

# Atlanta Democratic Socialists of America



November 30  
2021 Runoff  
Voter Guide

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# November 30th, 2021 Runoff Voter Guide

Electoral Committee, Atlanta Democratic Socialists of America

Thank you for using our voter guide for the November 30th municipal runoff elections! This guide was written by the Atlanta DSA Electoral Committee and is limited in scope to address the runoff elections for Atlanta Mayor, City Council, and School Board. Authors approached writing this guide with socialist values and a progressive, pragmatic lens. We see this as an opportunity to share information with fellow Atlanta DSA members, Atlanta voters, and other community members about the central questions shaping Atlanta politics.

Key issues that resurface throughout this voter guide include the vote to [clear-cut the South Atlanta forest and build an 85-acre, \\$90 million Cop City](#), the long-running campaign to [close the Atlanta City Detention Center](#) (ACDC), and grassroots efforts to defund the Atlanta Police Department, including [the Rayshard Brooks Bill](#) and [the vote on the FY22 police budget](#). Where applicable, we assess the candidates based on their stances and votes on these topics. (Special thanks to [Mainline Zine](#) for their thorough coverage of these issues!)

This guide makes no endorsements. However, since many people plan on voting and want guidance from a socialist perspective, we use this guide to provide assessments of candidates and identify those we believe are likely to cause the least harm. These assessments come from Atlanta DSA's Electoral Committee, not the entire Atlanta DSA chapter. If you already plan on voting, we encourage you to consider which candidates will cause the least harm and be most responsive to grassroots pressure when in office.

Join Atlanta DSA to work towards building a better future. The systemic change we need cannot come from voting for the lesser-evil. Only a mass movement of millions of working people can facilitate the transition to a truly democratic and socialist society, one in which the means of production are democratically and socially controlled. We need to build a working-class party: a mass democratic political organization capable of taking state power with a strategy for social transformation. Our economy and society has been stolen from us by the ultra-rich, but we can take it back if we band together and fight: [www.atldsa.org/join](http://www.atldsa.org/join)

# How To Vote

In order to find your polling place or nearby early voting locations, to request an absentee ballot, or to view a sample ballot, please visit the state website, Georgia My Voter Page at [www.mvp.sos.ga.gov](http://www.mvp.sos.ga.gov)

Find your City Council Representative [here](#), and a map of Atlanta City Council Districts [here](#).

## How Atlanta's Government Works

Atlanta, like most cities in Georgia, is governed by a mayor-council system. The relationship between the Mayor and City Council is similar to the relationship between the President and Congress in the federal government. The Mayor leads the city government on a day-to-day basis, acting as its chief executive officer. The City Council functions as a legislative branch for the City of Atlanta, debating and voting on legislation to determine the city's laws, raise funds through taxes, and allocate that funding to different city projects.

The City Council has sixteen members: one President, twelve district representatives, and three At-Large representatives—each elected to represent distinct "residency posts" (composed of four districts each). To run for an At-Large Council seat, a candidate has to live in the specific "residency post." Atlanta residents can vote in elections for all three at-large representatives regardless of where they live.

## Timeline

November 17	Early Voting Begins
November 19	Last Day to Request Absentee Ballot for Runoff Election
November 24	Early Voting End
November 30	Runoff Election Day

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# Mayor

We have no recommendation in this election.

The Nov. 2nd Mayoral elections resulted in a runoff between current City Council President Felicia Moore and At-large Council Member Andre Dickens, with Moore coming out far ahead with 41% percent of the vote, compared with Dickens at 23%. Corrupt former Mayor Kasim Reed narrowly came in third place behind Dickens despite having raised the most funds. Reed by far took the most pro-police stances during campaigning, having sought to increase the police force by 750 officers and keep open the Atlanta City Detention Center (ACDC). Reed was also endorsed by the local Police Union.

While both Dickens and Moore positioned themselves as “progressive” alternatives to Kasim Reed, both of these candidates worked to undermine grassroots opposition to Cop City and the [closure of ACDC](#). Felicia Moore attended a #StopCopCity People's Town Hall organized by Atlanta DSA and allied community organizations, [but dodged questions and refused to oppose the proposal](#) despite overwhelming opposition from residents. Dickens voted in favor of the Cop City proposal. Both candidates highlight crime as a central component of their campaigns and seek to expand the already over-funded police force in terms of number of officers and surveillance technology.

Felicia Moore, a long-time political ally of [racist Republican Mary Norwood](#), is shown to have a disproportionate amount of support from [white, affluent, Republican voters](#). Moore has served on City Council for over two decades, while Dickens has served since 2013. Both candidates rely [overwhelmingly on large donations for fundraising](#). We anticipate that Dickens and Moore would be eager champions for big business interests if elected.

As the election currently stands, progressive forces in Atlanta aren't significantly united behind any candidate for Mayor. As such, we have no recommendation in the Mayor's race.

## Council President: Natalyn Archibong

We believe Natalyn Archibong is the candidate likely to cause the least harm in office.

The City Council President only votes to break ties, however, they facilitate meetings and hold considerable power over the City Council's procedures.

Natalyn Archibong is the incumbent Councilmember in District 5. During the final Cop City vote, she was one of only four Councilmembers to vote and speak against the proposal, [explicitly citing outrage against the proposal among her citizen constituents](#) as a key factor in her vote. Her actions regarding Cop City demonstrate that Archibong is more responsive to public pressure and grassroots activism than the typical Councilmember. Although she is certainly not a socialist, an Archibong Council Presidency may better enable mass movements and community organizations to influence the City Council's future decision-making.

