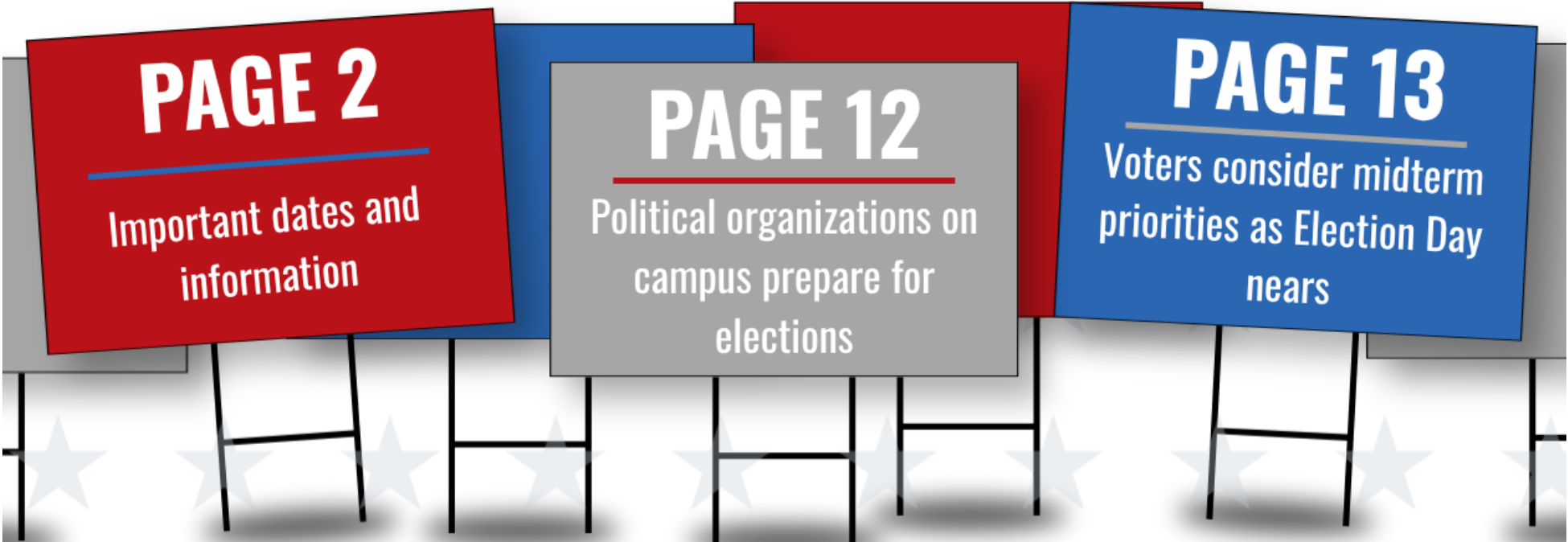


THE PENDULUM



VOTER GUIDE



THE PENDULUM
A PUBLICATION OF
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EDITORIAL POLICY:

ENN seeks to inspire, entertain and inform the Elon community by providing a voice for students and faculty, as well as serve as a forum for the meaningful exchange of ideas.

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ENN is committed to accurate coverage. When factual errors are made, we correct them promptly and in full, both online and in print. Online corrections state the error and the change at the top of the article. Corrections from the previous week's print edition appear on this page.

Contact
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to report a correction or a concern.



Important Dates

Oct. 15
In-person early
voting begins

Oct. 20
Absentee ballot
request deadline

Oct. 31
In-person early
voting ends

Nov. 3
Election day

Voter ID

People voting will need a form of photo identification to vote early or on Election Day. An Elon Phoenix Voter Card, which can be requested in the Phoenix Card office, a North Carolina driver's license, U.S. passport, state identification card or driver's license are acceptable forms of ID.

More information

For more information or to check voter registration visit the Alamance County Board of Elections



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Visit our website for full candidate profiles.

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Voting Locations

Mt. Zion Baptist Church
Alamance Civitan Club House
Trinity Worship Center
First Baptist Church of Elon
Twin Lakes Center
Marvin B. Smith Elementary School
St. Mark’s Community Church
Beth Schmidt Park Comm. Center
Elon Elementary School
St. Luke’s Community Church
Lakeview Community Church
Graham Civic Center
Graham Recreation Center
Bethany Presbyterian Church
Harvey R. Newlin School
R. Homer Andrews Elem. School
Fellowship Baptist Church
Mt. Hermon Community Center
Eli Whitney Recreation Center
Chatham Friends Meeting Church

Swepsonville Fire Station
Salem Community Church
E.M. Yoder Elementary School
Mebane Arts & Community Center
Hawfields Middle School
Mebane Recreation Center
Pleasant Grove Elementary School
Fairchild Community Center
Mayco Bigelow Center
New Birth Baptist Church
First Presbyterian Church
Hillcrest Elementary School
Grove Park Baptist Church
Turrentine Middle School
Elmira Community Center
Kernodle Senior Activities Center
Baptist Temple
St. Paul’s Community Church
Haw River United Methodist Church
*Elon South Campus Gym

*Elon South Campus Gym is open for early voting only.

Position Descriptions

U.S. Senate

Members of the U.S. Senate are elected to a six-year term and serve the entire state of North Carolina by drafting and voting on legislation. Senators also confirm presidential appointments.

State House of Representatives

Those who serve on the North Carolina House of Representatives serve two-year terms and are not subject to term limits. North Carolina legislators assume office Jan. 1 the year after the election. Representatives introduce bills and resolutions, offer amendments and serve on committees.

Alamance County Clerk of Superior Court

The clerk of superior court of each county is in charge of the clerical and record-keeping functions of courts. They also oversee proceedings involving wills, estates and trusts. They also issue arrests and search warrants.

U.S. House District 9

Members of the U.S. House of Representatives are elected to a two-year term and serve the people of a specific congressional district by introducing bills and serving on committees.

NC Superior Court

Superior courts in North Carolina are trial courts that hold trials for civil and criminal cases. Superior court judges are elected to eight-year terms. The courts sit — or hold court — at least twice a year in each county.

Alamance County Sheriff

The Alamance County Sheriff is the highest-ranking law enforcement official in the county. The sheriff oversees enforcing laws countywide and operating the county jail.

NC Supreme Court

A North Carolina Supreme Court Justice is a member of the state’s highest court, which is responsible for deciding cases appealed from lower courts. The Supreme Court’s justices are elected in nonpartisan statewide races and serve eight-year terms. The court consists of one Chief Justice and six Associate Justices. This is the highest state court and often upholds statewide laws.

NC District Court District 17

District courts hear civil, criminal, juvenile and magistrate cases. North Carolina is divided into 41 district courts across the state. The district court judge manages the courts administrative duties.

NC Court of Appeals

The North Carolina Court of Appeals is the state’s intermediate appellate court. Most cases that are appealed from superior and district courts are heard by the Court of Appeals. Judges hear cases in panels of three, and if one member of the panel disagrees with the majority decision, there is a right of appeal to the state Supreme Court. Judges serve eight-year terms.

District Attorney

District Attorneys are elected to four-year terms and represent the state in the prosecution of criminal matters in district and superior courts. They also advise local law enforcement.

ABSS School Board

The Alamance-Burlington Board of Education governs the Alamance-Burlington School System and is made up of seven members. The school board sets policy for the school system and the direction of the school system through planning. The board also sets an annual budget made up of local, state and federal funds.

NC State Senate District 25

North Carolina’s 25th Senate district is one of 50 districts in the North Carolina State Senate. The state senate is the legislative branch of the state government and works alongside the governor to create law and establish a state budget.

Alamance County Commissioners

The board’s duties include adoption of the annual budget, establishment of the tax rate, appointment of the country manager as chief administrator, establishing and enacting local ordinances and appointment of representatives to boards and commissions.

Soil & Water Conservation District Supervisor

The district board of supervisors is made up of three elected board members and two appointed board members who provide direction to protect and improve natural resources. The Board of Supervisors meets to establish local soil and water conservation priorities based on the needs of the county.

This sample ballot represents District 64. Alamance County is split into two voting districts: districts 63 and 64. To find the sample ballot for your district, scan the QR code below or visit ncsbe.gov.

Candidates and their respective parties can be found on the sample ballot. Voters may select one candidate per race, except in the races for soil and water conservation district supervisor and board of commissioners, where voters may select up to two candidates, and the board of education, where voters may select up to three candidates.

SAMPLE BALLOT	SAMPLE BALLOT Alamance County Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor (You may vote for TWO)		SAMPLE BALLOT	SAMPLE BALLOT NC House of Representatives District 64 (You may vote for ONE)		SAMPLE BALLOT	SAMPLE BALLOT Alamance County Clerk of Superior Court (You may vote for ONE)			
	☐ Ricky N. Reid ☐ Willie Holliday ☐ Write-in ☐ Write-in			☐ LeVon Barnes <i>Democratic Party</i> ☐ Dennis Riddell <i>Republican Party</i>			☐ Kristie Miller Culler <i>Republican Party</i>			
	REFERENDA Constitutional Amendment Constitutional amendment to require all voters, not just those presenting to vote in person, to present photo identification before voting. ☐ For ☐ Against			SAMPLE BALLOT US House of Representatives District 9 (You may vote for ONE)			SAMPLE BALLOT NC Superior Court Judge District 17 Seat 1 (You may vote for ONE)		SAMPLE BALLOT Alamance County Sheriff (You may vote for ONE)	
	Constitutional Amendment Constitutional amendment to keep the State income tax rate from being raised higher than three and one-half percent (3.5%). ☐ For ☐ Against			☐ Richard N. Ojeda II <i>Democratic Party</i> ☐ Richard Hudson <i>Republican Party</i>			☐ Doug Green <i>Democratic Party</i>		☐ Shannon Long <i>Unaffiliated</i> ☐ Terry S. Johnson <i>Republican Party</i>	
	Constitutional Amendment Constitutional amendment requiring limits on property tax increases by local governments. ☐ For ☐ Against			SAMPLE BALLOT NC Supreme Court Associate Justice Seat 1 (You may vote for ONE)			SAMPLE BALLOT NC Superior Court Judge District 17 Seat 2 (You may vote for ONE)		NONPARTISAN ELECTIONS Alamance-Burlington Board of Education (You may vote for THREE)	
				☐ Anita Earls <i>Democratic Party</i> ☐ Sarah Stevens <i>Republican Party</i>			☐ Craig Turner <i>Republican Party</i>		☐ Katharine Frazier ☐ Stephanie Long Enoch ☐ Brandy Whittaker ☐ Kyle Ward ☐ Charles Parker ☐ Samira Khan ☐ Eric Hall ☐ Write-in ☐ Write-in ☐ Write-in	
				SAMPLE BALLOT NC Court of Appeals Judge Seat 1 (You may vote for ONE)			SAMPLE BALLOT NC District Court Judge District 17 Seat 1 (You may vote for ONE)			
				☐ Michael C. Byrne <i>Republican Party</i> ☐ John S. Arrowood <i>Democratic Party</i>			☐ Bryan Ray <i>Republican Party</i>			
				SAMPLE BALLOT NC Court of Appeals Judge Seat 2 (You may vote for ONE)			SAMPLE BALLOT District Attorney District 17 (You may vote for ONE)			
				☐ George Cooper Bell <i>Republican Party</i> ☐ Tobias (Toby) Hampson <i>Democratic Party</i>			☐ Scott Wells Drorbaugh <i>Democratic Party</i> ☐ Sean Boone <i>Republican Party</i>			
		SAMPLE BALLOT NC Court of Appeals Judge Seat 3 (You may vote for ONE)		SAMPLE BALLOT Alamance County Board of Commissioners (You may vote for TWO)						
		☐ Craig Collins <i>Republican Party</i> ☐ Christine Marie Walczyk <i>Democratic Party</i>		☐ Sean C. Ewing <i>Democratic Party</i> ☐ Steve Carter <i>Republican Party</i> ☐ Ramona Allen <i>Democratic Party</i> ☐ Kelly Allen <i>Republican Party</i>						
End of Ballot		SAMPLE BALLOT		SAMPLE BALLOT		SAMPLE BALLOT				
This sample ballot was produced by Elon News Network. This is not an official ballot.						FIND YOUR SAMPLE BALLOT 				

