

What are the Questions on the Ballot Article for 10-18-24

What are the Questions on the Ballot? By Karlise Y. Grier, Chair, Legal Ministry.

On October 10, 2024, the Legal Ministry, in partnership with the Social Concerns Ministry, held a Voter Education 101 Forum to help voters in the community make informed decisions when they vote during the November 5, 2024, election cycle. Most people are familiar with the presidential candidates that will appear at the top of the ballot, but fewer people have thought about the “down ballot” candidates and issues that they will need to decide when they vote. One question posed by a church member who registered for the Voter Education 101 forum was about the proposed Georgia Constitutional amendments and proposed House Bill that most voters will see towards the bottom of their ballot. The speakers at the forum did not have an opportunity to respond to the church member’s question during the forum so I am addressing it in this article. While neither I nor the Legal Ministry can answer the question for our church members, I can share with you some of the questions I asked myself when researching the proposed Georgia Constitutional amendments and proposed House Bill and deciding how to vote. The Georgia Constitutional amendments, proposed House Bill, and my suggestions for what you should consider before deciding how to vote are as follows.

1. "Shall the Constitution of Georgia be amended so as to authorize the General Assembly to provide by general law for a state-wide homestead exemption that serves to limit increases in the assessed value of homesteads, but which any county, consolidated government, municipality, or local school system may opt out of upon the completion of certain procedures?"

Before You Vote, Research and Consider:

- a. What is the purpose of amending the Constitution, if the State’s local government, municipality, or local school system can just opt of the homestead exemption?
- b. Do I have enough information to make an informed decision about this constitutional amendment without knowing the “certain procedures” that my State’s local government, municipality, or local school system could use to opt out? Are the “certain procedures” already written and available for me to review?

2. "Shall the Constitution of Georgia be amended so as to provide for the Georgia Tax Court to be vested with the judicial power of the state and to have venue, judges, and jurisdiction concurrent with superior courts?"

Before You Vote, Research and Consider: