

CANDIDATE: JAMES "J.T." BROWN



Are you an active military member or veteran?

Yes

No

Educational Background (Please list all degrees and certifications)

Doctorate (ABD) Management and Organizational Leadership; M.S.A. Administration; B.A. Political Science, CPP Certified Protection Professional via ASIS, P.O.S.T Certified

Have you run for office previously?

Yes

No

Please tell us about any volunteer work you've done in the last 5 years?

I have served the communities of Fulton, Gwinnett, and Clayton Counties through my fraternity, church membership, non-profit organization affiliations, and my family's flagship initiatives. My volunteer work focuses on the youth, mothers facing housing insecurity, men who are transforming their lives, hospice patients, voters, and single mothers.

My volunteer work includes (but, is not limited to): Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. (served alongside my fraternity since 1997 to conduct voter registration drives, mentor the youth and students, host food and clothing drives, participate in fundraisers that support non-profit organizations such as Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, Peace Corp, and March of Dimes); Our Lady Perpetual Help Home (volunteer at Catholic hospice, visiting and comforting cancer patients, consoling family members); Ebenezer Baptist Church (Church Ambassador, Men's Day Choir member, Outreach Ministry volunteer, served men at Atlanta Missions who are overcoming homelessness, supported Christmas toy drive, volunteer for Back to School Drives), Our House (promote literacy by reading books to resident children, co-sponsor and co-host Pamper Party & Wellness Fair for mothers residing in the shelter, sponsor and host of Father's Day Dinner (2023) for dad's residing in the shelter); As an individual, I have fed and prayed with a group of men experiencing housing insecurity; I have been meeting with the men on the street corners and under Atlanta bridges to provide prayer, answer questions, and direct them to resources since 2006; Boy Scout Troop Leader for my son's Troop; Central United Methodist Church (weekly food pantry coordinator) Elizabeth Baptist Church (youth basketball team annual banquet speaker); served as a guest speaker on numerous for local non-profit organizations to discuss "The Officer and the Public," which covers tips on how Black youth should interact with law enforcement.

Why are you interested in this office?

I am interested in running for this office because the citizens of Fulton County deserve a Sheriff who is a "Law Enforcement CEO." I have law enforcement experience, business acumen, and the fiscal education to run an efficient organization.

The Sheriff's Office runs like a small city with the sheriff operating much like a mayor. I have run a successful private business since 2005. I have an educational background in business, administration, and finance. I am the only candidate who has successfully managed million-dollar budgets, negotiated contracts, operated in HR, and understands the application of statistical data. For the jail to run humanely and efficiently, the sheriff must understand their full scope of duties which includes the CEO role.

I am the only candidate who has worked in all three major divisions (jails, courts, law enforcement), and I understand the interrelationship of the three branches.

I am interested in this office because I have a plan to eliminate the negligent deaths in the jail while partnering with elected officials, community partners, non-profit organizations, and faith-based organizations to create humane conditions for all incarcerated persons.

I am interested in this office because I have the fiscal knowledge to manage a balanced budget while being a watchdog for every taxpayer dollar.

I am interested in being the next Sheriff of Fulton County because I have considered the comprehensive job description, not just one aspect, and know that I am the most qualified candidate.

What interaction, if any, have you had with the Fulton County Jail?

I started my career as a deputy where I was assigned to the jail where I worked on the floor. In this role, you learn to be a good caregiver of the incarcerated persons and a good investigator in resolving disputes. I also learned to employ exceptional communication skills (which include active listening, translating nonverbal cues, and commissioning emotional intelligence).

Then, I moved to the medical unit of the jail. There, I worked with the nurses and doctors to ensure that incarcerated persons received their requested medical attention.

From there, I moved to the administrative unit. In this role, I wrote bonds, and updated the detained person's profile after court appearance to facilitate release, transport to prison, or bond.

When I worked in the court division, I worked in the Court Transfer Unit. In this role, I transported detained persons from jail to court hearings. My interaction with the jail in this role was unique because I utilized the same classification and segregation skills honed while working inside the jail.