What do the amendments on the ballot mean?

Photo ID Referendum

Wording on the ballot: *“Constitutional amendment to require all voters, not just those presenting to vote in person, to present photo identification before voting.”*

Explanation: Voters in North Carolina are already required to present a photo ID at the polls or provide a photocopy if voting by mail. Republican lawmakers who support the amendment say that this referendum will solidify the current law, but Democrats say it’s not needed. If approved, it would require photo ID for all forms of voting.

Income Tax Referendum

Wording on the ballot: *“Constitutional amendment to keep the State income tax rate from being raised higher than three and one-half percent (3.5%).”*

Explanation: If approved, North Carolina’s income tax rate would not be able to exceed 3.5%. The income tax rate is already set to drop below 3.5% in 2027, so this would just speed up that process. Supporters of the amendment argue that it offers tax relief. Those in opposition toward the amendment argue that it hurts the state’s ability to fund public services and that it would benefit the wealthy and corporations.

Property Tax Referendum

Wording on the ballot: *“Constitutional amendment requiring limits on property tax increase by local governments.”*

Explanation: If approved, the amendment would limit property tax increases by local governments, but no amount is specified. Further legislation determining the limit would be needed. Advocates of the amendment argue that it would protect taxpayers from future increases. Those who oppose the amendment argue that it would make it harder for local governments to raise revenue and fund public services.

ENN’s candidate coverage team

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| Evan Cooper | Lilly Molina |
| Kate Gray | Lily Mosbacher |
| Brinna Hayes | Trista Panagakos |
| Abigail Hines | Emma Perman |
| Alannah Klingsporn | Charlotte Pfabe |
| Elissa Leka | Alexander Siegel |
| Lauren McCowan | Mia Torres |

Behind ENN’s reporting in this edition

Dear reader,

Thank you for picking up a copy of Elon News Network’s voter guide edition of The Pendulum. My name is Miles Hayford and I am the Managing Editor of The Pendulum.

This edition contains 11 pages of reporting, including 43 candidate profiles and five full-length stories. Planning for this edition began months in advance. For the candidate profiles, we interviewed 38 of the 43 candidates on Alamance County ballots and reached out to all of them for comment. For those who responded to our request for an interview, a team of 14 reporters conducted interviews with candidates, asking them about their background, their platform, priorities if elected and more. For those who did not respond to multiple requests for an interview, our reporters compiled profiles based on information available online. Alongside our reporters, a dedicated team of fact-checkers and copy editors looked over the paper before it was finalized.

We hope this edition is a valuable community service item and helps readers stay informed and make thoughtful decisions when voting. Information on local candidates is hard to find, especially in the current journalism environment, so we hope you take with you something valuable from this edition.

Sincerely,

Miles Hayford
Managing Editor of The Pendulum



Campaigning for U.S. Senate

Michael Whatley

Republican Party



PHOTO CREDIT MICHAEL WHATLEY.COM

Michael Whatley is the Republican candidate for the United States Senate seat. Whatley has never been elected to office before, but has served on President Donald Trump’s transition team for energy, agriculture and environment. Previously, he was the chairman of North Carolina’s Republican Party and in 2024 the chairman of the Republican National Committee.

Whatley’s campaign did not respond to requests for comment.

Trump endorsed Whatley, and on his website, his first policy position listed is to further the Trump legislative agenda.

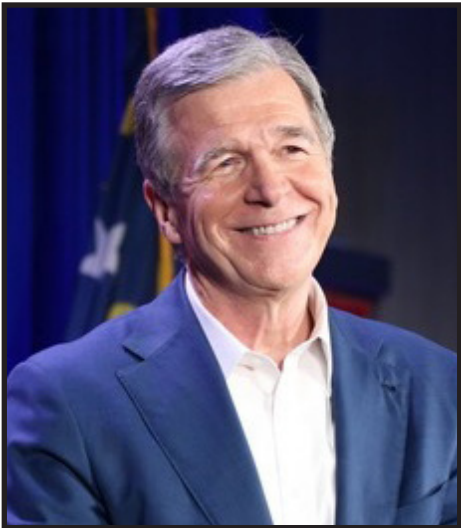
He is also running to “restore law and order,” within the country and often criticizes his Democratic competitor Roy Cooper for what Whatley perceives as a “soft on crime” approach Cooper had during his time as governor.

Another aspect of Whatley’s campaign is to get aid for hurricane disasters. His website emphasizes his work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency to secure funds for victims of Hurricane Helene.

Whatley’s campaign has faced some controversy over the last few months, particularly with his association with Harvey West Jr., who is a registered sex offender. West was part of the state GOP’s Plan of Organization Committee during the years Whatley served as chairman. According to WRAL, Whatley appointed West to the committee in 2021 and 2024.

Roy Cooper

Democratic Party



MILES HAYFORD | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Former North Carolina governor Roy Cooper is the Democrat running for North Carolina’s open United States Senate seat. Cooper has previously served as a state legislator, North Carolina’s attorney general and was governor for eight years.

Cooper was not available for comment.

According to a press release from 2024, Cooper added 640,000 new jobs in North Carolina over the course of his administration. He also distributed \$1.1 billion in grants for early childcare programs, according to the Office of Governor Roy Cooper website.

In his current campaign, Cooper is focusing on economic issues, with his number one priority making things cost less. His campaign website lists four policies he intends to prioritize if elected: supporting farmers and stopping tariffs, blocking major mergers that would stifle competition, ban grocery retailers from raising the prices of items for specific customers and preventing companies from increasing costs by using algorithms.

To lower healthcare costs, Cooper has proposed several initiatives he would pursue if elected. Some of those initiatives include capping prescription drug costs for consumers, increasing transparency on costs and reinstating the Affordable Care Act tax credits that have been reduced in recent years.

Shannon W. Bray

Libertarian Party



PHOTO CREDIT SHANNON BRAY

Shannon Bray is a Libertarian running for United States Senate. Bray ran for North Carolina’s lieutenant governor position in 2024 but won only 1.9% of the vote. Before seeking higher office, Bray served in the Navy and in the cybersecurity industry. Bray admitted some of his policy positions can be outside of the normal political talking points.

When he meets voters, Bray said the biggest concerns they have are “pocketbook” issues.

“There’s a lot of people out there that are struggling, and when we start to look at some of the differences that I would incur on the taxation side, I think it’s an unfair tax system,” Bray said. “I would try to replace the federal income tax with a consumption-based tax.”

This tax would have people who consume more paying more in taxes than those who do not.

Bray said he is anti-war. He said he believes the United States should focus on the problems facing its own citizens rather than the problems of other countries.

Bray also said he wants to reduce regulations for small businesses. Increasing competition in the medical industry is another position Bray holds. He said this will help to cut costs. Bray also said changing how the healthcare industry interacts with customers is important to increase transparency between insurance companies and patients.

Michael Dublin

Green Party



PHOTO CREDIT MICHAEL DUBLIN

Michael Dublin is running for North Carolina’s open United States Senate seat as part of the Green Party. Dublin has previously run for the United States House of Representatives District two seat. As he campaigns for Senate, Dublin said he learned that to make this campaign viable, he needed to start early and narrow his policy positions.

Dublin conceded that some people may not know what Green Party positions are, but said he is running a grassroots campaign and that he would not be one of the candidates who sends emails asking for money.

Before running for office, Dublin was a school teacher. He said he hears that voters are concerned about their children and schools.

“People are concerned about the infrastructure of schools and how come they have a shortage of bus drivers,” Dublin said.

Dublin is in favor of a data center moratorium that lasts “as long as it’s necessary.” He cited environmental concerns and called out local elected officials who sign non-disclosure agreements with companies.

Another pillar of Dublin’s platform is prison reform. Dublin said the criminal justice system was created to target people of color and those with a lower socioeconomic status. To combat this, Dublin said he believes laws need to be changed to not target people.

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U.S. Senate race influenced by experience, money



Left, Democrat Roy Cooper, is running against Republican Michael Whatley in the 2026 U.S. Senate race. Whatley is the former chair of the Republican National Committee and Cooper served as North Carolina's governor for eight years.

Roy Cooper, Michael Whatley to face off on Election Day

Trista Panagakos
Politics Editor

As Election Day nears, North Carolina voters are considering their options for the open United States Senate seat. Former North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper, former Republican National Committee Chairman Michael Whatley, Libertarian Party candidate Shannon Bray and Green Party candidate Michael Dublin are running for the seat and the opportunity to appeal to voters. Current Sen. Thom Tillis is retiring at the end of his term.

