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Bradford Pears and the unintended consequence of following science



THIS TIME OF YEAR, fluffy clouds of Bradford Pear blooms dot our neighborhood landscapes, cheerfully welcoming warmer days ahead. As joggers and dog walkers make their way back outside, the statuesque blooms signal more than just spring. This year they also represent the unintended consequences of following the science, and North Carolina will pay you to get rid of them.

In the early 1900s, U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of Foreign Seed and Plant Introduction brought these seeds and seedlings to the United States from China. Scientists were trying to create a disease-resistant pear tree. Scientists cloned them over and over, touting their beauty, hardiness, and sterility. They were cheap, grew fast, and scientists insisted they were the answer to sprawling tracks of housing with no trees and bad soil. By the 1950s they were everywhere, springing up in America's new suburbia.

Today, Bradford Pears, much like Kudzu, have long overstayed their welcome. Rather than the genius that scientists thought they were, the trees are more known for their invasiveness, distinct stink, and brittle branches and trunks that topple in the most moderate N.C. storms. The trees can pollinate

with anything, choking out native oaks, maples, dogwoods, pines, and flowers. More recent cultivars have huge thorns, and roots grow denser when you try to cut them down.

A new bounty program in North Carolina is starting April 23 in Greensboro, where residents can get up to five native plant species if they cut down the same number of Bradford Pears. On [treebountyinc.com](#) registrants can sign up to get the Bradford Pear Bounty. Response to the program has been so overwhelming that they've paused registration to make sure they have enough native trees to give away.

North Carolina isn't alone. Alarmed Illinois arborists now say they've discovered thickets of them in natural state forests. South Carolina recently banned the sale of Bradford Pears starting in October 2024. Ohio is banning them too, starting in 2023.

At the time, Bradford Pears were a marvel of modern science and produced with the best of intentions. Today they are a nuisance, and without intervention are shifting the natural landscape of North Carolina. Pick whichever analogy works for you, whether it is expanding Medicaid, handing out taxpayer paid incentives, or shuttering businesses and schools for a virus with a 99% survival rate. Good intentions don't necessarily mean a good outcome, and we should always look for those who see the red flags, even when we cannot.



I am woman. Lia Thomas is not. Now hear me roar.



Lia Thomas at the NCAA women's swimming and diving championships.



*I am woman, hear me roar,
In numbers too big to ignore,
And I know too much to go back
an' pretend.*

*-Lyrics to Helen Reddy's 1972 hit
"I Am Woman"*

I know too much to go back and pretend. I refuse to be part of the collective insanity that pretends not to know how to define the word "woman" and pretends that the NCAA women's swimming championships were fair. Lia Thomas, a biological man, competed against women. Thomas won the NCAA championship precisely because he's a man who is taller and stronger than any female competitor.

Highlighting the deterioration of our collective IQ was the remarkable exchange between U.S. Sen. Marsha Blackburn and Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson, Joe Biden's black female nominee for the U.S. Supreme Court.

Responding to Blackburn's question — "What is a woman?" — Jackson claimed she couldn't define the word because she's not a biologist. It may seem like a simple Q and A worthy of all the memes generated to mock it. At a time when the country is debating whether biological males who identify as women should be allowed to compete against biological females, it's a very serious question.

I don't have a biology degree, but I can define "woman." A woman is an adult female human. Genetically, a woman has two X

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CARTOON



Primary Voter Guide

See the center spread of this issue of Carolina Journal for a pull-out voter guide to the 2022 primaries in N.C.

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PHOTO GALLERY: Scenes from the Carolina Liberty Conference

Lawmakers end longest long session in state history, but work remains

BY THERESA OPEKA

As the book finally closed on the longest long session in the history of the General Assembly, lawmakers began gearing up for another busy year. A new “short” session begins May 18, a day after the primary election.

Then comes campaigning for the general election in November.