On this side of the jail, I had to ensure an exact match of the court docket and incarcerated persons. My responsibility was to keep incarcerated persons separate from co-defendants, state evidence witnesses, or rival gang members. After safely transporting the incarcerated person to court, I was then responsible for their safe return to jail. This is an example of how two of the three divisions must interact.

I, having worked in the court division, understand the importance of processing expediting paperwork from the courts to the jails so that detained persons can: receive their bond for release, receive their clearance to go home, or receive their sentencing to begin serving their time. These are matters of importance that help reduce the jail population.

When I worked in the law enforcement division, my interaction with the jail was as an arresting officer. I served warrants; then, transported the fugitive to jail. In this capacity, I learned to process the paperwork needed to deliver to the administration unit of the jail.

I am the only candidate who has arrested fugitives and transported inmates (or fugitives) to jail. This is another example of how the three divisions must interact.

Finally, in 2022, as a reserve retiree, I volunteered to assist in a jail shakedown. The jail conditions were inhumane, there was a lack of leadership and a clear absence of institutional knowledge. Inmates were in underwear, sleeping on floors, showers were broken, and locks on the doors did not work. I have already begun assembling a management team to fix these problems once I am elected.

In sum, my interaction in jail ranges from the perspective of working in all three divisions. For this reason, I am the only candidate with a multidimensional viewpoint of jail operations.

How long have you been a resident of Fulton County?

I moved to Fulton County in 1980 to attend college. I worked, lived, and purchased my first home in Fulton County. After retirement, I purchased a home in Gwinnett County (2014). In 2021, I was made aware of the gross mismanagement within the Sheriff Office's. With no other viable candidate to support, I moved back to Fulton County, uprooted my family, sold my home, and entered the race.

Tell us anything else you would like us to know about (150 words)

I would like the ACLU to know that I look forward to establishing a jail that best serves detained persons.

I WILL reestablish humane conditions. Next, I will focus on classifying persons with mental health issues so they can receive the appropriate behavioral services and rehabilitation. I plan to reinstate programs that provide new beginnings and training for incarcerated persons.

I commit to listening to your concerns, providing open visits to the jail, and creating a transparent organizational culture where we can build upon our collective goals.

I am, at heart, a humanitarian. The challenges facing our jail require the leadership of a humanitarian. We must be caregivers of detained persons. Once elected, every detained person under the care of my administration will be made to feel human.

Enforcement Duties

The Sheriff's Office is responsible for administration and operation of the Fulton County Jail, providing security for all courtrooms and judges, and providing Warrant Service/Civil Process, and Special Operations and Investigative Units. The Sheriff also conducts Delinquent Property Tax Sales.

Considering all the duties the Sheriff's office is responsible for, training of its employees becomes particularly crucial.

Will you commit to annual training for personnel in the following areas:

- Bias (implicit and/or explicit) - YES
- Bias (implicit and/or explicit) - NO
- Mental health for detainees - YES
- Mental health for detainees - NO
- Mental health of Deputies and other staff - YES
- Mental health of Deputies and other staff - NO
- Use of force/de escalation - YES
- Use of force/de escalation - NO

What will be/are your policies related to the categories above?

Once in office, I plan to create a think tank of law enforcement experts, medical experts, and law professionals to draft 21st-century policies that are lawful, viable and have the best outcomes for detained persons and personnel.

Collecting data is important as data analytics can uncover patterns that can ultimately improve safety and efficiency. Additionally, the sharing of data provides an accountability measure. Will you collect and share data openly in the following categories?

- Use of Force - YES
- Use of Force - NO
- In Custody Deaths - YES
- In Custody Deaths - NO
- Service contracts - YES
- Service contracts - NO

Jail Management

The state of Georgia has the highest rate of correctional control in the country. Recently, efforts have been made to reduce the number of people held in the Fulton County Jail.