For Cooper and Whatley, this race has been marked by attack advertisements on one another paid for by political action committees, campaign stops with President Donald Trump and large sums of money filtering into the race.

In the primary elections, Cooper decidedly won the Democratic nomination with 92% of the vote, while Whatley beat his Republican competitors with 64% of the vote. According to North Carolina State University political science professor Steven Greene, Cooper had a slight name recognition advantage over Whatley in the early stages of the race, but that evened out as time has went on.

Whatley has never held an elected position, and is the first campaign he has been part of, something Greene says puts him at a disadvantage compared to Cooper's nearly 40-year political career in North Carolina.

"Running for office across North Carolina is something Roy Cooper is very good at and very experienced at," Greene said. "I do think in most skills experience matters, and Michael Whatley has never done this before."

Cooper has never lost an election in his political career. He served in the North Carolina House of Representatives, as North Carolina's attorney general and as North Carolina's governor for eight years. As governor, Cooper expanded Medicaid to 600,000 North Carolinians, increased teacher pay by 19% and passed an energy bill that encouraged energy companies to

cut carbon emissions.

His time as governor was also marked by disagreements with the Republican majority in the state house. Cooper vetoed 104 bills that came across his desk and the Republican majority government overturned 52 of those vetoes.

“

RUNNING FOR OFFICE ACROSS NORTH CAROLINA IS SOMETHING ROY COOPER IS VERY GOOD AT AND VERY EXPERIENCED AT. I DO THINK IN MOST SKILLS EXPERIENCE MATTERS, AND MICHAEL WHATLEY HAS NEVER DONE THIS BEFORE.

STEVEN GREENE
NC STATE POLITICAL SCIENCE PROFESSOR

Republican Senate PACs have diverted funds they were planning to spend on behalf of Whatley to other races they believe are more competitive, according to Politico. This shift signals the party establishment's views on how winnable this race is for Whatley. His campaign will have to adjust to these lost funds that may have been spent on advertisements.

"The Republicans are dumping a ton of money in right now, and they're going to look and see and say, 'Do we think this is making a difference? Do we think it's making enough of a difference?'" Greene said. "If their answer is yes, they'll keep doing it. My hypothesis is that it won't make enough of a difference and they're going to say this race is just lost."

Historically, the party that controls the White House tends to lose seats in the United States House and Senate during the midterm elections. During Trump's first term, the federal government was

controlled by Republicans, with majorities in the House and Senate. After the 2018 midterm elections, Republicans maintained their majority in the Senate but lost control of the House.

Whatley has embraced the Trump administration and has been endorsed by the president since the March primary election. Greene said since Whatley is trailing in the polls, he is trying to do what he can to reach voters, but with Trump's declining approval numbers, these appearances may not have the effect Whatley is hoping for.

Director of the Elon Poll Jason Husser admitted people may have believed the Senate race was going to be more competitive than it is. He said he believes the race will tighten as Election Day gets closer.

Husser said Cooper and Whatley are running two types of campaigns which provide each candidate with a distinct advantage. Cooper has been running a campaign that offers the Democratic party as an alternative to the current Republican administration, whereas Whatley is focused on issues such as crime that are usually more favorable topics to Republicans.

7 points

is how much Roy Cooper led by in a recent Oct. 8 East Carolina University poll

Compared to presidential election years, midterm elections have lower voter turnout. Getting voters engaged and to the polls is another important piece Cooper and Whatley have to consider to reach Capitol Hill. With Cooper leading in most polls, Husser said this can affect voters and donors.

"Most importantly, probably, his thinking is about the state Democratic party, drive people to go turn out to vote for him and also vote for state general assembly Democrats at the same time," Husser said.

While Whatley is trailing in the polls, Husser said Cooper's lead is not as influential as one may think. While being polled, Whatley voters are still confident he will win in the end, while around 10% of Cooper voters believe Whatley will win.

"There's some fear in the Cooper base, which is healthy for Cooper and there's a lot of optimism still in the Whatley base, which is good for Whatley," Husser said.

As both campaigns look towards early voting and Election Day, Cooper and Whatley will be working to mobilize their bases and talk about the issues most favorable to them.

104

bills were vetoed by Roy Cooper as governor, almost three times the total of all other governors combined since NC created the veto in 1997



Attendees cheer for former North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper as he arrives for his "Make Stuff Cost Less" event Oct. 8 in Winston-Salem.

Campaigning for U.S. House District 9

Richard N. Ojeda II

Democratic Party



PHOTO CREDIT RICHARD OJEDA

Richard Ojeda is the Democratic nominee for North Carolina's ninth congressional district. In March 2026, he won the primary election with 41.8% of the vote, defeating three other Democratic candidates.

Ojeda said the main three issues guiding his campaign are affordability, anti-corruption and social security. He aims to tie minimum wage to the cost of living and make the first \$45,000 earned by an individual each year tax-free, oppose insider trading among politicians and raise the social security tax cap. He has also refused corporate political action committee money and 99% of his fundraising is from individual contributions, according to the Federal Election Commission.

Ojeda stressed the importance of being in the community during his campaign to connect with voters and hear their concerns.

"When we're done and we win this,

my office is going to speak with anybody, regardless of party," Ojeda said. "I want Republicans and unaffiliated and independent people to come and meet me when I go throughout this district because when I win this, they're my constituents too and they deserve to be heard just like anybody else."

Ojeda spent most of his 24 years with the U.S. Army at Fort Bragg in Fayetteville, North Carolina. He initially retired to West Virginia where he taught high school Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps and represented the seventh district in the state senate. Even while serving as a Democrat in a Republican-controlled legislature, he pushed legislation such as legalizing medical cannabis and raising teacher pay.

"I believe in putting boots on the ground," Ojeda said. "I tell people that when I'm not in Washington, DC, they're going to see me in their districts."

Richard Hudson

Republican Party



PHOTO CREDIT HUDSON.HOUSE.GOV

Richard Hudson is running for reelection to represent North Carolina's ninth congressional district. He has served as a representative since 2013, originally representing the eighth congressional district before the 2020 census prompted redistricting ahead of the 2022 midterm election.

Fort Bragg, the largest military base in the world by total population, has remained in Hudson's jurisdiction his entire congressional career and motivates his commitment to active-duty members and veterans, according to his campaign website.

Hudson is the current chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee, making him the highest ranking Republican member of Congress from North Carolina in history.

He was unavailable for an interview, but in a statement to Elon News Network, Hudson's campaign team said that he is "focused on growing the Republican majority in

the House by recruiting candidates with compelling life stories, building strong campaigns and raising the funds necessary to communicate effectively."

Hudson is also a member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee and chairman of the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology. According to his campaign website, these positions reflect his commitment to bridging the digital divide, leveraging American energy to lower costs and create jobs and streamlining federal regulations.

He is "dedicated to working across the aisle on solutions to support our military community, defend our Constitutional rights, create jobs, cut taxes and improve our quality of life," according to his campaign website.

Hudson is also an adamant defender of the Second Amendment and right to life movement and leads efforts in Congress to end gun violence and protect schools.

ENN ELECTION CENTER

Voting records shed light on main priorities of Hudson, Ojeda

Candidates for North Carolina congressional district nine have both introduced, passed legislation in public office

Kate Gray
News Editor

Between Republican incumbent Richard Hudson's 13 years in federal office and Democratic nominee Richard Ojeda's time in West Virginia's state senate, the two candidates for United States House of Representative for North Carolina's ninth district have both established core issues and worked to foster civic engagement in their communities throughout their careers.

Since his first congressional session in 2013, Hudson has introduced 129 pieces of legislation and five have become law. His proposed bills cover a range of policy areas from transportation security to Medicare protections.

In the state senate, Ojeda was the lead sponsor of 25 bills between December 2016 and January 2019. One of them was signed into law — the West Virginia Medical Cannabis Act, which legalized medical cannabis for people with severe chronic medical conditions. Ojeda said the law appealed to both Democrats and Republicans due to the potential benefits of medical cannabis for military veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder.

"I learned back then that when you truly believe in what you're pushing, when you show passion, when you're willing to work across the aisle with people because you got

good ideas, that right there is key," Ojeda said in an interview with ENN.

Hudson was unavailable for an interview for this story. His communications team did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

Identifying bipartisan issues is also beneficial for candidates by getting more voters to the polls. Nadine Gibson, an associate professor of public and international affairs at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington, studies political participation and said that in general, younger voters turnout in smaller numbers than older voters because they feel the impact of policy changes less and have an underdeveloped sense of civic duty and routine around voting.

However, having a strong stance on a certain issue — such as the Israel-Hamas war, Donald Trump's presidency or immigration policy — can trigger that participation.

"If people feel like the policies that the candidates are proposing will impact them and their lives, people are more likely to participate in an election," Gibson said. "People also are more likely to participate in elections where they think their vote matters — so close elections, elections with low turnouts when everyone's vote numerically counts more."

Gibson also described two philosophical models used to describe political representation. Some voters expect their representatives to be trustees, which allows politicians to use their own judgment and expertise when making decisions and is commonly associated with longer terms in office. In contrast, other voters expect delegates who will vote strictly according to the majority voice among their district.

With shorter terms, such as the two-year term served by representatives to Congress,

voters tend to prefer delegates.

"They can see how these people have voted on relevant policy and might feel very strongly that they want someone to go in there and act as what political scientists call a delegate versus a trustee," Gibson said. "They want someone who's going to vote a certain way."



PEOPLE ALSO ARE MORE LIKELY TO PARTICIPATE IN ELECTIONS WHERE THEY THINK THEIR VOTE MATTERS — SO CLOSE ELECTIONS.

NADINE GIBSON
UNCW PUBLIC AND INTERNATIONAL
AFFAIRS PROFESSOR

According to Voteview, a platform that tracks and analyzes every vote in the history of the U.S. Congress, Hudson has cast 7,244 votes since taking office in January 2013. Of those, 96% aligned with the Republican party's majority position. Voteview also provides an ideology score that describes where representatives rank in relation to their colleagues. According to Voteview, Hudson is more conservative than 73% of the current House and more liberal than 51% of Republicans currently in the House.

Gibson said for constituents, researching candidates' voting records can reveal whether

a politician's actions match their words.

