



GEORGIA EQUALITY – 2002 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

RESPONSE FROM KAREN HANDEL CANDIDATE FOR DISTRICT 2 FULTON COUNTY COMMISSIONER

1. **What are the two most important issues all residents in Fulton County will face in 2003 & 2004?**

Taxes and comprehensive planning for growth and infrastructure are the two key issues. I will work to increase government efficiency so that the dollars you do pay are spent wisely, while at the same time working to reduce the tax burden on all citizens. With serious infrastructure needs in the area of roads, water, sewer, parks, libraries, and public safety, we have to set priorities and establish the county budget accordingly. As we work to manage our growth and address our infrastructure needs, we must have stronger comprehensive planning that makes our quality of life a priority while encouraging high quality growth where we need it most and coordinating for today's infrastructure needs and tomorrow's demands.

2. **Do you have any gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender constituents in your district? If so, can you tell us a little about your interaction with any of these individuals or groups?**

District 2 encompasses all of the Fulton County, including the City of Atlanta, so the GLBT community is a significant constituency group. I have numerous gay and lesbian friends, and my interaction is mostly on a personal level with these individuals. I am also a member of the Log Cabin Republicans and participated in this year's Pride Weekend activities and attended the recent Georgia Equity forum. I believe it is important that, if we are to achieve real progress for Fulton County, we must reach out to all segments of our community, and I am committed to this.

3. **Have any gay constituents contacted you? What issues have they raised or discussed?**

I have been contacted by several gay constituents, including friends and colleagues and members of the Log Cabin Republicans. Generally, I have found that the issues for the gay community mirror those for our community at large. Our taxes are too high. Our roads are congested and increasingly unsafe. Growth and infrastructure are not adequately coordinated and planned. The two issues specific to the gay community that have been raised are discrimination and domestic partner benefits.

4. Do you support legislation to provide domestic partner benefits to Fulton County employees?

Yes. I believe in overall fairness for all Fulton County employees and will work with the GLBT community groups to fine tune workable legislation.

5. Many individuals whose employers provide domestic partner benefits can only gain access to these benefits if they are registered as a domestic partner. Currently, the City of Atlanta is the only government entity in GA that has a domestic partner registry. Would you support establishing a domestic partner registry?

I have real concerns regarding privacy issues as related to a domestic partner registry. I would prefer to apply my private sector experience to seek an equitable package that addresses these privacy concerns as well as fairness.

6. Why should the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender Fulton County residents support your candidacy?

I am a fair and open-minded individual who is committed to being accessible to all constituent groups, including gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgenders. I will have an open door and seat a the table for GLBT leaders, so that we can find common ground solutions to address the issues and challenges before us.

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