Mayor to include the acceptance, denial, or modification of the city's budget. The Council is also responsible for setting the tax rate and establishing lawful taxes and fees to secure revenue for the funding of the budget. Much like the state legislature who is responsible for implementing laws for the state, the council is responsible for creating local laws; also known as ordinances to ensure the safety and well-being of the citizens in the city. The city council has the responsibility of providing oversight and governance for the city of Memphis. Personally I feel that the elected bodies of government should collaborate and create more defined relationships as eventually we will all have to work together for the greater good of all citizenry in Shelby County, and Memphis City. MLG&W is a division of the city \(however perceived by the public as a separate entity\) the council serves as an "oversight" body to MLG&W \(according to the charter Article 65\). Organizations such as the Chamber and Center City Commission should work in collaboration with the council especially as related to economic development initiatives, community education, quality of life projects.](#)

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10. How would you, as a member of the City Council, to effectively reduce the crime rate in the City of Memphis? What current strategies would you continue to support and what changes would you propose? *As a council member, I could not effectively reduce the crime rate; (this power belongs to the mayor and his division director) however, I could support the funding of innovative crime prevention programs. I would propose the implementation of community policing whereas officers are to be assigned to specific communities, for duration of six months. The community builds a relationship with the officers, thus thwarting crime in areas where officers spend the most time. According to the Department of Justice, Community policing reduces levels and fear of crime, while increasing relationships and trust between the community and law enforcement agencies. Additionally I would support the notion of officers being allowed to drive their patrol car home. As with our offices, officers often are in their cars just as much or more than we are in our offices*

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11. In light of recent events, would you be willing to submit to a background check and then allow the results to be published? [Yes](#)

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12. Discuss the recently passed ethics ordinance/policy at the State and local levels? Is this sufficient and if not, what changes would you recommend? The local ethics law/ ordinance recently drafted is a push in the right direction. However, I would recommend looking at the section (4) Members shall serve without compensation. (There should be some form of compensation, whether it is benefits, etc.) the membership (section 6) Initial terms of the membership- (2yrs, 4 yrs, 6yrs) and length of service, as generally on a board such as an ethical board, six years is too long. I would also recommend that at least one member be of the faith based community. The ordinance should be in the charter of the city. Just as ordinances are passed by councils; the same could hold true deleting ordinances.

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13. Should the City Council Committee and full Council Meetings be video cast live? **Yes. We should be reaching those who do not have an opportunity to come to the meetings. The full council meetings are currently live on the radio, however if the capabilities to stream live on the internet were available, I would support this initiative. Most work is done in committee; therefore, if there were a choice to make, I would make the decision to have the committee meetings to be streamed live.**