For example, Hudson is vocal about ending gun violence in schools through improving school safety measures and mental health resources instead of implementing stricter gun control. He has authored and introduced a Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act in each of his seven terms to establish federal regulations on carrying concealed firearms across state lines. The bill proposes that an individual who is eligible to conceal carry in one state may own a concealed firearm in another state that allows concealed carry.

Ojeda is also an advocate for the Second Amendment. In the West Virginia state senate, he proposed a bill that would have allowed Alcohol Beverage Control Commission employees who inspect bars to carry firearms after completing police training.

Both campaigns for district nine have also featured conversations about Trump, government accountability and economic issues.

While spending time researching candidates helps some voters get a better understanding of who they are voting for, Gibson said there are shortcuts to voting "correctly," or in line with their positions. For those on the extreme left or right, simply knowing a candidate's party affiliation may be enough.

"You can do hours and hours of research, but would that really be different for you than voting straight ticket, depending on who you are?" Gibson said. "If you're super liberal or super conservative, I'm not sure you need to research and spend hours and hours. You can find some clues that might better direct you to vote correctly and then be fine with that. Just voting is important and not everyone has unlimited time and energy."

Campaigning for North Carolina Senate District 25

Southey Blanton

Democratic Party

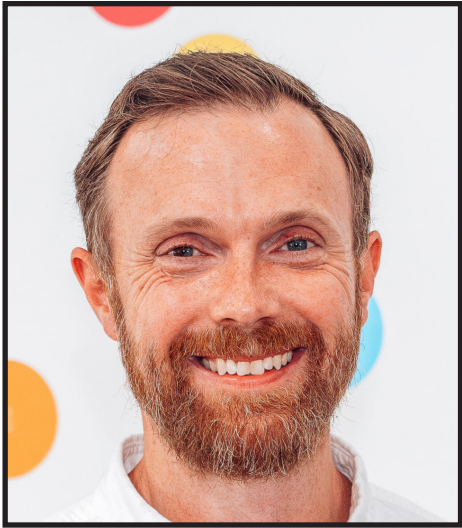


PHOTO CREDIT SOUTHEY BLANTON

Southey Blanton is running for the first time as the Democratic candidate for state senate District 25 against incumbent Amy Galey. He said he made the decision to run when he saw she initially had no one opposing her. Blanton said that went against his idea of a democracy, where both sides of politics are represented.

“It motivated me to at least throw my hat into the ring to give voters a choice to make sure that the incumbent has to make their case of why they should stay in office,” Blanton said.

Blanton works at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill School of Social Work, where he trains child welfare workers and foster or resource parents.

Alongside this experience, he said growing up in public school and having his four children go through a similar school system, helps him see the complexities of how schools run and the funding they have.

“I’ve been able to see the entirety of my life, a system that used to pay teachers a living wage and had the resources there,” Blanton said. “That has slowly been sort of chipped away at and cut away at, to the point where public education is in dire straits in a lot of places and it’s really tough for teachers to keep doing their jobs.”

He said this has enlightened him on the resources that the state senate needs to start allocating to the public school system.

Amy Scott Galey

Republican Party



PHOTO CREDIT AMY GALEY

Incumbent Sen. Amy Galey, a Republican representing Senate District 25, is seeking reelection with a campaign centered on three words: respect, experience and courage.

Galey said one of the biggest misconceptions voters have about her is that she is not supportive of education. She described herself as “pro-education” and pointed to her role in securing the vote for the construction of Southeast High School in Alamance County as one of her biggest accomplishments in office.

Education is one of three major issues Galey said she is focused on, along with healthcare and conservation. On healthcare, she said she supports repealing the state’s certificate-of-need process and expanding the scope of practice for certain health care professionals.

When determining what legislation is in the best interest of senate District 25, Galey said she relies on community networks and local resources to understand residents’ needs. Having grown up in Alamance County, she said her connection to the community has allowed her to hear and experience many of the challenges facing the area firsthand.

She said her message to voters is to consider her record and positions rather than dismissing her because of her party.

Campaigning for North Carolina House of Representatives District 63

Ian Baltutis

Democratic Party



PHOTO CREDIT BURLINGTONNC.GOV

Ian Baltutis is running as the Democratic candidate for the North Carolina House of Representatives District 63 seat. Baltutis has served in local government since 2015, including three terms as mayor of Burlington. He recently returned to the Burlington City Council before deciding to enter the state house race after the Democratic candidate previously running dropped out.

One of the major focuses of Baltutis’ campaign is affordability. He said he wants corporations to pay what he considers their fair share in taxes rather than eliminating the state income and corporate taxes. He said that revenue is necessary for communities to provide services residents depend on.

During his time as mayor, he focused on downtown revitalization and launching Burlington’s bus system. He said his local government experience would help him understand how decisions made in Raleigh affect communities across Alamance County.

Baltutis said he supports increasing funding for public schools and teachers while ending the state’s private school voucher program.

“We need folks who are really accountable to Alamance County,” Baltutis said. “Who will pick up the phone and talk to constituents and work with our mayors and city councils and county commissioners and school boards to make good policy that actually benefits Alamance County.”

Ryan Moffitt

Republican Party



PHOTO CREDIT RYAN MOFFITT

Ryan Moffitt is running as the Republican candidate for the North Carolina House of Representatives District 63 seat. Moffitt is a Burlington lawyer and lifelong Alamance County resident.

Moffitt said his campaign is focused on continuing the economic development work he has seen in Alamance County, while making sure growth is managed responsibly.

Moffitt graduated from Williams High School and Elon Law and has practiced law at the Vernon Law Firm since 2015. His work focuses on commercial real estate and business transactions, including development, zoning and land use.

A major part of Moffitt’s campaign is what he describes as “disciplined, responsible government.” He said he wants the county to attract business and employers while maintaining a careful approach to taxes and government spending.

Education is another area Moffitt emphasized. Moffitt said he is optimistic about the direction of Alamance-Burlington schools and highlighted Elon University and Alamance Community College for their roles in the community.

“Things will flourish at the end of the day if we can keep our government limited and our people empowered,” Moffitt said.

Campaigning for North Carolina House of Representatives District 64

LeVon Barnes

Democratic Party



PHOTO CREDIT LEVON BARNES

Democrat LeVon Barnes, a public school teacher, is running for North Carolina House District 64 for the second time. Barnes, who describes himself as a husband, father and educator of 24 years, said his campaign is focused on affordability, public education and access to health care.

Barnes, who teaches at a year-round public high school, said his experience working with students and families has shaped his decision to run for office.

“Working-class people need a working-class champion,” Barnes said.

Barnes first ran for the District 64 seat in 2024.

If elected, Barnes said one of his first priorities would be restoring some powers to the governor that he said have been limited by the General Assembly. He also supports significantly raising North Carolina’s minimum wage.

Barnes said the state should increase funding for public schools and, if necessary, repeal the state’s school voucher program. Barnes also said he would support changes to the current state tax structure.

Barnes said affordability is the biggest issue facing District 64, pointing to the cost of electricity, housing and other necessities. He criticized his opponent’s support for lowering income taxes, arguing that residents continue to struggle with rising costs despite previous tax reductions and instead proposed implementing wage-based tax structures.

Barnes said his campaign is centered on listening to residents and bringing their concerns to Raleigh. He said his experience as an educator has taught him to work with people across different backgrounds and political viewpoints.

“I know I’m only one vote, and I know I’m not a miracle maker,” Barnes said. “But what I promise to do is to bring that voice and bring your stories, most importantly, to Raleigh.”

Dennis Riddell

Republican Party

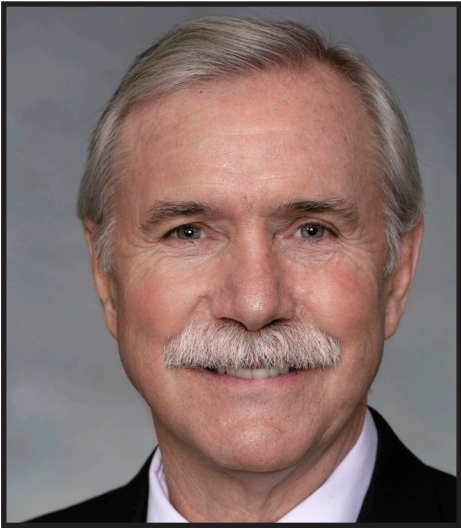


PHOTO CREDIT DENNIS RIDDELL

Rep. Dennis Riddell, the incumbent North Carolina House Representative for District 64, is seeking reelection to the seat he has held since 2012. Riddell said his campaign is focused on maintaining North Carolina’s financial stability, continuing income tax reductions and supporting families.

Riddell said he decided to run for the House after serving as chairman of the Alamance County Republican Party. In

2012, Riddell said that then Rep. Dan England encouraged him to run for the District 64 seat. After discussing the decision with his wife and eight children, Riddell entered the race and has since served seven consecutive terms.

Riddell said his primary concern for the district and the state is financial responsibility. He pointed to the state and national debt levels and said lawmakers should consider whether government spending is improving conditions for future generations.

During his time in office, Riddell said he has supported gradually lowering North Carolina’s personal income tax rate.

“Right now, your personal income tax obligation for the state of North Carolina is 3.9%, down from a high of 7.75%,” Riddell said.

Riddell identified family policy as a major priority. He said strong families are connected to a strong community.

Looking ahead, Riddell said he wants to maintain the state’s financial position while supporting education from kindergarten through higher education.

“To pass laws that keep us strong financially, but also pass laws that make it easy to succeed by removing stumbling blocks that different people have,” Riddell said.

Campaigning for Alamance County Board of Commissioners

Sean C. Ewing
Democratic Party



PHOTO CREDIT SEAN EWING

Sean Ewing, who currently serves on the City of Mebane’s city council, is running for Alamance County Board of Commissioners. One of the things he hopes to improve is the relationship between Alamance-Burlington School System and Alamance County. “I just see some real need for change in Alamance County, and that can come in the form of being an ally to our public schools, which we desperately need right now,” Ewing said. “I’m not saying I’m going to be a blank check for our public schools and also, right now, we just need a working relationship with our public school system, ABSS.” Ewing hopes to start conversations with both local government officials and residents. “My goal is to keep moving forward and to keep outreaching and keep talking with people,” Ewing said. “Even if we just disagree, even if I disagree with the constituent or resident or whoever, I still want to find common ground. There’s always common ground to be found, and that’s really, really important to me.”

