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# Ask Your Candidates!

American Medical Progress: A Conversation with Candidates  
May 9, 2014



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## Transcript:

### **Russell Allen, President and CEO of Georgia BIO:**

My name is Russell Allen, and I am the President and CEO of Georgia Bio, the state's life science and biomedical industry association. On behalf of Research!America, the hosts of the "Ask Your Candidates!" initiative, and on behalf of Georgia Bio, I'd like to welcome our esteemed Senate candidates and campaign representatives. We know there are many demands on your time, and we truly thank you for being with us today. I'd also like to welcome and thank the terrific group of Georgians who have come to speak with their candidates about what medical progress means to them. And last, but certainly not least, I'd like to thank all of today's sponsors and partners, including my colleagues at the Technology Association of Georgia, who helped us secure today's wonderful venue.

Informal is the name of the game today: we hope you all will feel comfortable grabbing lunch now or at any time, and having as many conversations as possible. As you may know, Ask Your Candidates! is an initiative for voters to gain insight into their candidates' thinking about medical progress – where it fits among national priorities, what should be the role of Congress in accelerating that progress, or to get information on any other topic related to medical research and development...here in Georgia and around the country.

While there are no rules about these conversations, this is not intended to be a discussion focused on the new health insurance law, but rather a focus on finding new ways to prevent, treat and cure diseases and disabilities...an issue of great importance to Georgians.

Georgia's life-sciences industry – made up of private-sector innovators who develop new ways of combating disease and disability – along with the mostly government funded "basic" research conducted at Georgia universities – has a \$20 billion annual impact in our state and employs more than 94,000 people. Amazing medical advances have started with research at Georgia universities and academic health centers, and have been developed into groundbreaking medical advances at Georgia biotech, pharmaceutical, medical device and other life-sciences firms. Our state definitely stands out for its prolific life-sciences sector.

But by far the most important reason we are here today is not economics or bragging rights: it's the need for medical progress to help patients and their loved ones – who are also often their caregivers – and to reduce the suffering associated with enemies like Alzheimer's disease, cancer and rare diseases that threaten children and adults alike. We need progress.

There isn't just one way to accelerate medical progress – it's not all government or all industry, and it's not spending for spending's sake. If the candidates and campaign representatives here today have varying views on how to move the needle on medical progress, that's not good or bad – it's a reflection of how hard it is to be in a decision-making role that requires you to balance competing priorities and get involved now only in writing

laws, but in influencing government regulation and helping shape an environment conducive to private-sector innovation.

None of our candidates would be seeking office if they wanted easy jobs, and just their willingness to address the issue of medical progress speaks to their commitment.

At this time, I'd like to welcome each candidate or their campaign representative to come up and say a few words. If you could limit your remarks to three minutes or less, that would be great, since the real purpose today is to give voters a chance to speak with you.

### **Art Gardner, Republican Candidate for U.S. Senate:**

Good afternoon, my name is Art Gardner, and I really appreciate the opportunity to be here; it means a lot to me. I'm a candidate in the United States Senate Race here in Georgia in the Republican Party, and I'm a graduate of Georgia Tech; I have a mechanical engineering degree from Tech; my wife went to Tech; her dad went to Tech – was on the faculty at tech, all those kinds of things. So this is home to me.

I'm a patent lawyer; I've been a patent lawyer for 26 years, and we do a lot of work related to medical technology and things like that. In our firm, we have two PhD chemists who are in our firm, a lot of medical device work, a lot of chemistry work, so medical research is actually an important part of our business. We've been working with universities and private companies for many, many years, so I have a little bit of special insight into the issues the industry faces as compared to maybe some of the other candidates.

Now I'm a budget hawk; I'm out to fix our budget problems, so that has to be tempered against the need for maintaining strong funding for medical research. I understand that, as many people in here do, that a lot of medical research is conducted because profit [inaudible], so you've got a company, they see a big market, they'll invest a lot themselves, but government can fill in the cracks between the bricks because there's not always a big enough market for a company to invest in a lot of research, but there's still people who are afflicted by those diseases, those maladies, and the government can step in, fund that research where it might not make as much economic sense for a company, and we can still reduce human suffering, so that's the way I see the two working. We don't want it all to be the government. We can't rely completely on private investment, either, because private investment has to, by its nature, focus on providing a strong return, a profit return, for the shareholders, so to me the two go hand-in-hand. That's how I see it.

