

Meridian Tea Party
2011 Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate: Kyle Rutledge

Office aspired to hold: District Five Supervisor of Lauderdale County

Campaign point of Contact: Kyle Rutledge

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Education: Bachelor Degree in Secondary Education - Social Studies

Experience: Four years teaching 7th grade Science

Business Experience: My father, Tim Rutledge, has owned and operated an auto repair shop for the past thirty years. I have assisted him through keeping his books and day to day operations.

If elected to office, what will be your three top priorities?

1. Serving the people of District Five and Lauderdale County as a whole.
2. Promoting unity between county and city government to create an environment to entice business to come to Lauderdale County, which will provide jobs and revenue.
3. I would like to see the taxpayers' hard-earned money being used in more of a manner in which they can benefit from; such as emergency services in Lauderdale County and parks and recreation.

Simply put, what qualifies you for this office? I have a tremendous passion for Lauderdale County, and I am very driven to see positive changes made if I am elected.

How would you describe your political views? I am a conservative that believes in the principles of good morals and hard work. These are among the principles that our fore

fathers set as they established this great country we are so blessed to live in. I make every effort to uphold myself to these principles.

What are the most important values and ethics you believe in and demonstrate as a leader? I am a firm believer in the character traits of respect, integrity, and professionalism. I also believe a man is only as good as his word. Without shame, I can also say that I seek Godly wisdom that can only be provided through prayer and meditation on God's word. I do not make any decisions without first seeking the will of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Identify three of your most important leadership accomplishment?

1. Director of recreation for our Awana program at Bethany Baptist Church
2. 7th grade teacher and football coach at Southeast Middle School
3. Being Salutatorian of my graduating class from Southeast High School

What is the proper role of government? The role of government is to provide duties and services to the public.

Are ethics as important as economics in election? Ethics are the moral principles that govern one's behavior and decisions. We have to have elected officials with good principles and morals. Economics are a vital part of any election; however, I would much rather see and know that this realm of government is being influenced and overseen by persons of upstanding character rather than the alternative.

Leaders often deal with conflict. Describe a recent significant conflict you have had to handle, what was the outcome? Are you satisfied with the outcome? Could you have handled it better? How? Being a middle school teacher and coach, I am forced to deal with and resolve conflicts on a daily basis. Conflicts between students, teachers, and

administration arise often in the school atmosphere. Ask any teacher you know. I strive to be a teacher and coach that kids can turn to in time of conflict, and I am often looked to as a “mediator” of sorts when their lives are in turmoil. I strive to remain positive despite added stresses that teachers sometimes encounter. My coworkers know that I possess this positive attitude, and many of them often look to me as a source of encouragement.

What is your position with regard to the statement ‘... to the people’s right to keep and bear arms? Our Constitution gives us this right, and I believe it should *never* be taken away from us.

America’s federal deficit has reached an all-time high, being measured in numbers never before expressed to the people. If elected, what can you do to reverse this trend locally? I plan to use common sense spending and not be wasteful with the tax payers’ money.

How do you feel about the economic outlook of Meridian, Lauderdale County, and/or Mississippi? I would not want to live in any other state, county, or city. Meridian and Lauderdale County has potential to go forward, but we need unity in our county and city governments in order for us to move in that direction.

How do you believe illegal immigration does/will affect this area and specifically your office should you win? I believe if someone is living here illegally they should be deported to their country of origin. The illegal immigrant could be taking jobs and services away from citizens who have a right to them.

Are there tax measures you would advocate to assist in job creation? I do not have anything specifically in mind, but I plan to be open to the ideas of fellow elected officials

and citizens of Lauderdale County. We are desperately in need of job creation in the county.

Do you believe children would get a better education if parents had the right to choose their children's school? As a teacher at an inner city school for two years, I can honestly say that my qualities as a teacher were no less or more than they are now that I am at a "more desirable" school in terms of parents wanting or not wanting to send their children to a certain school. As it currently stands, if a school does not meet or exceed criteria set by the state, a parent is given the option to decide to send his/her child to a school within the same district that does meet the criteria.

Do you support the "Charter School" concept of education? Charter schools benefit the select students who attend the schools. My only concern is that education in Mississippi is under-funded as it is.

Should teachers be required to pass standards examinations pertaining to the discipline they teach? Currently, teachers must complete and pass a Praxis II examination in order to teach their subject matter or have 18 hours of class pertaining to that subject in order to teach it. I do believe that a teacher's license should reflect "Highly Qualified" status in the discipline/s they teach. As it currently stands, the requirements I mentioned in the latter sentence allow a teacher to achieve "Highly Qualified" status as they are met; therefore, I believe that the current system suffices in assuring that our teachers are educated concerning what they are teaching.

What are your views of the current school curriculum, textbooks, and educational results in our area and what changes, if any, would you advocate? We have some great teachers in Lauderdale County who do an outstanding job educating our students in life and

subject matter; however, I do believe that too much emphasis is placed on standardized tests and their results. This comes directly to us as teachers from the state level, and it trickles down to them from the federal government. If elected as a local supervisor, I believe the best thing I could do for the education system in Lauderdale County is to work cooperatively with local superintendents and other governments (city and state) in order to see that what is best for Lauderdale County, in terms of education and our future, is accomplished.

It has been suggested that the Department of Education (and the office of the Secretary of Education) is an unnecessary extravagance. Should this government agency be abolished and bring control of education back to a state or local level? If this were 50 or even 30 years ago, I would have said yes. However, our students must be able to compete in a global economy today. There is much competition nationally and globally for college acceptance and jobs. Our students must be prepared to compete with students from other states and countries. The Common Core Standards are seeking to do just that. They will be implemented in my school district this upcoming school year, and I look forward to seeing how it affects my students' learning.

Are you in favor of seeking funds from the Federal Government for projects in Lauderdale County? Yes, as long as it saves the tax payers money and there is no giving up of county or state control to the federal government.

Does government at any level create jobs? Yes, I believe that jobs can be created by any level of government.

Do you favor indefinite extension of unemployment benefits for out-of-work people in Mississippi and how should those benefits be funded? There are many unemployed

people in Mississippi, but there should be a time limit for someone to find a job as well as documented true effort in seeking employment. As it currently stands, I do believe that the system is being abused.

Should Mississippi's public sector employees be unionized or be able to collectively bargain? Employees needed to be treated with respect, but people whose jobs are those of public servants should not be able to cease their service. We have all seen on the news recently what kind of chaos can erupt when this occurs.

Comments: I would like to thank the Meridian Tea Party for doing this so the public can see how the candidates stand on different issues. If I am elected I will work as hard as I can to be a servant and make positive changes for the people of District Five and Lauderdale County as a whole. I will be accessible to the people to hear and listen to their input on various issues. I tell my students all of the time how blessed we are to live in a country where we are able to make our own decisions and choices concerning elected officials. First and foremost, I ask that you get out and vote on August 2nd. Secondly, and most importantly, I ask that you choose me, Kyle Rutledge, as your Republican candidate for District 5 Supervisor of Lauderdale County.