Steve Carter
Republican Party



PHOTO CREDIT STEVE CARTER

Steve Carter is seeking reelection for a third term as an Alamance County Commissioner. He initially said he would not run again but decided to because he wanted to finish the work he had started. When Carter first ran for commissioner, he said he wanted to build stronger relationships with the school district to improve the quality of education in Alamance County. In August of this year, the board unanimously approved a one-year moratorium on development of data centers in the county. Carter said that if a data center plans on developing in Alamance, he wants to make sure they are paying for the water and utility bills and provide support for the county. “There’s so many different issues that we deal with,” Carter said. “There’s so many different opinions on each issue. We have to be knowledgeable about what our people, what our citizens want from us.”

Ramona Allen
Democratic Party



PHOTO CREDIT RAMONA ALLEN

Ramona Allen is running for a seat on the Alamance County Board of Commissioners. Allen is a pastor and has been an Alamance County resident for almost 60 years. She said she has always been active in the community, whether it was feeding the homeless or working with the police department. Allen said her background as a pastor has been helpful with connecting with the community. “Being a pastor is motivating me even more to do what I do because I know that change has to come and it comes to us being serviced, being involved,” Allen said. “You have to get your hands dirty. It’s more than taking photo ops, it’s more than just showing up to be on a board.” Win or lose, Allen said she hopes voters know she cares about the community. “I’m relatable, I’m transparent and what I bring to the table is my integrity,” Allen said.

Kelly Allen
Republican Party



PHOTO CREDIT KELLY ALLEN

Kelly Allen is running for a seat on the Alamance County Board of Commissioners. Allen is one of four candidates running for two open seats. She was appointed to the board in 2024 after Craig Turner left the board when he was elected to the district court. This election, Allen said her first concern is the safety of Alamance County citizens. She said she will look for funds and grants to help with improvements to local first responder buildings. Allen also said that she and the county manager have worked to scale back on unnecessary spending. In doing so, Allen said they can avoid increasing taxes. Allen was also involved in hiring a tax appraiser, who confirmed what Allen believed that bigger companies had too low of taxes in the county. “Actually getting appropriate amount for businesses is going to help in the long run,” Allen said.

Alamance County Board of Commissioners
Unexpired term ending 2028

Campaigning for
Alamance County Sheriff

Kourtney J. Royster
Democratic Party



PHOTO CREDIT KOURTNEY ROYSTER

Kourtney Royster is running in the Alamance County Commissioners special election. Royster has experience as a claims adjuster for an insurance company. Royster is also a licensed clinical mental health counselor which he said gives him insight into the medical system and an idea of what needs people may have. Royster said if elected, his job is to work for the people and the goal of all county commissioners, regardless of party, should be to support the community. For Royster, his biggest policy position is education. He said he wants to ensure that staff are supported financially, the curriculum at each school is effective, ensuring extracurricular programs and expanding mental health services for students. “It’s all those things that help build the ideal student that we want to become a citizen of Alamance County,” Royster said.

Samuel C. Powell
Republican Party



PHOTO CREDIT SAM POWELL

Sam Powell is running in a special election for the Alamance County Board of Commissioners. Powell was previously appointed to this position to fill a vacancy after the previous commissioner, John Paisley Jr., died in February. Powell said his three main focuses are safety, public school funding and prosperity for Alamance County residents. Powell’s greatest concerns when it comes to safety in Alamance County are the number of fully staffed ambulance services, the funding that supports Alamance County Rescue Unit and the amount of drugs dealt in the area. Powell said Alamance County currently has eight fully staffed ambulances, but a county this size needs 16. He also said that increasing the funding for Alamance Rescue, a nonprofit that provides specialized rescue services, will help better support local citizens who are in an emergency.

Shannon Long
Unaffiliated



PHOTO CREDIT SHANNON LONG

Shannon Long is an unaffiliated candidate running for the position of Alamance County Sheriff. Long stated that he previously served in several capacities with the sheriff’s office, including in patrol, detention and as a school resource officer. Long currently serves as the owner and chief operating officer of a barber school institute. Long said that a lack of trust has created a challenge in public safety. “In service to the community, there must be listening sessions with the community, not only feel, but know that they have a voice in the community,” Long said. “That is something that is lacking in the community. The members don’t feel like they have a voice. They feel targeted. They feel like they’re in the shadows. They feel like they’re not a part when it comes to public safety.” Long said that if elected, he wants to provide mental health resources both to the deputies and to the community.

Terry Johnson
Republican Party



PHOTO CREDIT ALAMANCECOUNTYNCGOV

Incumbent Alamance County Sheriff Terry Johnson is running for reelection as the Republican candidate for his seventh term as sheriff of Alamance County. According to his campaign’s website, Johnson has served for 23 years as the Alamance County Sheriff, with 53 total years in law enforcement. Johnson has focused on “professionalism, accountability and public safety,” according to the site. During his tenure as sheriff, the Alamance County Sheriff’s Office has established several specialized units, including the Special Victims Unit, Mental Health Unit and the Evidence Depository Unit. The Special Victims Unit investigates rapes, sexual assaults and child exploitations. He has also worked with the Invictus Task Force and other sheriff departments to arrest child predators. Johnson did not respond to Elon News Network’s request for an interview.

Campaigning for Alamance-Burlington Board of Education

Katharine Frazier

Nonpartisan



PHOTO CREDIT KATHARINE FRAIZER

Katharine Frazier is running for Alamance-Burlington School System Board of Education, bringing a background in corporate finance and a longtime interest in education policy with her.

“I feel like at this moment, with where we are in ABSS, some good things are happening, but there’s a long way to go when it comes to our transformation here,” Frazier said.

She said her finance and accounting experience would help her approach district funding and work with county commissioners on a school budget.

Frazier said competitive teacher supplements are important, but the district could also focus on working conditions and staff support to meet the needs of experienced teachers.

Frazier said the district should also develop a policy for artificial intelligence as technology continues to advance.

If elected Frazier said she would like to approach the district’s budget with a longer-term perspective by developing five-year financial projections.

Stephanie Long Enoch

Nonpartisan



PHOTO CREDIT STEPHANIE LONG ENOCH

Green Level town council member Stephanie Long Enoch is running for Alamance- Burlington School System Board of Education. Enoch has worked as a substitute teacher for many years.

Enoch said she wants to advocate for students in underserved communities, particularly those from single-parent, low-income households.

“They may need someone to be an advocate between the school board and that parent that has to work and isn’t there to help their child do their homework at night,” Enoch said.

One of Enoch’s priorities is recruiting and retaining quality teachers, through better pay and incentives, is important to improve outcomes for students.

Enoch also wants to expand academic support through tutoring, mentoring and supplemental instruction. She said she wants students to begin thinking about their future early and to have every ninth grader meet with a guidance counselor to discuss their plans after high school.

Brandy Whittaker

Nonpartisan



PHOTO CREDIT BRANDY WHITTAKER

Brandy Whittaker, a former Burlington city council candidate, is running for a seat on the Alamance-Burlington School System Board of Education.

Whittaker said her experience as a parent and involvement in her children’s schools motivated her to become more politically active.

“I think I’ve just gotten to the point where there aren’t enough voices for our kids,” Whittaker said. “There are voices for politics.”

If elected Whittaker said she wants to bring more understanding of programs like 504 plans, which provide accommodations and support for students with disabilities, as well as Individualized Education Programs to the school board. She said that her own experience has affected her view on decisions that affect students with disabilities and their families.

Teacher recruitment and retention is another priority for Whittaker.

Whittaker graduated from Elon in 2010 with a degree in international studies with a focus in African politics and a minor in political science.

Kyle Ward

Nonpartisan



PHOTO CREDIT KYLE WARD

Kyle Ward is running for a seat on the Alamance-Burlington School System Board of Education. Ward retired in June after working as a teacher and athletic director for 30 years in Alamance County. Ward is a graduate of Graham High School and Elon University.

Ward said his extended time working in ABSS helps him better understand the schools’ needs and how best to serve them.

“It gives me a little more insight to things than your normal candidate,” Ward said.

One of Ward’s biggest concerns, he said, is how the board is spending money. Ward said he has observed members of the board attempt to temporarily fix issues that have progressively gotten worse over time without getting to the root of the issue.

Ward said he would also like to recruit more teachers to ABSS schools by increasing the supplement provided by the county.

Ward said he also wants to provide money to schools that need additional funding to help positively impact the school’s performance.

Charles Parker

Nonpartisan



PHOTO CREDIT CHARLES PARKER

Charles Parker is seeking reelection to the Alamance-Burlington School System Board of Education. Parker previously won a seat on the board in 2022.

Parker said the past four years on the board were spent dealing with different crises, including the mold outbreak in local schools. If he were reelected, Parker said he wants to focus on the long-term needs of the schools now that they’re past those other issues.

To accommodate the increasing number of students enrolled in ABSS, Parker said the county needs to start considering building new elementary schools and a middle school.

“It’s important to continue that work and continue some of the safety work, which is coming up, to make sure that students have a safe learning environment, and our educators, teachers and staff, can focus on instruction rather than facility issues,” Parker said.

Parker said he would also like to see a streamlined method of communication between parents and staff to guarantee voices are heard and thoughtfully considered during meetings.

Samira Khan

Nonpartisan



PHOTO CREDIT SAMIRA KHAN

Samira Khan is running for one of the three open seats on the Alamance-Burlington School Board of Education. Khan works at Guilford Technical Community College as an advisor and in integrated education and pathway design.

Khan said the county needs to bring a larger focus onto uplifting its public school system.

“I think teachers don’t feel supported. They are not fairly compensated as compared to other counties. We’re not prioritizing education,” Khan said.

Khan pointed to private school vouchers and lottery systems, explaining that while she is supportive of enriching those programs, government funding should stay within the public school system.

As an immigrant who speaks four languages, she hopes to focus on inclusion and represent people from backgrounds like hers who she said often are underrepresented.

Khan said she supports early intervention with math and English language arts testing, so the district can address student needs early on in their schooling.

