

## **Questions for State Representative Candidates in District 167:**

1. What is your position regarding (a) the consolidation of Glynn County and the City of Brunswick? b) Incorporation of St. Simons Island? c) Giving the citizens the right to vote on these questions?

### **Jeff Jones (Incumbent):**

Having now lived and experienced the dynamics of our community for 27 years, I believe we would strengthen our community and save our taxpayers money by eliminating duplicate services and municipal functions by combining those functions. For example, this could include a combined county-wide police department (while still retaining a separate, constitutional Sheriff's department); a combined fire department; a combined parks & recreation department; a combined community development department that gives greater, statutory authority to St. Simons Island community development actions.

A decision to combine/change these important functions or change the legal structures of our community should be at the will of the citizens by referendum.

### **Cedric King:**

At this time, I am unsupportive of consolidation. Many conversations concerning consolidation happen behind closed doors. I believe transparency in any effort that would affect the entire population of Glynn County and Brunswick is paramount. To date I have not seen a cohesive and digestible effort to bring leaders from all communities together to discuss realistic pros and cons around consolidation. These efforts tend to have a negative effect on the marginalized population of our community. I intend to ensure any push to consolidate makes sense for all communities involved.

At this time, I'm unsupportive of the incorporation measure. All residents of St. Simons Island deserve to fully understand the impact of incorporation. They should be able to understand and be willing to support the additional layers of government and the extent of services that will be needed to support incorporation. If I were voting to expand something, what does it look like beyond a Mayor, City Council and City Manager? Will we need our own police, fire, sanitation, recreation, maintenance, administration staff, etc.? Another consideration for me is, I want to know its full impact on the city of Brunswick and Glynn County.

I believe the citizens of Glynn County and Brunswick know what they are doing when they are allowed to vote on any measure. As to whether this measure would be brought forward to the ballot is a question that would need to be answered in a resounding cohesive voice from our entire community for me to consider supporting this type of local legislation at the state level.

2. What is your position regarding drilling off the coast of Georgia?

### **Jones:**

The petroleum industry has already completed preliminary testing of oil reserve potentials off the coast of Georgia. The findings suggest there is little evidence of sufficient oil reserves to make development or drilling off our shores economically viable. Simply stated, the likelihood of further drilling offshore the coast of GA is unlikely. There has been legitimate concern expressed about the harm that further testing could do to migrating whales, which we all learned

recently continue to be in decline. Oil industry representatives have stated this potential problem is easily solved by banning such testing during whale migration season; they support such a ban. Given the extremely flat nature of the ocean shelf off our shores, man-made offshore seabed structures and reefs, such as sunken cars and oil platforms, have been shown to dramatically increase the population of aquatic life.

**King:**

I would join the lawmakers who are leading bipartisan efforts in the state legislature to oppose offshore drilling in Georgia. These dangerous avenues of energy exploration jeopardize our beaches, wildlife, fishing, shrimping and tourism industries. These industries have been and continue to be the major driver behind our economy and need someone who is willing to protect them on the state level.

3. What can you, as a state legislator, do to bring opportunities for economic growth to Glynn County?

**Jones:**

By sponsoring and supporting legislation and policies that encourage economic development. For example, by supporting the growth of Spaceport Camden and the resulting high paying aerospace jobs it will foster. Another benefit of the spaceport initiative is that it will encourage southeast Georgia students to pursue STEM studies (science, technology, engineering, and math) which are the high paying jobs of the future. Conversely, legislators can help spur and promote economic growth and prosperity by opposing and working against legislation and policies that tend to hamper or strangle economic growth; for example, working against tax increase legislation, stopping the expansion of expensive state-level entitlement programs and growth of government.