I'll be happy to answer any questions that you might have about my background, my approach. You'll see that in the press, last Sunday's AJC paper, you'll see that I have proposed very innovative patent laws to bring down the cost of medicine in the United States, because we're paying a lot more for patent medicines than the other countries in the G7, so I'd be glad to talk with any of you all about that, but I will tell you this – that is very impactful, it can save a lot of money for American consumers, and it is just plain wrong that we should pay a lot more than Canadians or Germans, or Swedes for the exact same medicines; we should not subsidize their medicine. Thank you, and I look forward to speaking with you each.

### **Derrick Grayson, Republican Candidate for U.S. Senate:**

Hello, as you just heard, my name is Derrick Grayson. Some of you may find some of my remarks a little strange, and that's aside from the fact that I'm a black man running in the Republican Party. Speaking to research – I'm all for research; the problem with research is – government always gets in the way. I've known people that were

dying and there were experimental drugs, but they weren't able to get them because somebody said it's not safe.

"I'm dying, what have I got to lose?"

So from that point of view, I believe that if people want to participate in programs for untested drugs, and they're willing to be the test subjects, I don't think the government should get in the way of that, so I won't go into much more detail other than that, other than to say, we need government out of the way. But I will speak to why government is in the way, and specifically that is because of us, we put government in the way.

We have groups of people in this country that will continue to support people in spite of the fact that they have the lowest ratings of all time, but we will continue to reelect them because we believe what the press tells us about them. We also have people, even to their own detriment, who will continue to support the party, even though that party has not improved the nature of their lives, as a whole. Things have gotten better for this particular group of people, and things have gotten, I'm sorry, gotten worse for this particular group of people, and things have gotten worse for this country overall, but we continue to reelect the very same people. This is one of the reasons why medical research is having such a problem, because of collusion between big pharma in some instances and government.

Art just spoke about the cost of medicines here in this country as compared to other countries. We have a great health care system already, it just needed some tweaking at the state level and not at the federal level, but again, we the American people, we put the government in charge of our health care system, 1/6 of our economy, and they are going to do to it what they did with Amtrak and the postal service. The government doesn't do a very good job, of what they used to be, and we the people need to get back to where we move government out of the way and let people come forward like those pioneers of old and make things, build things, and fix things, but that won't happen if we the people continue to do what we've been doing and getting what we've been getting and that is a country that's being driven into the ground.

I'm Derrick Grayson; thank you.

### **Steen Miles, Democratic Candidate for U.S. Senate:**

Good afternoon everyone, please excuse my croaky voice, but we've been talking quite a bit in the state of Georgia. I am very excited about what you are doing and want to be your voice and your vote in Washington to continue the innovation in medical research and technology. Right here on the campus of Georgia Tech, and the public-private partnership between Georgia Tech and Emory University, for instance, are the only two schools in the entire state of Georgia that are members of the prestigious American Association of Universities; that's very, very important. I understand the importance of medical research. I'm standing here with a bionic hip that I got 10 years ago. And I know that it's medical research and technology that allowed that to happen. The scanning, the imaging – all of these things are so very important in moving us forward as a people and as a nation.

China continues to outstrip us and one of the things that we have to do is begin to educate people to the importance of medical research and technology, particularly in my community, my community the African American community, the people of color, because of their history and distrust, many African Americans and others of colors do not participate in medical trials, which are very, very important to moving us forward as a nation.

Three things that your legislature does:

First and foremost, we legislate, we pass laws, we vote; I'm your voice in Washington.

The second thing is that we take care of constituent services; that's the second thing that we do.

And then the third thing is to educate, and part of that responsibility, I see, is educating our communities about the importance of the work that you folks do. In addition to that, I'm so happy and delighted that the President is committing in this 3.9 trillion budget, significant dollars for research and for development and to encourage the public-private partnership that you're doing here at GA tech and at Emory, that we need to see more of that.

I'm running for the U.S. Senate – No. 1, I'm the only one on the Democratic side that has legislative and policy-making experience, and that counts for something. Second to that, I'm running because we need to start putting people before politics, and part of the people before politics is encouraging investing in research and development and moving us forward; thirdly, I'm running because I have a unique professional and personal experiences to bridge the racial, the economic and the political divide that I believe is stymieing our growth here in the state of Georgia and in this nation.

