

Deborah Silcox

Candidate for Georgia House District 53

Housing, ADUs and Local Zoning Authority

Question:

As Georgia continues to grow, state policymakers have considered ways to increase housing supply, including policies affecting accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and local zoning.

What role, if any, should the General Assembly play in local land-use and zoning decisions, including ADUs, and how should the state balance housing needs with local control and the interests of established neighborhoods?

Deborah Silcox's Response:

I believe that local governments and not General Assembly should make zoning decisions. One size does not fit all, and zoning is different all over our state because we have different needs in different communities. For example, I voted against HB 1166 last year which would have allowed any landowner in Georgia to build an ADU or accessory dwelling unit anywhere on their property. In spite of the bill passing the Georgia House, I lobbied hard with the House leadership and the Georgia Senate to stop the bill from going to the Governors' desk. This law would have hurt property values in Buckhead and would have brought more traffic and potentially more crime to the Buckhead neighborhoods.

Public Safety and the Criminal Justice System

Question:

Public safety depends on law enforcement as well as an effective judicial and corrections system.

What changes, if any, should the General Assembly make to improve the enforcement of Georgia's criminal laws and the effectiveness of the state's courts, prosecution, corrections, and public-safety systems?

Deborah Silcox's Response:

I would like to see the House appropriate more funds towards solving longstanding criminal cases with DNA evidence and rape kits. Many crimes in our city go unsolved and devoting more resources would bring more criminals to justice and more victims closure and mental relief from these horrible incidents.

Education and Local Control

Question:

Recent legislation addressing student cell phone use in public schools is one example of the General Assembly setting statewide policy on an issue that also affects the day-to-day operation of local schools.

What role should the state play in setting education policy and which decisions do you believe are best left to local school districts and boards of education?

Deborah Silcox's Response:

The State Department of Education has an important role in making sure that all public schools fulfill the state educational requirements under the QBE or Quality Basic Education formula, and the Georgia Department of Education should build and maintain schools in all counties in our State. However, parents should have choices, and the business of schools should be competitive. There should be schools at every price point, and the county or city schools should have to compete with charter schools and private schools. Competition lifts all boats and makes every school accountable.