



COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ALABAMA LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 2

1. Why are you running for this seat?

I am running because I am a proud Alabamian and resident of the 2nd Congressional District. I intimately know our communities' diverse needs, rural and urban areas, such as access to affordable healthcare, good-paying jobs, safe and affordable housing, quality education, and clean air and water. I believe that the American dream is a promise, not a privilege.

2. How do you plan to address disparities in educational opportunities and resources among different communities within our district?

To address disparities in educational opportunities and resources among different communities within our district, I propose the following:

- *Equitable Funding:
Advocate for equitable funding distribution to ensure that schools in underserved communities receive adequate resources to meet the needs of their students. This includes funding for modern facilities, updated technology, and quality teaching materials. We understand Title I exists, but how can we go beyond that with additional need-based funding.*
- *Teacher Support and Training:
Invest in professional development programs and support systems for teachers in underserved communities to enhance their effectiveness and retention. This includes providing mentorship opportunities, resources for classroom management, and training in culturally responsive teaching practices. We need more teachers in Alabama, and creating more pathways for growth and good pay will give Alabama a competitive edge. We are ranked at the bottom in terms of our educational systems and I intend to draw down on federal funding for the 2nd Congressional District to be able to recruit and retain more teachers.*
- *Addressing Socioeconomic Factors:
Collaborate with community organizations and local government agencies to address socioeconomic factors that impact educational outcomes, such as poverty, housing instability, and access to healthcare. By*

providing wraparound services and support to students and their families, we can create a more conducive learning environment. We can put money into infrastructure all day, but if the child's needs aren't being addressed, If a child is hungry or dealing with trauma at home, they won't be able to function as their higher self.

- *Closing the Digital Divide:
Bridge the digital divide by expanding access to broadband in underserved communities. This ensures that all students can access online learning resources and participate fully in the digital age.*
- *Community Engagement:
Foster partnerships between schools, parents, businesses, and community organizations to support educational initiatives and provide additional resources and opportunities for students. This includes mentorship programs, internships, and extracurricular activities that enrich the educational experience. I have been on the frontlines of creating sound partnerships in East Alabama through my community resource center, The Curtis House and this is just another way we can expand this work across the 2nd Congressional District through constituent services.*

3. Given the rising cost of housing in our area, what measures will you support to ensure affordable housing options for all residents, including low-income families and individuals?

There are many factors that impact affordable housing, but at the end of the day, housing is a right that every American deserves to have.

- *Expand Affordable Housing Programs: Advocate for the expansion of federal and state affordable housing programs that provide financial assistance, subsidies, and incentives to developers to create affordable housing units. This includes programs such as the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) and the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program. We see much work being done under the leadership of Secretary of HUD Marsha Fudge, but I would work to bring dollars back to the district specifically to assist our community in equitable development and house rehabilitation programs as well.*

- *Incentivize Mixed-Income Developments:*
We have seen in many communities across the country that the development of mixed-income housing developments that include a range of housing options, from affordable to market-rate units. Providing incentives to developers, such as density bonuses or streamlined permitting processes, can help spur the creation of mixed-income communities that promote economic diversity and inclusion. It allows us to bring new business in while still ensuring all Alabamians have access and get to experience the growth at affordable rates.
- *Protect Tenants' Rights:*
Advocate for stronger tenant protections and safeguards to prevent displacement and ensure housing stability for renters. This includes measures such as rent control, just-cause eviction protections, and tenant relocation assistance in cases of redevelopment or gentrification.
- *Promote Homeownership Opportunities:*
Support programs and initiatives that help low-income families and individuals become homeowners, such as down payment assistance programs, homeownership counseling services, and affordable mortgage products. Increasing access to homeownership can build wealth and stability for underserved communities. In addition to ensuring that rent payments can help with building credit, which in many instances it doesn't.

4. With budget constraints, how will you prioritize funding for social services, such as mental health programs, addiction treatment, and support for vulnerable populations?

- *Community-Based Resources:*
It's critical that we invest in community-based resources and organizations that provide crucial support services to vulnerable populations, including homeless individuals, veterans, and survivors of domestic violence. This may include funding for shelters, food assistance programs, job training programs, and case management services to help individuals access the resources they need to stabilize and rebuild their lives.
- *Collaborative Partnerships:*

Collaborate with local government agencies, nonprofit organizations, healthcare providers, and other stakeholders to leverage resources and maximize impact. By working together, we can pool our resources, share best practices, and coordinate services to better meet the needs of our community.

5. What steps do you think the government should take to address police brutality against communities of color?

To address police brutality against communities of color, the federal government must enact comprehensive police reform legislation, including accountability measures like body cameras and independent oversight boards, while reevaluating qualified immunity. Investing in community policing initiatives, establishing civilian oversight boards, and reallocating police budgets towards social services will create trust and collaboration between law enforcement and communities. Addressing systemic racism within law enforcement, promoting diversity, and supporting legislative initiatives for police accountability and criminal justice reform are crucial steps toward building a more just and equitable society for all.

6. Do you support an individual's right to reproductive rights?

Unequivocally yes. First and foremost, I am a proud person of faith, and the laws being pushed by conservatives are often rooted in racism and systemic oppression. It's crucial to acknowledge this reality.

We cannot ignore the disproportionate impact these abortion laws have on marginalized communities, particularly poor women and women of color. As a black man who grew up in the projects, I refuse to support any measures that further criminalize women, exacerbating the already alarming rates of incarceration, especially in states like Alabama.

It's not my place, as a man, to insert myself into the deeply personal decisions made between a woman and her doctor regarding her reproductive health. We must respect women's autonomy and trust them to make the best choices for themselves without unnecessary interference or judgment.



7. Will you make it a priority to get the John Lewis Voting Rights Act passage?

Absolutely. I am committed to supporting and advocating for the restoration of the John Lewis Voting Rights Act. This critical piece of legislation is essential for safeguarding our democracy and ensuring that every citizen's voice is heard at the ballot box.

Furthermore, I will actively work to prevent voter intimidation and combat the discriminatory impact of problematic voter ID laws. It is imperative that we uphold the integrity of our electoral process and ensure that every eligible voter can exercise their fundamental right to participate in our democracy without fear or barriers.

Please return your responses to the questionnaire by February 5, 2024 to beverlycooper@standupmobile.org.