What plans, if any, do you have to reduce the population of the Fulton County Jail? (150 words)

To reduce the jail population, I will work with the DA and solicitor general to move cases. Unilaterally, I will work with pretrial detention and diversion programs. Next, I will extend Sign Own Bonds for detained persons.

Do you think Fulton County needs to build a new \$2 billion jail?

- Yes
- No

Since 2022, over 20 people have died in the custody of the Fulton County Sheriff's department. What plans do you have to improve the safety of the Fulton County Jail? (150 words)

I plan to increase the safety in the jail by:

- Revamping the intake process to properly house identified gang members, members of the LBTQIA+ community, persons needing medical care, and the mentally ill;
 - Ensuring proper staffing in the pods and medical unit;
 - Creating a task force to conduct shakedowns and remove contraband; and
 - Implementing robust training on policies and procedures.
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We are all aware that there is bias in policing in the United States. According to our 2023 report, "Breaking the Cycle, Exploring Alternatives to a New Jail," 89% of the population in the Fulton County Jail is Black, while Black people make up 43% of the population of Fulton County. As Sheriff, what will you do within your powers to reduce the racial disparities in incarceration? (150 words)

I am committed to decreasing racial disparities in incarceration.

My plan is 3D's: Deaths, Dollars, and Diversion. My diversion strategy is to target the youth with literacy programs and the Junior Deputy Academy. Statistics show that many disengage if they're not fluent readers by third grade. The Junior Deputy Academy will engage our youth in the criminal justice system as community members. The second tenet of the diversion programs involves the reinstatement of programs that create new beginnings for detained persons. The third tenet of my diversion program will target formerly incarcerated persons; thus, reducing recidivism.

I also plan to establish Crises Intervention Precincts in high-crime communities to assist persons facing crises with likely criminal outcomes.

I am also working with community partners to establish support resources for formerly incarcerated persons. I am currently working with two organizations (founded by formerly incarcerated persons) whose mission is to reduce recidivism.

Section [287\(g\) of the Immigration and Naturalization Act](#) allows the Department of Homeland Security to enter into formal written agreements with state or local law enforcement agencies and deputize selected state and local law enforcement officers to perform certain functions of federal immigration agents. Cooperation with ICE does not make our community safer, it harms our community.

Will you commit to not reinstating 287(g) in Fulton County?

Yes

No

Other

Civil asset forfeiture is used by law enforcement to confiscate property they deem as having been used in criminal activity and does not require a conviction or criminal charges. What should due process look like for people who seek to regain their property that has been seized by the department?

Civil asset forfeiture can be abused and may serve as a financial incentive for rogue law enforcement agencies. If a person has not been charged with a crime, the Sheriff's Office, under my administration, will not seize their property. If a person is charged with a crime and the property in question was used in the commission of the crime, I will support property seizure for court evidence.

The due process for recovering seized property will look as such: if the person is found not guilty, the seized property will be returned. The person will complete a Property Release Form. My administration will have the property returned in thirty (30) days. I plan to have written instructions for the citizen that outline the process, the timeline, and instructions on how to file a grievance if the deadline is missed.

What protections should community members have from civil asset forfeiture?

The protection should ensure that the defendant is notified at least thirty (30) days before their court hearing, which gives them proper time to prepare. The greatest protection for community members is to have time to prepare.

An essential duty of the Fulton County Sheriff department is to provide security at the courthouse and in courtrooms.

What plans do you have to improve court security/efficiency?

- I will ensure that all deputies assigned to the courthouse are Courthouse Certified through P.O.S.T. This certification will train deputies on all processes from contraband, guarding detained persons, courtroom order, and overall deployment of personnel to an assigned duty.
- Each courtroom and the command room will be properly staffed to ensure the safety of all visitors and personnel.
- The courthouse will be staffed with two (2) EMT-certified deputies while the court is in service (approximately 8a-9p).

Are you willing to participate in a ACLU of Georgia Town Hall Meeting with other Fulton County Sheriff candidates on April 16, 2024?

Yes

No

Other: