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ESPLOST VI passes with 58.5% support Hunter, McCarter advance to General Election

UNION COUNTY UNOFFICIAL ELECTION RESULTS

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The Education Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax continuation passed handily in the May 24 General Primary/Nonpartisan Elections, earning 58.5% support among Union County voters.

Also, in the Republican Primary for Union County Board of Education, incumbent Tony Hunter beat Will Nelson in the District 2 race, and Jason McCarter defeated Joseph Goble in the District 4 race.

Republicans Hunter and McCarter will advance to the Nov. 8 General Election to face, respectively, Michelle Maloney and John Andrews, who qualified unopposed in the Democratic Primary.

All told, 45% of the Union County electorate cast ballots in the May 24 elections for a turnout that exceeded the last mid-term primaries from 2018, when just 35% of the electorate turned out to vote.

Notably, the number of active registered voters in Union County has increased by more than 4,000 people since the 2018 election cycle – a greater than 25% jump in the electorate.

In place since 1998, this is the sixth consecutive voter-approved referendum on ESPLOST, with 5,155 people voting to continue ESPLOST in

2022 and 3,658 voters rejecting it.

ESPLOST is a 1% local sales tax collected by school districts for the purposes of building new facilities, renovating existing facilities, upgrading HVAC systems, adding to aging bus fleets, updating technology, acquiring textbooks and more.

Since ESPLOST VI will be continuing from ESPLOST V, the total countywide sales tax on eligible purchases of local goods and services will remain at 7 cents on the dollar when the new collections begin July 1.

The tax features a \$42 million collection cap over the next five years.

One of the proposed projects for ESPLOST VI is a brand-new Elementary School to accommodate recent and projected growth in the county.

In addition to ESPLOST, the May 24 elections featured political party primaries for three county-level seats up for grabs, all for Union County School Board.

Republican Patrick White of Suches qualified unopposed for Board of Education District 5, and he is slated to appear unchallenged in the General Election.

For Board of Education District 2, incumbent Tony Hunter and Will Nelson went head-to-head in the Republican Primary,

with Hunter earning 58% of the vote to advance as the Republican nominee to face lone Democratic qualifier Michelle Maloney in November.

In the District 4 School Board race, Jason McCarter defeated Joseph Goble with 64% of the vote to become the Republican nominee for the General Election. The contest between McCarter and lone Democratic qualifier John Andrews will also be decided in November.

Given Georgia's transition in recent years to an increasingly "purple" electorate, several Peach State elections have garnered national attention in 2022, particularly the offices of Governor and U.S. Senate.

Among the five Republican candidates for governor, incumbent Brian Kemp and David Perdue garnered the most primary votes statewide, with Kemp easily beating out Perdue to guarantee a General Election rematch with lone Democratic qualifier Stacey Abrams, who narrowly lost to Kemp in 2018.

Overall, more Union County Republican Primary voters supported Kemp, handing him 66% of the vote with 5,195 votes compared to Perdue's 2,226 votes. Statewide, the projected winner Kemp was ahead by more than 70% with over half of the vote counted by press time.

As was widely anticipated,

Herschel Walker won the Republican Primary for U.S. Senate, meaning that, come November, he will be squaring off against Democratic incumbent Raphael Warnock, who also won his statewide primary election with ease.

In Union County, 66% of the Republican electorate supported Walker over his biggest rival, Gary Black. On the Democratic side, 95% of Union County voters supported Warnock over Tamara Johnson-Shealey.

For U.S. Representative from the 9th Congressional District, Republican incumbent Andrew Clyde won his primary with plenty of room to spare, and he will be appearing on the ballot opposite lone Democratic qualifier Mike Ford in November.

Another race to watch is that of Lieutenant Governor, which, by press time, saw Burt Jones winning by a slim margin in the Republican Primary, and a runoff race expected in the Democratic Primary.

Similarly, by press time, Republican incumbent Brad Raffensperger for Secretary of State had just north of 50% of the vote, with no clear winner on the Democratic side.

Full election results, including other state races with local impacts, will be available in the June 1 edition of the newspaper and at nganews.com.