Eric Hall

Nonpartisan

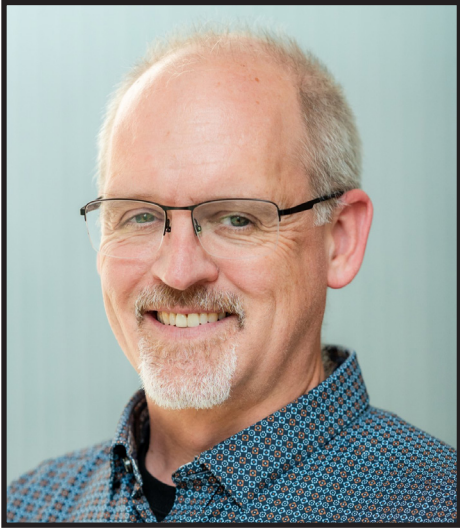


PHOTO CREDIT ERIC HALL

Eric Hall is running for a seat on the Alamance-Burlington School System Board of Education. Hall currently serves on the board after being appointed in April 2025 to fill a vacancy after the retirement of Chuck Marsh.

An Elon University professor for over 25 years, Hall has lived in Alamance County throughout the entirety of his Elon career.

Hall’s campaign focuses on four main pillars: students, educators, responsible leadership and safe and supportive schools.

Focusing on student success is important, specifically presenting students with a variety of pathways. Hall said he hopes to cater to the needs of students, whether those are AP or IB courses or career and technical options.

Hall said support also needs to focus on recruiting and retaining educators.

Hall said ABSS schools should be clean and up to date to meet the needs of the students.

“When I talk about safe and supportive, it’s really that sort of holistic area where I want them to be successful in,” Hall said.

Political organizations on campus gear up for Election Day

College Democrats, College Republicans are hosting events, speakers to get students involved in local politics

Trista Panagakos
Politics Editor

Students on Elon University's campus are getting prepared for the midterm elections. Two groups on campus are both trying to do their part to get students excited and interested in the elections happening locally and nationally.

The College Democrats and College Republicans chapters at Elon have both been involved with civic engagement, bringing local candidates to campus and trying to bridge the gap for politically disengaged students at Elon. To do this, both organizations have hosted or partaken in events that emphasize the upcoming election.

For the College Republicans, Public Relations Chair Gillian Prichard said one of their biggest goals was to offer students of any political background a space to talk and share ideas and opinions.

"I'd say support for college kids specifically who might be too scared to speak up or speak out in their classes or in their personal lives," Prichard said. "I think it's really, really important for us to say 'Hey, we are a safe space for you to come to.'"

The College Republicans have also committed themselves to getting outside of



ALEXANDER SIEGEL | PHOTO EDITOR

Beck Whitehead, President of North Carolina College Democrats, speaks during the Sept. 24 College Democrats meeting at the Downtown Elon Plaza.

their regular meeting space and involved within the Alamance County community. Recently, the organization took part in an event hosted by the Alamance Republican Women of North Carolina.

"We can get involved in the community and see what events they're doing, and if we can have a little bit more community outreach, because our goal this semester is to be recognized as a club and a legit organization," Prichard said.

In the past, the organization has hosted speakers at their meetings, including state Senator Amy Galey and Chairman of the North Carolina GOP Jason Simmons. This semester, the organization is hoping to host more speakers. At a meeting in early September, Alamance County district attorney candidate Sean Boone made a surprise visit and spoke to the organization.

"He said basically the best thing we can do as a club — because we asked him — is get involved, do outreach, don't be afraid to speak up, don't be afraid to expand your organization," Prichard said.

As Election Day nears, Prichard said the College Republicans will be using social media as much as possible to remind students to vote.

On the other side, the College Democrats have placed their focus on local Alamance

County elections. The organization has been hosting a speaker series at their bi-weekly meetings, with speakers such as Alamance County sheriff candidate Shannon Long and district attorney candidate Scott Drorbaugh speaking at a recent meeting.

President of the College Democrats Noah Mallion said students can get caught up in day-to-day life and forget that there is an upcoming election, but these events serve as reminders about what is happening and how to get involved.

"A big point of emphasis is definitely attending meetings where you can come and speak with Alamance County Democratic representatives," Mallion said. "You can speak with current candidates. You can get all the information that you need directly firsthand."

According to Elon University's website, around 75% of Elon's student population comes from out of state, and for the College Democrats educating that group of students is extremely important. Mallion described how the Northeast tends to swing blue, but local races in Alamance County can be more competitive. Mallion said the out of state students have a more powerful vote in local elections because races can go either way.

"That's actually one of our number one focuses right now, is trying to educate out-

of-state residents who currently live here at Elon as students, that changing their registration can actually make a major difference," Mallion said.

Mallion said the organization views its relationship with local candidates and the Alamance County Democratic Party as a partnership. Students in the organization can network and get experience with canvassing and phone banking, while candidates get help with getting elected.

In the lead up to Election Day, the group is trying to host North Carolina Democratic Party Chairwoman Anderson Clayton on campus and a tailgate at a home football game with local candidates.

Mallion encouraged students who do not want to be part of a partisan organization but still want to be civically engaged to get involved with Elon Votes!

Mallion emphasized how young people are more in tune with politics now than they were a decade ago. He highlighted the current tense political landscape in America but made a point to note how young people have a ton of opportunity to get involved and have a seat at the table.

"People are very sick and tired of older generations having run our country and being seemingly out of touch with the younger generations," Mallion said.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ELON COLLEGE REPUBLICANS

Elon College Republicans pose for a photo at the org fair on Sept. 2.

How North Carolina's judicial races can come down to a few hundred votes

North Carolinians will vote on one state supreme court seat, three North Carolina Court of Appeals seats

Alannah Klingsporn
Elon News Network



GRAPHIC BY AMELIA METZ

As the 2026 midterm elections approach, candidates are running for seats on the North Carolina Supreme Court and Court of Appeals. Voters will elect one candidate to the state supreme court and three candidates for the court of appeals.

Chris Nichols, a government affairs consultant to North Carolina Advocates for Justice, said that this election is important because North Carolina, unlike many other states, elects all of their judges.

"In a lot of states, the judges are appointed, sometimes by the bar association, sometimes by legislatures, and then maybe they'll have a retention election," Nichols said. "In a lot of ways, we as a state are one of the most democratic states in the nation, in the way that we pick our judges."

The NC Court of Appeals currently has a

partisan composition of 12 Republicans and three Democrats. Nichols said that if voters care about party balance, this is an election they should pay attention to.

"We could come out of this election with all Republicans on the court of appeals. That's a potential," Nichols said. "I think that's something that people should — if they're concerned with party balance — they should look at the numbers."

Nichols also said that this election could be decided by a few hundred votes. This comes after state supreme court judge Allison Riggs won her reelection by 734 votes in 2024 after two recounts.

"If you don't think your vote is important, you are wrong because this may come down to 200 votes or 150 votes," Nichols said. "College students participating will make

an absolute difference in the outcome."

Associate professor of political science at North Carolina State University Elizabeth Lane said the supreme court elections matter because the court tends to rule on important cases such as redistricting.

North Carolina redrew its congressional map ahead of the 2026 elections. The state senate approved the plan in Oct. 2025, with the house close behind. The governor cannot veto redistricting bills in North Carolina. It is the second time within two years that legislators have redrawn the maps, as the new districts were previously approved in Oct. 2023.

"As we think about this election and our next election coming up in 2028, whoever is on the supreme court after that will be the court that oversees redistricting," Lane said.

"There's a lot of discussion, not just within the state of North Carolina, but nationally, about the way the North Carolina congressional map looks and whether that map is fair."

Lane said that the attention around the 2024 race shows just how important elections like these are.

"How many people were invested in the outcome, demonstrates how important the judicial races are," Lane said.

Lane said she recommends first time voters use sample ballots and research candidates.

"We can't escape these devices that are in our pocket," Lane said. "But this is one way to actually get involved and do something about what is happening in our state, in your town, in our country."

Students, local residents focus on election priorities

Elon University Poll finds voters see inflation, cost of living, general economy as “very important”

Evan Cooper
Elon News Network

As the 2026 midterm elections approach, voters are reflecting on what issues are most important to them. North Carolina adults are most concerned about the national economy, according to an Elon University Poll published in September 2026. Eighty-six percent of voters said inflation and the cost of living were “very important” to them, with 73% also listing the general economy and healthcare as “very important.” For other issues that voters saw as very important, 66% said taxes, 54% said immigration and 50% said the war in Iran. Fifty-two percent of registered voters said they were opposed to U.S. involvement in Iran, and 31% said they supported it.



EVERYBODY WANTS TO HAVE A DECENT PAYING CAREER, TO BE ABLE TO AFFORD THEIR FAMILIES NEEDS AND HAVE MONEY IN THE BANK WHEN YOU RETIRE.

SHANNON O'TOOLE
TOWN OF GIBSONVILLE RESIDENT

For many Elon students, they are prioritizing national issues when thinking about the midterm elections. Junior



Town of Elon residents and council members discuss their priorities for the town at the Oct. 1 Neighborhood Meeting.

Roxanny Difo Rojas said she wants candidates who would address what she called overreaches in power from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and President Trump. Sophomore Ella Chamness said she wants candidates to focus on reinstating environmental protections rolled back by the Trump administration, as well as revisiting Roe v. Wade’s overturning and what women’s health will look like now. “I’m not saying I want more restrictions but I definitely do want women’s health to be supported, not just the baby but the mother as well,” Chamness said. For some students, their priorities are in their home states. Freshman Noah Levy is from Texas, and said he wanted candidates there to focus on improving the public education system without as much direct government involvement.

“I know this is an issue across the U.S., but especially in Texas with the government infiltrating into the schools,” Levy said. “Trying to infiltrate with religion as well, that stuff is causing more issues.” The Texas State Board of Education approved a proposal in June requiring Bible verses to be studied in classes. Supporters of the proposal said studying the Bible can help students learn about the United States’ founding, while critics say it violates the separation of church and state. Local residents said they’re also concerned about the economy, as well as local issues like safety and public schools. Bill Mann, a town of Elon resident, said that he hopes state-level candidates focus on local issues such as keeping citizens safe, and that national candidates put an emphasis on lowering prices. “I know we’re feeding more people at

this church, and that’s how I’m seeing people hurt by prices,” Mann said while standing outside First Baptist Church of Elon. Shannon O’Toole, a resident of Gibsonville, hopes candidates will concentrate on ending the war in Iran and lowering government spending. “Everybody wants to have a decent paying career, to be able to afford their families needs and have money in the bank when you retire,” O’Toole said. “I feel a lot more people get along than there is to this.” Town of Elon resident Sandra Pettiford wants candidates who would prioritize fixing financial issues such as high gas prices and low wages, as well as investing more resources into school systems. “I have a couple grandchildren, and I’m concerned about the young people and the school system,” Pettiford said.

