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## **Wiedower seeks a new term**

By [Caitlin Farmer](#) | March 20, 2024 | Comments Off on Wiedower seeks a new term



Georgia House of Representatives District 121 Rep. Marcus Wiedower has qualified to run for reelection as a Republican after serving constituents in parts of Oconee and Athens-Clarke Counties since 2019.

Wiedower will face Republican candidate John Michael Grigsby on the May 21 General Primary Ballot and the winner will face Democrat candidate Courtney Frisch on the Nov. 5 ballot.

Wiedower has lived in the greater area since 1993 and moved to Oconee County in 2006. “We came here and realized this is exactly where we need to stay,” Wiedower said.

Wiedower received a landscape architecture degree from the University of Georgia and he remained in the area to **build houses**, building around 17 in Oconee County in 30 years. Wiedower got a **real estate license** through Coldwell Banker Upchurch Realty. He also works in External Affairs **for Hillpointe, a real estate development and investment management firm** that mostly develops in Florida, where he represents them at meetings.

Wiedower said he decided to run for reelection because it’s been an honor to serve thus far.

“I know that seems cliché, but it is an honor to do this and have people believe in you,” Wiedower said.

Wiedower said running as a Republican means fiscal conservativeness. “We want to make sure our dollars go where they need to go and they’re not wasteful, but also personal responsibility and being there for when somebody’s going to be in need, but not to waste tax dollars on the folks that...aren’t willing to do it for themselves,” Wiedower said.

Wiedower said if reelected he will continue keeping his constituents in mind, bringing local **project funding** to the district and supporting his constituents in need when dealing with things such as public safety and healthcare.

Wiedower serves on nine committees: Higher Education, Intergovernmental Coordination, Motor Vehicles, Natural Resources & Environment, **Technology & Infrastructure Innovation, Urban Affairs, Ways & Means, Transportation** and is Chair of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government.

“I’ve really, really enjoyed the appropriations process and learning where our tax dollars really truly are going and how they are allocated and making sure that those dollars can be used to serve our district the best they can,” Wiedower said.

When asked about his most notable achievements thus far, Wiedower reflected on public safety, the newly announced UGA medical college, **road projects**, foster care reform, HOPE scholarship funding and school choice vouchers.

Wiedower said there are public safety concerns in the district and retention issues in state law enforcement they’ve tried to combat by giving state law enforcement officers a \$6,000 raise last year and a \$3,000 raise this year.

Last Wednesday, Wiedower said Governor Brian Kemp signed Senate Bill 332 into law, allowing the Prosecutorial Attorneys Qualifications Commission to begin operating and have oversight. “I think those are measures that are hugely important to making sure our community stays safe,” Wiedower said.

Wiedower said the recent announcement of the UGA Medical College to be built in Athens was a “huge win” for the district, bringing home local tax dollars.

Wiedower said funding received for a Georgia State Patrol and Department of **Driver Services facility on State Route 316, coupled with “countless” road projects** such as the new traffic light on Union Church Road or the expansion of Experiment Station Road, are other examples of bringing tax dollars back into the district.

Wiedower said he’s also increased the tax-deductible amounts going into 529 college savings accounts and has been able to continue fully funding the HOPE Scholarship.

On the topic of education, Wiedower said he's worked to provide teachers with pay raises and discussed the Georgia Promise Scholarship Act recently passed that provides \$6,500 vouchers from state funds for public school students in low-performing schools to attend private schools. "It really doesn't affect Oconee County, we don't have failing schools, thank goodness, but the schools that are in need, this gives those children the possibility of having a good, quality education," Wiedower said.

Wiedower said he's found a lack of attention to foster care and adoption "disheartening" over the years and will pass **foster care reform** this year to encourage fostering children in need and provide tax deductions for donations to organizations such as Lydia's Place that provide wraparound services. "There are people that will campaign on being pro-life, which I am, but I don't believe life stops at birth so I feel like, you know, we've got to continue to support our mothers and babies, as they move through life, and foster care...the kids are in the worst of situations."

Wiedower said his interest in foster care and adoption was the culmination of many things including advice he received when first elected from District 47 Rep. Jan Jones who said, "If you do this job right, you'll leave here an expert in something you knew nothing about when you walked in the door."

"That's kind of what foster care has been for me," Wiedower said.

Wiedower credited the story of Oconee residents and foster care advocates Joel and Jennifer Shinpoch, the retirement of District 34 Rep. Bert Reeves who "carried the torch for foster care and adoption reform," and living next door to Lydia's Place Founder April Farlow, for how he became involved in foster care and adoption reform. "All those things converged, really just in a godly way, quite frankly, to kind of put it on my heart to really pick that torch up and carry it."

Wiedower said he isn't hard to find and enjoys conversing with his constituents.

"I think social media is really kind of degrading our society and so I like the personal conversation and I'm always available for anyone who needs me."

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