And so for those reasons, ladies and gentlemen, I'm running to be your voice; I've left the comfort level of television news, where I've tolled for some thirty ...years....because of the myriad of social concerns that I saw out there. And I remember very vividly the importance and the excitement in the newsroom of reporting on the latest findings from the New England Journal of Medicine and what that meant. We our here today because of the advances that I have been made in research, development and technology, and we need to continue to invest to make certain that our populous is healthy as possible. Because when you're healthy, you're productive, and you can't be productive, if you are not healthy.

So ladies and gentlemen I would invite you to go to my website, which is [www.steenmilesussenate.com](http://www.steenmilesussenate.com); we don't have time to talk about the levels of my involvement in my community over the past 30 years, from PTA to chamber of commerce, to league of women voters, and every step of the way I have been involved, because it's important to whom much is given, much is required. I want to be your voice and your vote in Washington, and I look forward to your questions.

### **Susan Radulovacki, Wife and Campaign Representative of Branko Radulovacki, Democratic Candidate for U.S. Senate**

Well I found out about 30 minutes before I got here that I was coming here, so I don't have prepared remarks, but fortunately I've spent more than half my life with Dr. Rad, so I can tell you a fair amount about him. He and I are both children of medical researchers; my dad did cancer research at NIH for a number of years; his dad left the former Yugoslavia, took the family to Khartoum, Sudan, and then they immigrated here to the U.S., so he could do medical research. He's a tenured professor at the University of Illinois, has developed the Adenosine sleep theory, now there are medications in clinical trials, which is very exciting for him.

My husband and I met in business school at the University of Chicago; after a short time on Wall Street he decided that really was not his passion. And he went back, and while I was the family bread winner, he went premed, med school, residency, because he wanted to be a physician; he was on the receiving end of a lot of the benefits of medical research and technology when he was diagnosed with cancer, and he is now completely cancer free. Thank you to those who did the research, the basic research, developed particular drugs, machines that were available to him to treat him, cure him, and now he wants to pay that forward in service.

I can tell you that we have at least three generations of scientist in our house, my daughter, our daughter, is 17 years old, an English major, got talked into taking AP chemistry this year, and loved it, so now she wants to be a scientist. So, the reason that matters – I was talking to a couple gentlemen before we started, the folks in Washington are going to set the priorities and set the budget, and when you've got people with intellectual curiosity, scientific backgrounds and genuine understanding of the difference that this research, these drugs, these technologies can make in the quality of people's lives, that impacts their priorities. So when you have someone like my husband, who is used to being an opinion leader, and influencer, a consensus builder, as your advocate, and someone who listens and welcomes input, then you know that you will have a voice.

So I encourage you to learn more about him; the more you learn the more you'll say, "holy cow, you mean there are still people like this who wanted to go into politics," and I encourage you to check him out – Dr. Rad for senate.com.

Thank you so much.

### **Billie Gingrey, Wife and Campaign Representative of Phil Gingrey, Republic Candidate for U.S. Senate**

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak to you today. I am a native Georgian; I grew up in Newman and I graduated from LaGrange college; I have a tremendous love of travel, so I decided to move right away to Atlanta and became a Delta flight attendant, so right down the street from here I was living in an apartment; I went out to the swimming pool one day, and I met Phil, he was about to start his internship at Grady Memorial Hospital. I can say that day – my life changed forever; all of a sudden I became interested in what he was doing a part of his world, and the world of medicine and his commitment to become a physician. He went on and did his residency in OB/GYN at the Medical College of Georgia, and when he was finished with his residency, he was thinking about places to go, and we chose this area, mainly because we had many friends here, because Phil also is a Georgia Tech graduate, as two of my [inaudible] went to GA tech, as well as two of our children.

Phil has been in Georgia in Cobb County now and practiced medicine for almost 30 years, and has delivered more than 5200 babies, so he really understands medicine. I think he has a lot of expertise in the field of medicine, and that makes him a special authority on this. He felt like he could...he came to the point that he really felt like there was more that he could do. And he was talking to his patients, and he was involved in their lives, and in their stories, he became convinced that maybe he could do a little bit more, and he became a member of Congress. So he ran and was elected to Congress. One of the first things that Phil did when he was elected, is he formed the doctors' caucus, which they did not have one at that time, and now I believe there are 21 members of the doctors' caucus. He was the founder, and he is now the chairman of the doctors' caucus, who work very hard for the issues you all are working for today. And I might say that while the new health care bill was written, the doctors who have...it was some astronomical number, that they all together have expertise in the field of medicine, in all specialties, the doctors' caucus was never included in any study, any comments, any get-togethers, committee meetings, they were never included, although you can think of the expertise that all these physicians had.