NC state auditor steps into political spotlight with new election oversight

State auditor now appoints members to the state board of elections

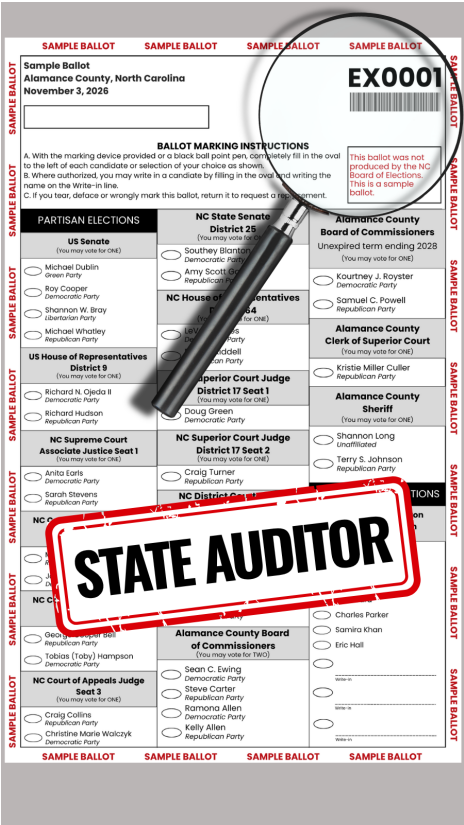
Miles Hayford
Managing Editor of The Pendulum

A state auditor is often seen as a behind-the-scenes role, but North Carolina state auditor Dave Boliek has bursted onto the political scene in the past year with newfound control over how elections are run in the state. Boliek, whose job usually oversees monitoring taxpayer dollars and the elimination of waste and fraud throughout the state, was granted the power to appoint members to the state board of elections and the county-level election board chairs. This was a power usually reserved for North Carolina’s governor. Most states also give their governor or secretary of state appointment power for their board of elections. This was the sixth time the state legislature has tried to get that power away from the NC governor, which is one of the weakest governors in the country by governing power over things like vetoes and appointments. Since taking office, Boliek has appointed new members, flipping the state board and all 100 local boards to Republican control. Political science professor at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte Eric Heberlig, said this has led to a politicization of the state auditor’s role. “That’s not an office that the voters typically pay really any attention to, and certainly the office has been in the news much more in the past year than previously, almost entirely due to controversies over board of election issues,” Heberlig said. Since Republicans took control over

election boards, the boards have been criticized over changes to early voting sites and Sunday voting. In several counties, election boards removed Sunday voting from their schedules, which is typically something Black voters use frequently through events like Souls to the Polls, according to Adrienne Kelly, executive director of voting rights group, Democracy North Carolina. “That raises one of the concerns that the auditor’s role should be about election administration,” Kelly said. “It should not be a political role, and so politics was getting infused in terms of one party’s preference to not have Sunday voting, and why would you not have Sunday voting?” However, Andy Jackson, director of the Civitas Center for Public Integrity at the John Locke Foundation, a conservative-leaning think tank, said that the auditor’s job naturally creates politicization. “That’s the nature of the office. I mean, your job is essentially going in there and telling government officials that they are wasting taxpayers’ money or they’re doing something that they’re not strictly allowed to do under North Carolina law, and so that ruffles feathers,” Jackson said. Jackson was appointed by Boliek to the Modernization of Election Data Systems Commission earlier this year, which aims to modernize North Carolina’s elections. Heberlig said the connection between auditing and elections has grown due to a nationwide trend. “The broader election environment nationally that we’ve seen over the past couple election cycles, particularly President Trump making accusations of voter fraud, has raised the profile of the issue and mobilized a lot of conservative voters around that,” Heberlig said. “We’ve seen nationwide a lot of pressure being put on local board of

election officials to, at the very least, be more transparent about what they’re doing.” Boliek’s office faced criticism earlier this year after Dallas Woodhouse, the former executive director of the North Carolina Republican Party, resigned from his role as an elections liaison for Boliek. Woodhouse had faced criticism for contacting county election officials about recommendations for changes to early voting locations and hours, sparking backlash about putting partisan pressure on election-related issues. State legislators have also tried to expand Boliek’s power in other areas. Legislators have tried to pass bills that would increase his power to investigate the state’s Medicaid program for waste and fraud. They also have tried to increase his ability to work with prosecutors and have wanted to give him more employees, a bigger budget and the authority to investigate some nonprofits and private businesses, alongside being able to make recommendations on ways to cut state spending. Boliek was also tasked with finding state government jobs that could be cut. He found that nearly 9,000 of the state’s 79,800 positions — about 11% of the state government’s workforce — had been vacant for six months or longer. Jackson said the increased demand for auditing and transparency comes amid disagreements over how the government should be held accountable. He said this tension has grown under the Trump Administration. “There’s a point of view, traditionally on the left, that doing that will make it harder for government funds to flow freely,” Jackson said. “Whereas on the right, they say, ‘Well, if you’re going to be spending money, you need to not waste it.’” Boliek is the first Republican state auditor

since 2009, so the state auditor’s board of elections appointment power may not stay for long. “We have seen the General Assembly switch powers among executive branch offices, depending on which party controls those offices,” Heberlig said. “It’s not a wild stretch of imagination to think that if the Democrats won the state auditor position in the next election that the General Assembly would decide there was another office that was better positioned to oversee elections.”



GRAPHIC BY AMELIA METZ

Campaigning for North Carolina Supreme Court Seat 1

Anita Earls

Democratic Party



PHOTO CREDIT ANITA EARLS

Incumbent North Carolina State Supreme Court Associate Justice Anita Earls is running for reelection for Seat 1 on the court.

Earls said her judicial philosophy is centered around equal access and systemic accountability.

“To me, fundamentally, our court should treat everyone the same who comes before us,” Earls said. “Whether you’re an individual, a business, a defendant or the state.”

Earls pointed to two cases that capture her view of the court’s role: her dissent when the court allowed Duke Energy rate increases. She was also outspoken about the halt of Leandro public school funding.

“It breaks my heart to see the state’s commitment to public education erode,” Earls said.

Throughout her career as a civil rights attorney and jurist, Earls said she has maintained a firm stance against letting politicization influence judicial decisions. Earls said that judges should function as an independent, nonpartisan check on legislative power.

Sarah Stevens

Republican Party



PHOTO CREDIT SARAHSTEVENSNC.COM

Sarah Stevens, a Republican, is running for Seat 1 on the North Carolina Supreme Court in this upcoming election.

Stevens was a member of the NC House of Representatives since 2009, but resigned so she could run for the supreme court position. Stevens was a practicing attorney from Mount Airy for over 30 years.

Though she has not been a judge in the past her experience comes from being a legislator.

According to her website, she is running a campaign on respecting the constitution and conserving liberty to her cases.

Much of Stevens’ work centered around reforming the child welfare system in North Carolina, advocating for victims and family law.

She is also the former Speaker Pro Tempore of the North Carolina House, Chair of the House Elections Law Committee and the former Chair of the North Carolina Courts Commission.

Stevens did not respond to Elon News Network’s request for an interview.

Campaigning for North Carolina Superior Court District 17 Seat 1

Doug Green

Democratic Party

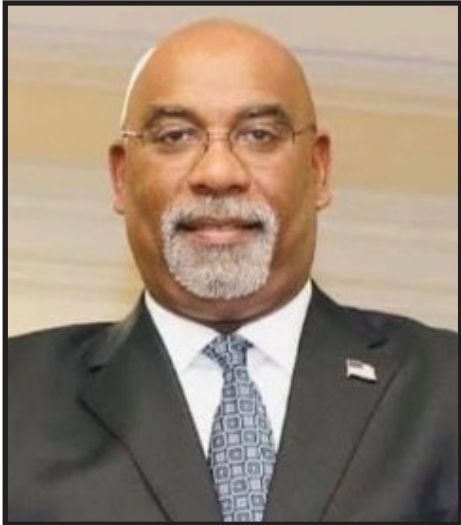


PHOTO CREDIT DOUG GREEN | LINKEDIN

Democrat Doug Green is running unopposed for reelection to the first seat in District 17 of North Carolina’s Superior Court. Green was appointed by Gov. Josh Stein to the seat in December 2024.

Green is an Alamance County native. He previously worked as a civil litigator in Orlando, Florida, an attorney with Smith Giles, PLLC in Burlington and in the Alamance County District Attorney’s Office.

As a litigator and attorney, Green represented plaintiffs and defense in personal injury cases, and said this experience with both sides helped him when he started work as a judge. Green previously served as an assistant attorney general in the North Carolina Department of Justice and as District Court Judge in District 17.

“I am a staunch advocate for following the law and also a staunch advocate for letting everybody have their say, and that’s the way it should be in my opinion,” Green said.

Craig Turner

Republican Party



PHOTO CREDIT VOTECRAIGTURNER.COM

Republican Craig Turner is running unopposed for the second seat in District 17 of North Carolina’s Superior Court. He currently serves as North Carolina District Court Judge, in the third seat of District 17.

As a district court judge, Turner has handled criminal cases, Department of Social Services cases and civil disputes. Turner previously served as a law clerk in business court, a prosecutor in Alamance County and in private practice. Before serving as a district court judge, most of Turner’s case experience was in civil superior court, and he said this experience will help him as a superior court judge.

Turner said he would focus on reducing the amount of time it takes to adjudicate these cases.

“Sometimes there are folks who are in jail for an extended period of time. I think it’s good to focus on getting those cases adjudicated promptly,” Turner said. “That’s true whether people are in custody or not, but particularly when people are in custody I think we need to cut down the time it takes to get cases resolved.”

Campaigning for North Carolina District Court Judge District 17 Seat 1

Bryan Ray

Republican Party



PHOTO CREDIT BRYAN RAY

Republican Bryan Ray is running unopposed for reelection to the first seat in District 17 of North Carolina’s District Court.

Ray received his law degree from Elon Law in 2013. After graduating, he interned with local attorney Julian Doby in Graham, where he became a partner in 2017 and primarily practiced family law.

Ray has served as a board member on Alamance County Juvenile Crime Prevention Council, and has volunteered with the Alamance County Teen Court.

Ray was appointed to the Alamance County Board of Elections in 2018, where he served until being elected as a district court judge.