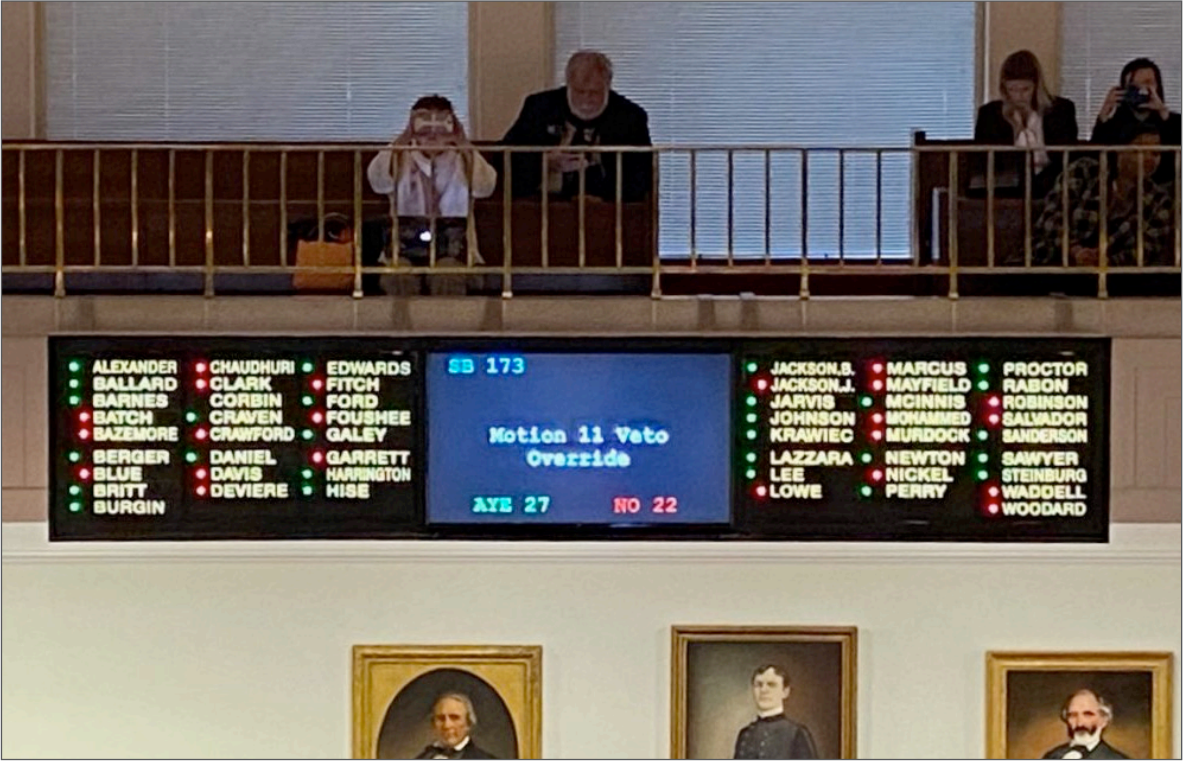
“I get the sense that legislators aren’t looking for a drawn-out short session this year, given the longevity of the previous long session and the coming general election in November,” said Jordan Roberts, director of government affairs for the John Locke Foundation. “However, there still will be plenty of time for legislating, and some large pieces of legislation could come up.”

The 2021 session convened Jan. 13 and was originally supposed to conclude Oct. 29.

The state would have a budget, and redistricting maps would be drawn. Those were the hopes, anyway.

Democrat Gov. Roy Cooper signed the budget into law, but not until Nov. 18. It was the first one he signed since taking office in 2017. The General Assembly passed new redistricting maps Nov. 4, but that victory was short-lived. Lawsuits challenging the maps literally brought legislators back to the drawing board after the session ended for the year Dec. 10.

On Feb. 17, lawmakers passed Senate Bill 173, Free the Smiles Act, which would have given parents the final decision over whether their children wear a mask at school. Cooper called for an end to mask mandates for schools and local governments the same day, though state lawmakers seemingly forced his hand.



The N.C. Senate falls short of the 30 votes needed to override Gov. Roy Cooper's veto of the Free the Smiles Act.

Kody Kinsley, the state health secretary, echoed comments from Cooper, saying if trends continued to improve, starting March 7 schools and other low-risk settings could consider moving to voluntary masking at the discretion of local authorities.

Not surprisingly, Cooper vetoed Free the Smiles on Feb. 24, making it his second veto of the year and a record-extending 71st since he took office in 2017.

“Passing laws for political purposes that encourage people to pick and choose which health rules they want to follow is dangerous and could tie the hands of public health officials in the future,” Cooper said in a statement.

Both chambers approved the

bill with a three-fifths majority, but an effort to override that veto failed before lawmakers adjourned March 9. Senate Democrats who originally voted in favor of the bill — Sen. Kirk DeViere, D-Cumberland, and Sen. Ben Clark, D-Hoke — changed their minds and voted against the override.

On March 10, the House passed a resolution supporting Ukraine before following the Senate’s lead and voting to adjourn the long-running session.

What to expect

Legislators’ plates will be full when the short session begins May 18.

Senate leader, Phil Berger,

R-Rockingham, spoke with Carolina Journal at the John Locke Foundation’s 2022 Carolina Liberty Conference in February.

The focus for lawmakers in the short session is controlling the growth of government, an observation based on early numbers.