Phil worked very hard to get onto the energy and commerce committee, and the energy and commerce committee, Phil was able eventually to get onto the health subcommittee, and the health subcommittee is the one that has jurisdiction over Medicaid/Medicare, the FDA, which has jurisdiction over health and technology,

so he looks at these issues every day and he fights for what is right, and what is going to be best in the field of research and medicine.

I feel like he's got the expertise because he's been in congress, he knows how to get things done, he knows every health care issue that there is, and he has the experience of been a practicing physician himself. And I did hear him say the other day, you know, it's about all of us, it's about all of us and our politics, and what we here are trying to do, but we can never forget that all of this is about our patients, and what we can do for them, the caregivers and the families, and we picked the right person to continue working for us and for our cause and who has experience and expertise to do that then we're going to be, our cause is going to be, much stronger. So please, I ask you to vote for Phil for the U.S. Senate. Thank you.

### **Stan Wise, Campaign Representative of Jack Kingston, Republican Candidate for U.S. Senate**

It is my distinct honor to speak today and speak on behalf of my dear friend, and longtime friend, Jack Kingston, serving in congress for close to 20 years. It is not lost on many people in this room that Jack has been involved in the appropriations committee for those 20 years and has done a great job balancing issues of importance and research and funding for events in our state, and it's not lost on us as well that Jack has just been recently endorsed by John Leonard, Steve Forbes, and the Georgia Chamber of Commerce. And so when it gets right down to it, you talk about the appropriations process, Jack is a known leader in funding research for the NIH, targeting basic, foundational science, making sure that the job is done to get the foundation for the disbursement of this technology of the research goes forward.

He's done that almost from the time he's been in Congress and he continues to go ahead and make sure that they prioritize that same research at the NIH that it follows through so that year after year you just don't give token research but you follow through to make sure that guys in the white lab coats get the job done.

I'm extraordinarily proud of Jack Kingston as our congressman, and I believe that we'll be enormously proud of Jack as a United States senator.

### **Carlos Moreno, Campaign Representative of Michelle Nunn, Democratic Candidate for U.S. Senate**

I'm a professor at Emory University so I am someone who does health research, and I just wanted to tell you why I'm supportive of Michelle Nunn. Michelle understands that having a competitive economy and innovative economy to grow jobs and businesses that you have to invest in research and development, and so she is very much in support of not only the funding streams for institutions like the NIH and National Science Foundation, but also in extending and expanding the corporate research and development tax credit. She also is very much aware of the importance of education and promoting the next generation of scientists and researchers and entrepreneurs, so she is someone that is really quite committed to medical research and research and development in general.

And I know that she has incredible background in public service, as well. She's learned, being a ninth generation Georgian and daughter of a former Senator herself, she has managed to build a [inaudible] organization that is dedicated to public service and volunteerism, and public-private partnerships, and she understands what it means to grow an organization from almost nothing to 4 million volunteers across the county. So I believe her commitment to public service and her leadership in these areas, as well as her commitment to medical research and innovation is why I'm supporting Michelle Nunn, and I hope you will, as well. Thank you.

## **David Perdue, Republican Candidate for U.S. Senate**

I am sorry I was unable to join you today, because as patients and loved ones, researchers and business leaders, you are involved in saving lives and giving wounded warriors and other Americans combating injury and disability the tools they need to share in the independence so important to all of us. There is no cause more important than that.

I believe in American ingenuity and the power of our free market economy to fuel new treatments and cures. It is a mistake to rely on government for medical progress that is more efficiently and quickly achieved with private sector investment. That's true for university research as well as the critical development of that university research into new treatments and cures by Georgia's bioscience industries.

I hope those industries will provide more support to our great universities here in Georgia so that they don't have to rely on government funding. In return, I promise you that when I represent you all in the United States Senate I will work to get the government out of the way of private sector medical innovation. Too much regulation can kill any enterprise, and it is slowing down medical progress that Georgians deserve.

It will be a true honor to represent patient advocates and innovative business leaders like you in the U.S. Senate. Together, we can make sure that that leadership in medical research and innovation remains one of the many ways our nation stands apart and proud.