

COALITION FOR A BETTER MEMPHIS
Shelby County Commissioner Candidate Questionnaire
Election Date: May 6, 2014

**AN ELECTRONIC VERSION OF THIS FILE CAN BE RECEIVED BY SENDING AN EMAIL
TO peggy@bettermemphis.org**

Name: Walter L. Bailey, Jr.

District for which you are running: District 8

Section 1: Qualifications and Background (2 questions) Section 2:
Vision and Strategies (4 questions)
Section 3: Improving the System of Government (4 questions)

1. QUALIFICATIONS AND BACKGROUND

- 1. Describe your qualifications for holding the office of Shelby County Commissioner.**

As mentioned in my position statement my qualifications to serve as commissioner result from my unique long political history. During this history I worked with many commission bodies, county administrators, and elected officials in identifying revenue sources with which to provide a sound budget and fiscal stability. This has enabled me to contribute to the continued growth and progress of county government in many areas. Also as mentioned, my service as the Commissioner's representative in the school merger mediations with the municipalities provide me with a special insight and perspectives regarding forthcoming challenges.

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- 2. What events or experiences caused you to decide to run for this office?**

I seek reelection to this office because of the vast experience I have in facing many challenges in our community. I feel compelled to continue to provide whatever skill, knowledge and ability toward its growth and development so that we can all enjoy a higher quality of life for ourselves and future generations.

NAME: WALTER BAILEY

2. VISION AND STRATEGIES

- 1. In your opinion, what are the (problems or opportunities) facing Shelby County in the next four years?**

In my Opinion adequate school funding of the unified school system is a number one priority facing county government. Revenue deficiencies are sure to occur in view of the loss of revenue attributable to decreased student population, charter school and the expansion of the voucher program .

2. The second challenge in my opinion is a continuing cost of our pension plan and retiree's benefits.

3. The third challenge is the cost of aging infrastructure which must be met.

4. I also see a strong need for more female representation at the Commission level.

- 2. How would you recommend we continue to pay down County debt and still fulfill the financial obligations of the County? What budget priorities must take precedence?**

The County's financial obligation is reflected in its budget of \$1.2 billion. This includes the county general fund, school funding and debt service. These are the three budget priorities which are primarily met by revenues from property taxes.

SHELBY COUNTY COMMISSIONER CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME: WALTER BAILEY

- 3. What is are your views regarding the best way to fund public education of Shelby County and Memphis children?**

With what's available it appears that property taxes and the wheel tax are the best method for education funding.

- 4. Some people believe that urban communities should adopt policies that encourage what is called “smart growth.” Do you believe Shelby County should have a general policy about new residential and commercial developments? If so, what should that policy be?**

In my opinion redevelopment inside urban areas and the redevelopment of old structures would contribute to smart growth.

SHELBY COUNTY COMMISSIONER CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

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- 5. Are you satisfied with the economic growth (jobs and income) of Shelby County today? If not, what should the county government do to improve economic development efforts? What incentives would you support or oppose be used to attract future economic development?**

I am not satisfied with the economic growth of Shelby County and the incentives I would encourage would be to seek to provide a qualified workforce.

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3. IMPROVING THE SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

- 1. What do you regard as the greatest obstacle or barrier to economic growth in Shelby County today? What can the County Commission do to reduce that impediment?**

It is my firmly held belief that the cycle of poverty is the most fundamental challenge to economic growth. We can address this obstacle with greater educational training and development.

- 2. What is your philosophy about offering incentives to companies that are considering major new investments or job expansions in Shelby County?**

My philosophy is counter to offering generous incentives but as a practical matter we don't have much choice in most instances. However I do feel that in some instances the taxpayers and the community as a whole would be better served by taking a tougher position against these incentives. In some instances prudence would dictate that we say no.

- 3. What is your position on consolidation of city and county governments?**

I firmly believe that consolidation would avoid duplication of services in some instances such as law enforcement and encourage a broader community spirit. It would also provide a more equitable tax formula and efficiency.

SHELBY COUNTY COMMISSIONER CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

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- 4. When you complete your service as commissioner, what do you want your legacy to be?**

I would want my legacy to provide an example of dedication and commitment to public education, fair opportunity, and greater racial and cultural growth and tolerance. Though I am the first to admit we have had significant progress.