“We are again going to overshoot our revenue projections by a large amount,” Berger said. “We have to be careful we don’t grow the size of government at rates that will create problems we have seen in the past.”

Berger said lawmakers are concerned about the effects of government on people’s lives, as well as what’s happening in schools.

“We are concerned whether parents are able to have the im-

pact on the educational experiences their children have,” he said. “Whether it is school choice or policies school boards employ in terms of educating children on reading and the subjects that children are taught in school, and in terms of how schools deal with interaction with children and between children and educators.”

Berger mentioned Medicaid expansion. Roberts said that’s a top priority.

“One of the General Assembly’s main focuses right now is a committee to examine the issue of Medicaid expansion and, more generally, health care access in the state,” he said. “Depending on how the rest of the committee meetings on this topic finish up, there could be some health care legislation or a package of bills to vote on in the short session.”

“Sports betting and medical marijuana are two controversial issues that are still out there and may see some movement during the short session,” Roberts said. “There are several smaller bills passed out of one chamber by last year’s crossover deadline that are still eligible for action. We could see some of those come back up to be considered by the opposite chamber of where they originated.”

Senate Bill 711, Compassionate Care Act, which deals with medical marijuana, and Senate Bill 688, Sports Wagering, last gained traction last August. They may come up again.

Lawmakers also have proposed several constitutional amendments, but passing them requires a three-fifths’ vote from each chamber to get them on the election ballot.

In the best case, lawmakers meet their goal of ending the short session by July 4. Time will tell.

IMAGE FROM YOUTUBE

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4 ELECTION 2022

U.S. Senate race heats up for Republicans; Beasley’s path to nomination appears clear

BY JOHN TRUMP

A handful of Republican U.S. Senate candidates have a legitimate chance not only to win the primary but also to take the Senate seat now held by Richard Burr, who’s retiring.

It’s a packed field, for both major parties, though the Democratic primary is attracting much less attention. Cheri Beasley, a former chief justice of the N.C. Supreme Court, is one of 11 Democrats vying for the seat. Most observers presume she’ll have an easy path to victory.

Beasley can effectively sit out the primary, using her stash of campaign money to target the eventual Republican candidate. N.C. Sen. Jeff Jackson and Erica Smith, a former state senator, dropped out of the race after Beasley announced her candidacy.

“Beasley looks to have a clear path to the Democratic nomination and as such is likely to conserve resources,” says Andy Taylor, a political science professor at N.C. State University.

“It’s not clear how much that will matter, however,” he said. “Whoever wins the GOP nomination will have access to national sources of funds and, because control of the Senate will be so tightly contested, much of Beasley’s fundraising will come after the primary. She, and the Republican nominee, will also be beneficiaries of large amounts of super PAC spending.”

Beasley served on the N.C. Court of Appeals and, in 2014, won election as an associate justice to the state Supreme Court. Gov. Roy Cooper appointed Beasley as the high court’s chief justice in 2019, bypassing senior Republican and Democratic justices. She lost that seat to Republican Paul Newby in 2020, in a race decided by about 400 votes. Beasley could become the first Democrat representing North Carolina to serve in the U.S. Senate since Kay Hagan, who upset Elizabeth Dole in 2008. Hagan, who died in 2019, lost her seat in 2014 to current U.S. Sen. Thom Tillis.

Things on the Republican side are far less clear heading into the 2022 primary, and the campaign rhetoric is getting louder and more vitriolic by the day.

U.S. Rep. Ted Budd, representing North Carolina’s 13th Congressional District, picked up an endorsement last summer from former President Trump. Yet Budd, as of mid-March, was trailing former Gov. Pat McCrory in the polls.

“I’d be cautious on the use of internal polling and await some reputable third-party polling before making a definite sense of who is up and down in this race,” says Michael Bitzer, professor of politics and history at Catawba College.

Mark Walker, who won election to Congress in 2014 and served until January 2021, was trailing them both. A Baptist minister, Walker chose not to run for re-election to the U.S. House in 2020.

Don’t discount the former president’s influence on this race and those in the future, says Chris Cooper, a political science professor at Western Carolina University.

“Trump matters,” Cooper told Carolina Journal. “He will matter



In late February, from left, Pat McCrory, Mark Walker, and Marjorie Eastman took the stage in a Raleigh hotel for a primary debate that marked the culmination of the Carolina Liberty Conference, sponsored by the John Locke Foundation.

in the Republican primary and in the general election.”

Walker, now a reported target of Trump — who reportedly asked him to drop out of the race — could play the spoiler’s role, picking off some conservative voters who might otherwise support Budd, says Mitch Kokai, senior political analyst at the John Locke Foundation.