Since he was elected to a partial term in 2024, Ray is running for a full four-year term in this election. Ray said that his experience in family law and as a district court judge helps him serve the community.

“In Alamance County all of our judges are on rotation where we serve in every courtroom, so I’ve done every type of case a district court judge can handle,” Ray said.

Campaigning for Alamance County Clerk of Superior Court

Kristie Miller Culler

Republican Party



PHOTO CREDIT KRISTIE MILLER CULLER

Incumbent Kristie Miller Culler is running unopposed as the Republican candidate for Alamance County Clerk of Superior Court.

She has served for over 15 years in the clerk’s office, and has more than 30 years of experience in the field. In the early 2000s, she began work for the Alamance County Attorney’s Office. She later worked as Guilford County’s Clerk of Court and then Alamance County Clerk of Court. In her role, she acts as a judge in some proceedings, meets with other judges and

helps with record-keeping for the court.

According to her website, Culler has goals to maintain transparency, accountability and efficiency, support technology improvements and expand public communication tools.

Culler did not respond to Elon News Network’s request for an interview.

Seat 1

Campaigning for North Carolina Court of Appeals Judge

Seat 2

Michael C. Byrne
Republican Party



PHOTO CREDIT MB4NC.COM

John S. Arrowood
Democratic Party



PHOTO CREDIT JOHN ARROWOOD

Michael Byrne is running for Seat 1 on the NC Court of Appeals and said fairness is the platform he wants voters to be aware of when they see his name on the ballot.

The Wake County native has been an administrative judge since 2020.

Byrne is running against John Arrowood who currently holds Seat 1 on the Court of Appeals. He said voters should consider him because he’s able to complete a full term.

“If my opponent wins reelection, he will not be able to serve a full term,” Byrne said. “So he, in essence, is running for a job he can’t finish.”

At the age of 76, it is mandatory for a judge to step down. A judge’s term lasts eight years. Arrowood is currently 69 which means if he wins, he would be asked to step down in the seventh year of his term.

Byrne said he can serve for not only another term, but up to two.

“Adding someone to the team who has decades of experience in that area of expertise that currently isn’t there, I think makes the team stronger,” he said.

Democrat John Arrowood is running for reelection for the North Carolina Court of Appeals Seat 1. Arrowood has served on the court since 2017. Arrowood has a long resume with experience in private practice and as a superior court judge.

Although the race is partisan, Arrowood said he does not think the court’s decisions should be based on political ideology.

In 2023, the North Carolina General Assembly extended the tenure of judges. Now, judges are able to remain on the court until they are 76 years old. Arrowood is 69 years old and would not be able to finish his full term before turning 76.

Arrowood said that the legislature sets the retirement age and they could change it in the future to another age. This would allow him to serve his full term.

“I’m the fifth most senior person there,” Arrowood said. “So two-thirds of the people there lack the experience that I do, and I think the court needs that.”

George Cooper Bell
Republican Party



PHOTO CREDIT GEORGE COOPER BELL | LINKEDIN

Tobias (Toby) Hampson
Democratic Party



PHOTO CREDIT TOBY HAMPSON

Superior Court Judge George Bell is running for Seat 2 on the NC Court of Appeals and is ready to change his title to Appeal Court Judge.

For the past eight years, Bell has been presiding over trials by himself, but he said he is ready to collaborate with other judges.

“I love to talk to people,” Bell said. “I like to talk about issues. I like to collaborate, and that’s just who I am.”

He said as a superior court judge he is used to making hard decisions based on the law and facts. He said his “quick game-time decisions” is what differentiates him from his opponent.

Bell has leaned Republican since he was 18, but when it comes to decisions he said he rules based on facts.

“I’m going to rule on your case without favor,” he said. “I’m going to be fair and impartial.”

He said at his core what matters is that people feel like they are heard when he presides over a case. He said he understands how showing up to court can be a stressful or important day for people.

Incumbent Toby Hampson is running for reelection to Seat 2 on the North Carolina Court of Appeals.

Hampson started his career as a law clerk at the court of appeals before going into private practice. In 2018, he was elected to the North Carolina Court of Appeals and has served since 2019. He is the State Bar certified specialist in appellate practice serving the North Carolina Court of Appeals.

He said his judicial philosophy is impartial and independent and he is dedicated to improving the confidence constituents have in the justice system.

Hampson wants voters to know the importance of the appellate courts, to which he has dedicated decades of his life.

“The court of appeals is a really important court in the lives of all North Carolinians,” he said. “It’s important that we keep judges on the North Carolina Court of Appeals that have the experience to do the job, the temperament to do the job and the desire to do the hard work of the court.”

Seat 3

Craig Collins
Republican Party



PHOTO CREDIT CRAIG COLLINS

Christine Marie Walczyk
Democratic Party



PHOTO CREDIT CHRISTINE MARIE WALCZYK

Craig Collins is the Republican candidate for Seat 3 of the North Carolina Court of Appeals.

Collins previously served as a district court judge and currently serves as a superior court judge.

His past work has given him experience with various cases, including felony trials and large civil cases. Family law was also a recurring part of his work as a district court judge.

One of his strongest beliefs is the need for impartial, originalist views in the court system.

“We need consistent judges who follow the Constitution and the law that’s written,” Collins said. “When judges deviate from the Constitution and the statutes, it creates chaos within the court system, eliminates predictability and therefore interferes with fairness.”

Although Collins is the Republican candidate for the seat, he said he doesn’t let his affiliations control his decisions. He believes judges cannot subject the law to their personal agendas.

Judge Christine Marie Walczyk is a Democrat running for Seat 3 in the North Carolina Court of Appeals.

Walczyk served as a district court judge in Wake County for 19 years. Prior to that position, she was an attorney with her own law firm in Wake County for 10 years.

The court of appeals functions on a “cold record,” meaning the parties involved are not physically present. Instead, the judge reviews transcripts and information and then makes a decision. Walczyk believes her experience as a trial judge makes her uniquely suited for the position of an appellate judge.

“It’s really important to have trial judges on the court of appeals,” Walczyk said. “We’re the ones that get to see how trials work.”

Walczyk believes the politicalization of the North Carolina court needs to change.

“I think the rule of law requires independent adjudicators and not partisan agendas, that’s why I’m running,” she said. “People need to feel represented on the court.”

Campaigning for District Attorney District 17

Sean Boone
Republican Party



PHOTO CREDIT SEAN BOONE | FACEBOOK

Incumbent Alamance County District Attorney Sean Boone is seeking reelection for his third term as DA. Boone had previously served as Assistant DA in Alamance County, before being elected to his current role in 2018.

He said his primary goal is to move cases as efficiently as possible while still achieving justice for victims.

Boone said that one of the challenges he faces is maintaining a judicial system that is not always able to keep up with the increased need due to population growth. He said that since he started as the district attorney in 2018, the population of Alamance County has grown, but still has the same number of court rooms for District Court.

During previous terms as DA for Alamance County, Boone started the Adult Treatment Court in Alamance County, a court that aims to help those charged with low level felonies and drug related cases.

Boone said that he'd like to expand the Adult Treatment Court into a Veterans Treatment Court as well.

He noted that one problem in Alamance County is that smoke shops are selling products with contents over the legal limit.

"We have very limited resources. They never keep up with crime, so I would prefer to use our limited resources on violent crime, repeat offenders, sexual predators, and those who need some type of assistance to get a legitimate leg up," he said.

Scott Wells Drorbaugh
Democratic Party



PHOTO CREDIT SCOTT4ALAMANCE.COM

Attorney Scott Wells Drorbaugh is running for the position of District 17 District Attorney.

According to Drorbaugh's campaign website, he has served as a felony prosecutor in both Guilford and Alamance counties, with nearly a decade of experience.

In a post to his campaign page on Facebook made in March, Drorbaugh said that he is running for district attorney because Alamance County deserves one that is focused on public safety, fairness and doing the job correctly every time.

"Our criminal justice system is strained," the site says. "Scott believes it is critical to rebuild trust through fairness, transparency and principled leadership."

Drorbaugh supports strengthening victims' rights, reducing unnecessary delays in the judicial process, and expanding diversion and treatment courts, according to his website.

Drorbaugh did respond to Elon News Network's request for an interview.

Campaigning for Soil & Water Conservation District Supervisor

Ricky N. Reid
Nonpartisan



PHOTO CREDIT RICKY REID

Ricky Reid is running for reelection to the Alamance County Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors. Reid was appointed to the board in October 2019, and was reelected in 2022.

Reid grew up in Alamance County, attending Western Alamance High School. He graduated from East Carolina University in 1991 with a bachelor's degree in industrial technology.

Reid has been a full-time farmer for 18 years, and is a fourth generation farmer at Reid Farms. He raises beef cattle, hay, soybeans, corn and wheat.

Along with serving on the Alamance County Soil and Water Conservation District Board, Reid serves as the secretary for the Alamance County Farm Bureau.

As a member of the Soil and Water Conservation Board, Reid said he has helped farmers improve erosion control and water quality on their farms. Reid has gone to farms to help put in field borders, construct waterways and install wells. Reid said that he enjoys helping the community and working with farmers to improve their farms.

"I feel like there's a need to have someone experienced that knows the farmers in the area, and that can help the farmers and feel confident in the people that they're dealing with," Reid said.

Willie Holliday
Nonpartisan



PHOTO CREDIT WILLIE HOLIDAY

Willie Holliday is running for a seat on the Alamance County Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors.

Holliday graduated from Southern Alamance High School in 1996, and has been a full-time farmer ever since. He is a fifth-generation farmer on his family farm, ESW Farm LLC. He raises beef cattle, corn, soybeans and wheat.

As a full-time farmer for 30 years, Holliday has frequently worked with the Alamance County Soil and Water Conservation District. Holliday said he is running to be a board member because believes a strong board will help the district continue to serve and help Alamance County farmers.

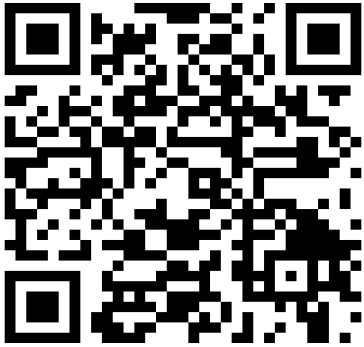
"I'm a farmer that sees the results of the soil and water office every day, and I just really feel like that's important," Holliday said.

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