



**2024**

**TN State House**

**District 65**

**Republican**

**Candidate Survey**

# Brian Beathard



## **1. Why are you running for TN State House District 65?**

I care deeply about Williamson County—its values and way of life. Many people move here for what Williamson County has to offer, but then want to change things once they arrive. I am running for State Representative to help preserve and sustain this special place we call home.

I believe in Tennessee's tradition of fiscal responsibility. I am running for State Representative to promote budgetary prudence and small government, and to continue fostering an environment that supports job creation. I will vote for policies and laws that keep Williamson County, Tennessee the best place to live, raise a family, grow a business, and retire.

During my 14 years as a Williamson County Commissioner, our schools have become among the best in the nation. We have built a nationally recognized Sheriff's Department, great parks, roads, and a state-of-the-art hospital. And we have accomplished all of this with one of the lowest tax rates in the country while maintaining a AAA bond rating.

Each of these accomplishments is outstanding on its own. But when you put them all together, you begin to recognize how blessed we are to live in Williamson County. Most wealthy counties in the U.S. are not known for their low tax rates, and most counties with low tax rates are not known for their excellent schools. We have both, and it didn't happen by accident. It's the result of hard-working, fiscally responsible individuals doing their due diligence every day to ensure our property values and way of life remain high, while our taxes and crime rate remain low.

It's the result of courageous leadership, collaboration, and wise investment. I want to continue this tradition as the State Representative in the 65th District.

## **2. What have you found to be the most pressing issue for voters in TN State House District 65?**

As the second-fastest growing county in the state, Williamson County is an economic engine. I see two fundamental issues that result: lack of appropriate funding from the tax dollars we generate, and the overreach from Nashville that negatively impacts our ability to manage our local government most effectively. Our challenges are the byproducts of our success, but we need to be in a position to address our infrastructure on our timeline with our resources. I'll be fighting for more of our fair share of the revenues that we produce.

**3. If elected, what will be the first bill that you would like to bring forward for legislation?**

I'm not going to the state House with the intention to pass a bunch of new laws, but among my first priorities would be re-evaluating the TDOT funding formula. State roads like Highway 100 in Fairview, Highway 31 in Thompson's Station, and Mack Hatcher in Franklin need immediate attention. We could do an awful lot with the nearly \$700 million we send to the state to be redistributed to other counties. That needs to change.

Williamson County is one of three counties in the state that produces more than twice of the tax revenues it receives back from the state. Another bill I would consider a priority would cap that amount at no more than double.

**4. The RNC recently issued a resolution on Election Integrity which encourages the use of secure, hand-marked paper ballots. Read the resolution [here](#).**

- a. Where do you stand on this resolution?
- b. If you support the resolution and are elected, how will you ensure that it is enacted?
- c. If you do not support the resolution, why not?
- d. Would you advocate for appointing election commissioners who support this resolution?

I believe in the conservative bedrock principle of local control. The Heritage Foundation has ranked Tennessee #1 in election security in the nation, because Tennessee election integrity law is strong and comprehensive; we've already implemented the measures the resolution suggests. The RNC's election integrity efforts should be focused on states where we know there are issues with ballot harvesting, drop boxes, universal mail-in ballots, and people going door to door taking votes. None of this is permitted in Tennessee.

Every vote cast in Williamson County since 2019 has been on a voter-verified paper ballot. We require citizenship and verified photo identification, and we provide both convenience and security. Humans are neither timely nor accurate, and hand-counting and interpreting ballots would be a step backward. We should all remember Tennessee's "Hopewell Ballot" days.

Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Arizona where the majority of the 2020 complaints came from and Republicans are not currently in charge.

**5. The state of Tennessee has strong laws concerning the life of the unborn. If elected, will you uphold the restrictions that are currently in place?**

I believe in the sanctity of life, which includes that of the mother, and I think there should be consideration in the instance of rape or incest. I certainly support parental consent to transport a

minor across state lines, for any reason. The simple answer is that government's most fundamental job is to protect innocent life.

**6. Would you support additional legislation to demagnetize Tennessee for illegals? If so, what would that legislation look like?**

Yes, illegal immigration is out of control, based on the absurd lack of security at our southern border. The eVerify system should be enforced, and if it's not working, then the penalties should be increased. I would be receptive to legislation that would "demagnetize" our state.

**7. Williamson County is over \$1.2 billion in debt. Would you be willing to pass legislation that mandates feasibility studies prior to zoning changes of more than 5 acres? These studies might include -- but are not limited to -- studies on infrastructure, environmental impact, imminent domain, gentrification, and taxes.**

I would not be willing to pass any legislation that removes control from Williamson County; the last thing we need is Nashville micromanaging Williamson County. The state doesn't have any business regulating local zoning. Of our 95 counties, Williamson is one of only a handful of counties to have maintained a AAA bond rating, and when you look at the total assessed value of property in Williamson County, our debt load is akin to a \$10K mortgage on a \$600K home. Considering that the vast majority of our debt is at very low interest rates — much around three percent, and in some cases less than one percent — these are wise investments that allow us to accommodate growth instead of raising taxes.