[Doug Shipman](#) is a three-time former CEO of the National Center for Civil and Human Rights, the Woodruff Arts Center, and BrightHouse Consulting. He is in favor of a fully-staffed police force, cracking down on street racing, and building a new cop training facility.

## City Council At-Large Posts

The City Council has three at-large seats. All Atlanta voters may vote in all three elections, regardless of where they live.

### Post 3 At-Large: Keisha Waites

We believe Keisha Waites is the candidate likely to cause the least harm in office.

Meet the [“First Lady”](#) of the City of Atlanta Department of Corrections, Jacki Labat! If you weren't sure whether we were living in a police state, perhaps the candidacy of Fulton County Sheriff's (Pat Labat) wife will convince you. Labat's victory presents a real threat in that it would further strengthen the ties between City Council and the carceral state at a time when Sheriff Labat is hoping for Fulton County to seize the [very jail \(ACDC\)](#) which [activists have been working to close](#). Not only is Labat a steadfast supporter of police, but her corporate background lends itself to be easily influenced by corporate entities just like the Atlanta Police Foundation.

Labat's opponent in the runoff is former State Representative [Keisha Waites](#). Waites supports the full funding and staffing of the police force, plus the expansion of surveillance equipment such as cameras and costly ShotSpotters throughout the city. While both candidates are

pro-police, we believe that Labat's close connection to the Sheriff's office makes her a worse choice for office, and recommend voting for Keisha Waites.

## City Council Districts

### District 1

We have no recommendation in this election.

[Nathan Clubb](#) is a former State of Georgia employee whose website advocates for expanded affordable housing and funding for P.A.D. so that it can run 24 hours, 7 days a week. He advocates for a relocation of Cop City, but is still in favor of building a new training center.

Jason Winston is a marketing and consulting business owner who advocates for expanded affordable housing, expansion of P.A.D. and support for small businesses.

Jason Winston (29.40%)

Nathan Clubb (27.52%)

### District 3: Erika Estrada

We believe Erika Estrada is the candidate likely to cause the least harm in office.

AccuLedger founder Erika Estrada and Capacity Builder Inc. CEO Byron Amos made the runoff for the District 3 race in the Nov. 2 election. Prior to the runoff, both Estrada and Amos led the pack in fundraising, each raising a total of \$15k as of the September 30 [campaign finance report](#). While Amos has [close ties with the Atlanta Police Department](#) and owns a private security company "End All Threat Security," Estrada has committed to police reform and serves on the board of Initiative for Affordable Housing, a nonprofit that helps homeless Atlantans find resources for support.

### District 4: Jason Dozier

We believe Jason Dozier is the candidate likely to cause the least harm in office.

Jason Dozier is running as a progressive alternative to 27-year incumbent Clela Winslow. Dozier ran previously, in 2017, losing the runoff against Winslow by [less than 250 votes](#). Dozier is in favor of closing the Atlanta City Detention Center and supports relocating Cop City away from the Old Atlanta Prison Farm site. However, he supports building a training facility

elsewhere. Dozier's website advocates for ending the 1033 exchange program which provides surplus military weapons to local police. While Dozier is a standard Democrat, we believe he is a less-entrenched alternative to corrupt incumbent Clea Winslow.

Over the course of her tenure, Clea Winslow has consistently sided with big business, developers, and police over the interests of working people, who she [openly disdains](#). Winslow is pro-police, having voted against the Rayshard Brooks bill and for both Cop City and the FY22 police budget increase. She has committed electoral fraud on multiple occasions, refusing to file campaign finance reports, using [taxpayer money to pay for campaign events and materials](#), and even [exploiting the homeless with sub-minimum-wage campaign jobs](#).

## **District 5: Liliana Bakhtiari**

We believe Liliana Bakhtiari is the candidate likely to cause the least harm in office.

Liliana Bakhtiari ran against and [nearly beat](#) Archibong in 2018. While Bakhtiari is no socialist (she advocates for [filling police vacancies](#) which have already been budgeted for, and "community policing" — a misleading term which often expands police presence and narrowly defines "community" to mean homeowners and business interests), she is likely the most progressive candidate in the race. Her website advocates increased funding for the Policing Alternatives and Diversion Program (P.A.D), a \$15 minimum wage (although this legislation must be passed at the state level), the expansion of affordable housing, and support for homeless Atlantans. She has also voiced support for local Nabisco and [IATSE strikers](#), and spoke [against the Cop City legislation](#) early on when it was first introduced.

Opponent Mandy Mahoney also advocates for filling police vacancies, increasing the overall number of officers, and expanding P.A.D. Mahoney [opposes](#) the use of vacant land to build affordable housing.

## **District 12: Antonio Lewis**

Last but not least is the 12th district election with union and community organizer Antonio Lewis running against fifth-term incumbent Joyce Sheperd. We believe Antonio Lewis is the candidate likely to cause the least harm in office.

[Antonio Lewis](#) has publicly supported the #StopCopCity and George Floyd movements. His website cites food deserts and income inequality as some of the major issues plaguing Atlantans. Lewis was also endorsed by the Atlanta-North Georgia Labor Council. For these reasons, we believe that if elected, he would expand community organizations' and organized labor's influence over the City Council's. Lewis won 40.65% of the vote during Nov. 2nd elections, compared to Sheperd's 41.57%.



Joyce Sheperd, on the other hand, is responsible for the worst piece of legislation of the year, [Cop City!](#) She [shoved the Cop City legislation](#) through City Council without the consent, feedback, or buy-in from her constituents, at the behest of the corporate Atlanta Police Foundation. She also authorized giving the Atlanta Police Foundation a total of \$175,000 from her and other Councilmembers' district funds to purchase security cameras for their respective districts.