**King:**

I believe one of the joys of being a legislator is having the ability to bring together strong cohorts of people to think about smart and innovative ways we make Brunswick and Glynn County attractive to new and emerging industries. By working hand in hand with the Georgia Department of Economic Development I will ensure that we have clear line of communication by which to make our presence known as one of the premier Georgia sites for new projects. We also have to make sure we are preparing our children for the jobs of tomorrow by challenging traditional K-12, charter school, Technical College System of Georgia, and our university system to create a clear pipeline for students from education to employment in sectors primed to grow in our region. We have seen this plan work in other places such as Augusta which through its strong leadership has transformed itself into one of the Nation's top cyber security hubs. With the right leadership that could be Brunswick and Glynn County. We have the resources, we have the talent, we need a plan that coalesces all tools at our disposal to make our region the clear choice for the next project here in Georgia. As Chairman of the Brunswick Glynn County Development Authority, I focused on our goal to, "Promote economic prosperity for Brunswick and Glynn County by assisting expansion of existing industries and securing new diversified industries to locate here and creating job opportunities and capital investments." This experience is what will guide me in making sure we spurn economic growth.

4. What do you feel are the top three issues facing Glynn County today?

**Jones:**

- Reducing crime and protecting our kids from violence while they are in school;
- Rebuilding critical infrastructure including our water and sewer systems;
- Preventing those individuals in our state, who do not have "lawful status", from receiving a Georgia Driver's License (instead they'll receive a GA "Driver Courtesy Card") thus helping to reduce fraud in our state voting system and reducing fraud and abuse in our many entitlement programs;
- Continuing to promote a slimmer state government; a number of years ago our state embarked on a plan to require "zero-based budgeting" by all of our many state agencies and commission; this effort seems to have stalled and needs a kick-start.

**King:**

- Improving and modernizing existing infrastructure
- Creating an innovative educational environment for our students and lifelong learners
- Helping produce a firmer foundation for our healthcare system to operate

5. In your role as a state legislator, do you believe you should you be driving an agenda that benefits Glynn County or waiting for the County and/or City Commissioners to ask for your help?

**Jones:**

My role as a State Representative is to represent all of the citizens of District 167 at the state level.

This requires a blend of responding to local government requests, such as the legislation I sponsored at the request of the Brunswick City Commission, to legislatively create a special tax district to promote economic development in the City of Brunswick. Similarly, I sponsored legislation, at the request of the Long County Board of Commissioners, to restructure the county commissioner election cycles.

There are also opportunities to sponsor or support legislation or appropriations requests that will benefit District 167 that may not have come at the request by the local government - coastal hurricane recovery funds and funds to clean up derelict watercraft that dot our coastline causing many hazards. Similarly, I sponsored legislation to protect our aquifers from possible coal ash contamination that, although strongly supported locally, did not originate from our local government. So, its a combination of both.

**King:**

The relationship with local legislators should be one of symbiotic growth. It will be important to work from a focused but flexible legislative agenda that meets the needs of our entire district. However, it will be extremely important to work with, update and educate our County and City Commissioners as opportunities present themselves to move our area forward.

6. What can you do, in your role, to help Glynn County address and solve the current issues with its infrastructure?

**Jones:**

Ideally by identifying and enacting solutions that have a minimal impact on our local taxpayers and ratepayers, so that our local authorities can obtain funds that will be used for infrastructure projects. Another option is to identify and change existing Georgia law that creates greater flexibility for our locals to obtain much needed funds, such a tweaking Georgia's "MOST" law (municipal option sales tax).

Otherwise, all zoning and planning ordinances are controlled locally, as they should be. See my comments above about giving greater statutory authority to St. Simons Island community development actions.

**King:**

Infrastructure issues in our community not only create water quality and safety issues, it also creates barriers and gaps to economic development. Looking at the big picture as it pertains to the future growth of Brunswick and Glynn County I have to ask, what do we want our community to look like in 2030, 2050, and 2080 not just 2020? I would love for the next generation to say that the community leadership of today left them with a road map and foundation to succeed.

One way to tackle this would be to use the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax, or "SPLOST". Many in our community are familiar with "E-SPLOST" which added additional taxes to residents and visitors to pay for many of the educational facility upgrades we see in our area. Our community rallied around the needs of the students and educators of our school system and you can now see the results. I would push for a similar measure aimed at meeting our infrastructure needs head on and with community buy-in. Termed the "I-SPLOST," or Infrastructure Special Option Sales Tax, our community could choose how and when we need to fund many of our area's needs.

The time is now for us all to sit down together and address infrastructure needs and the economic development gaps those needs create. As stated earlier, we owe it to our children to provide a fiscally responsible direction, new beginning, and a pathway for moving forward together.