**8. What is your position on mass transportation?**

We should leverage technology in every way possible instead of working to build multi-billion-dollar mass transit systems that will be obsolete by the time they are actually completed many years later. Other common-sense approaches could encourage staggered commute times, rural broadband that facilitates remote work, signal optimization, etc.

**9. What are parental rights? If your interpretation of these rights were challenged, how would you defend them? More specifically, what is the source of these rights, or from where are they derived?**

Parental rights are God-given, and absolute unless they cross into parental abuse. We have truancy laws that were put into place in the 1920s and '30s to prevent parents from taking kids out of school to help work, as the impact on the child of the loss of formal education would be tantamount to abuse — the child would be set up to fail for life. But within reasonable boundaries, parents should be free to raise children as they see best. My wife and I raised two children now in college, and it's common sense that parents are best positioned to know how to raise their children. It isn't up to the village.

**10. Is it good for government to appropriate taxpayer dollars to incentivize corporations to move here?**

In the right circumstances, it can be a useful tool. If a company is bringing more high-paying jobs and revenue to our county, then there can be a strong return on investment for taxpayers.

Incentives are an unavoidable reality in the world of economic development, and we wouldn't want to be the only ones to unilaterally disarm ourselves from a competitive standpoint. But, considering our struggles to accommodate growth, we don't need to be bending over backwards for more of it. It's about wise stewardship and return on investment. We are not abating taxes for our schools, and 67% of taxes collected are allocated for public education. Benchmarks are also used, i.e. number of jobs created, to hold corporate partners accountable.

## 11. **Regarding the 2nd Amendment to the US Constitution:**

### a. **What does "shall not infringe" mean to you?**

It means exactly what it says — the late Justice Antonin Scalia famously said that the Constitution says what it says, and it doesn't say what it doesn't say. It was written very carefully to be clear and precise.

### b. **Since the Covenant shooting there has been a lot of discussion about red flag laws and ERPO. At what point do these types of legislation infringe on 2nd Amendment rights?**

They infringe when they infringe on due process. The American legal system is based on what a reasonable person would think, and a law is not considered full and final until it has been adjudicated by the Supreme Court. I think we can all agree that we wouldn't want to be on an airplane full of armed passengers, any more than we would want everyone to bring a long gun in to the chambers of the General Assembly. There are reasonable standards that help protect the citizenry without infringing on our right to protect ourselves.

## 12. **There is an "ethics and campaign finance reform" bill that seeks to force 501(C)4's to divulge a list of their donors before an election. In your estimation, is this a legitimate effort to stop "dark money", or is it an attempt to stifle opposition and suppress previously protected free speech?**

All of these "defund the police" and Hamas type demonstrations that appear to be funded with George Soros money, but it is not required to be disclosed. Our great Senator Howard Baker said if you can't vote for me, you shouldn't be able to give to me. Out-of-state and out-of-district dark money is a real problem, here and everywhere.

## 13. **Would you support making nongovernment agencies that receive government funding subject to public records requests? Why or why not?**

I believe in transparency. Fundamentally, taxpayers deserve to be able to follow every one of the dollars they contribute to the government's stewardship.

## 14. **Do you believe property taxes should be capped at current levels statewide?**

This is a local issue, and any solvent municipality or county should be free to set their own rates. Unless the city or county is insolvent and in receivership, the state has no business regulating local property taxes. I've never voted for a property tax increase, and Williamson County is one of the lowest-taxed counties in the state and the nation. I would support doing away with the state property tax (presently 0%) altogether via constitutional amendment.

**15. As a legislator serving on a committee, would you ensure that every bill gets a hearing, whether by bringing it forward or providing a second to a motion to bring the bill forward?**

I believe in transparency, and would support roll call votes versus voice votes. Minutes of municipal and county meetings are far more detailed for accountability and posterity, and there should be more of that in the General Assembly. At the state level, a lot of bills filed before the deadline never make it to a hearing, for various reasons. The committee structure exists for a reason, and there is no need to give voice to extreme activists and their frivolous bills. Robert's Rules of Order have worked well for a long time — if a bill doesn't get a second, the committee doesn't deem it worthy of debate. If you don't like the makeup of the committee, then vote them out.

**16. In the interest of supporting small government, would you support a house rule to reduce the number of bills brought forward in the house from 15 to 10? Why, or why not?**

Yes, I would. Less government is better government. As a businessman, I believe in getting by with less, and the Legislature should be no different. I'd like to see it go back to eight.

