

Ballot...from Page 1A

School boards and local superintendents obsolete for those schools.

For example, a school district may only have one school that is "chronically failing," at which point that school would fall under the care of the OSD and its

superintendent, while the remaining schools would stay under local jurisdiction.

A school is considered chronically failing if it scores less than 60 on the College and Career Ready Performance Index for three consecutive years.

Under the requirements laid out in the amendment, 127 Georgia schools are considered chronically failing, out of more than 2,200 in 181 school districts. Once a school enters the OSD, it must stay in it for a period of at least five years but no longer than 10 years.

Gov. Nathan Deal spearheaded the legislation,

stating that he believed the "status quo isn't working" when it comes to failing schools, and District 51 State Sen. Steve Gooch co-sponsored the legislation behind the amendment.

Not everyone is a fan of Amendment 1, however, including the Georgia Association of Educators, the Georgia School Boards Association, and the Georgia

School Superintendents Association, among others.

Even Union County Schools Superintendent Dr. Fred Rayfield is against the amendment, despite the fact that Union County Schools aren't even close to being considered "chronically failing."

"I want to encourage the community to become educated on Amendment 1, and not just vote on Amendment 1," said Dr. Rayfield. "Make themselves knowledgeable of the pros and cons, and the information that is out there related to Amendment 1, and not go in and just make a quick judgment decision based on the pure wording of the amendment itself."

"I would also encourage them to think about how this amendment effects the control that local communities have over their educational process for their children and their families. It will have a dramatic impact in terms of reducing local control, and still using existing tax dollars and more tax dollars to fund the new mechanism."

Amendment 2
Ballot Title: "Authorizes penalties for sexual exploitation and assessments on adult entertainment to fund child victims' services."

The gist of Amendment 2 is that a "yes" vote shows support for "providing penalties for court cases involving certain sex crimes in order to allocate the generated revenue for the Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Children Fund," according to Ballotpedia, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that studies American politics.

This one is self-explanatory - vote yes to punish some sex crimes by imposing financial penalties meant to go specifically

toward helping children who are victims of sex crimes.

Amendment 3
Ballot Title: "Reforms and re-establishes the Judicial Qualifications Commission and provides for its composition, governance and powers."

For this amendment, it is important to understand the function of the Judicial Qualifications Commission, or JQC.

According to gajqc.com, "The Judicial Qualifications Commission is a constitutionally created independent State Commission responsible for investigating complaints of judicial misconduct and/or judicial incapacity and for disciplining judges in the State of Georgia."

The JQC was created by constitutional amendment in 1972, and the current Amendment 3 proposes to replace the JQC with a new commission to be defined and then governed by the Georgia General Assembly.

Proponents of the amendment seem to feel that more internal accountability is needed within the JQC, while opponents, including the State Bar of Georgia and the Georgians for Judicial Integrity think that the JQC needs to remain an independent commission free from direct influence from legislators.

Amendment 4
Ballot Title: "Dedicates revenue from existing taxes on fireworks to trauma care, fire services and public safety."

This amendment is worded in a straightforward manner.

The following resources were utilized for this report: gov.georgia.gov, gadoe.org, sos.ga.gov, gajqc.com and ballotpedia.org.

Voting...

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during the scheduled weekdays of voting.

Voters looking for absentee ballots will need to contact the Registrar's Office in the courthouse, or call (706) 439-6016.

Tuesday, Oct. 11, was the voter registration deadline leading into the General Election that is now less than two weeks away.

The following candidates appear on the ballot:

For President of the United States, Donald J. Trump, with his vice presidential running mate Michael R. Pence, Republican; Hillary Clinton, with her vice presidential running mate Tim Kaine, Democrat; and Gary Johnson, with his vice presidential running mate Bill Weld, Libertarian.

For U.S. Senate, Incumbent Johnny Isakson, Republican; Jim Barksdale, Democrat; and Allen Buckley, Libertarian.

For Public Service Commissioner, Incumbent Tim Echols, Republican, and Eric Hoskins, Libertarian.

For U.S. Representative in 115th Congress from the 9th Congressional District of Georgia, Incumbent Doug Collins, Republican.

For State Senator from 51st District, Incumbent Steve Gooch, Republican.

From State Representative in the General Assembly from 8th District, Matt Gurtler, Republican.

For Clerk of Superior Court, Incumbent Judy Odom, Democrat.

For Sheriff, Incumbent Mack Mason, Republican.

For Tax Commissioner, Incumbent Lee Knight.

For Surveyor, Jason Henson, Republican.

For Coroner, Incumbent Benny Erwin, Republican.

For Sole County Commissioner, Harold Cook, Republican, and Incumbent Lamar Paris, Democrat.

For County Board of Education District 1, Janna D. Akins, Republican.

For County Board of Education District 3, Cynthia "Cindy" Byers.

The ballot will also feature four proposed state constitutional amendments asking for a "yes" or "no" vote each.

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