“He hasn’t matched either Budd or McCrory in terms of fundraising or polling, but he’s a significant-enough player that he can’t be ignored,” Kokai said. “As McCrory and Budd focus their attention on bashing each other, Walker could be the beneficiary. If the top two candidates escalate their damaging attacks on each other, and if Walker can find some way to garner a little more attention for his campaign, he could sneak up on the competition. That’s going to be a tough task between now and May 17.”

Walker, said Andy Jackson, is in a difficult spot.

“His path to the Republican nomination is narrow but not impossible. He needs to run a strong grassroots campaign that involves meeting as many Republican primary voters as possible between now and the primary on May 17,” said Jackson, director of the Civitas Center for Public Integrity at the John Locke Foundation.

“That is the kind of retail politicking that neither McCrory nor Budd have been doing much of. He will also need an assist from the McCrory and Budd campaigns in the form of them tearing each

other down over the next several weeks,” Jackson says. “If they manage to turn off enough primary voters from each other, Walker could emerge as the least objectionable choice for voters.”

The 2022 primary election, after a delay because of a contested redistricting process, is May 17. Buckle up.

Budd is airing ads attacking McCrory, using clips and soundbites showing the former governor railing against Trump.

Club for Growth Action, the conservative super PAC backing Budd, announced on its website it has already raised \$5.125 million to support Budd’s campaign. Budd has a 97% lifetime rating on Club for Growth Foundation’s Economic Scorecard, and he was endorsed by Club for Growth PAC as well as by Trump, the Club for Growth website says.

“Ted Budd is a true champion of pro-growth policies, and we are proud to support his Senate campaign,” said David McIntosh, Club for Growth Action President.

McCrory, in his first ads of the campaign, countered with spots depicting Budd as sympathetic to Russian President Vladimir Putin, saying, for instance, Putin has strategic reasons for protecting his southern and western flanks.

“We understand that,” Budd says in the McCrory ad.

In a statement, Jordan Shaw,

a strategist for McCrory’s campaign, echoed the ad and said, according to The Washington Post, Budd has “repeatedly praised Putin and excused his invasion, all while Ukrainian women and children are being killed.”

“Budd’s comments are not only indefensible and irresponsible, they’re also proof that he’s not ready to be a U.S. senator,” Shaw said. “We are confident Republican primary voters will agree as they see this ad.”

Jonathan Felts, senior adviser for Budd’s Senate campaign, responded to the ad.

“Governor McCrory has a long track record of underestimating the opposition, which is why he’s already lost twice and is about to lose again,” Felts told Carolina Journal. “Ted Budd presented the sort of level-headed assessment of a foreign crisis you would expect from a U.S. senator because he knows these are serious times that require strength and substance, not the empty soundbites preferred by career politicians like Biden and McCrory.”

Still, political experts around the state seem to agree McCrory has a built-in advantage.

“Certainly, having been governor helps McCrory,” says Taylor. “He would not be as well-known and enjoy as many advantages — access to national party networks and important donors — if he had not been our chief executive for those four years.”

Bitzer says McCrory’s “natural advantage” comes with his name recognition across the state, compared to the regional name recognition of Walker and Budd.

“He also can lay claim to more ‘non-Trump’ supporters within the Republican Party and has come out aggressively against Budd. But the next few weeks leading into May should see the gloves of all the candidates come off, and with Club for Growth pledging a potential \$14 million in ads against McCrory, the air wars will be in full combat heading to the primary.”

Beyond Budd, Walker, and McCrory are another 11 Republican candidates seeking the Senate seat. That list includes Marjorie Eastman, a political newcomer, mom, and Army and combat veteran who served from 2002 to 2012.

In late February, Walker, McCrory, and Eastman took the stage in a Raleigh hotel for a primary debate that marked the culmination of the Carolina Liberty Conference, sponsored by the John Locke Foundation. Eastman, McCrory, and Walker, who met specific polling and fundraising criteria, took part in the debate.

Budd, too, qualified for the debate, but he declined to participate. The debate’s sponsor left Budd a podium, which sat empty onstage at McCrory’s right throughout the hourlong event. Budd spoke that same weekend during the Conservative Political Action Conference in Orlando, Florida. Walker also spoke at CPAC that weekend, but he came for the debate.

The three candidates in the debate agreed on many points. They all supported many of the same policies as Trump, that the current Democratic leadership in Washington has failed and needs an overhaul, and that government, in general, is too big, too bureaucratic, and clearly out of control.

They also agreed that Russian President Vladimir Putin deserves harsh punishment for his country’s invasion of Ukraine, a dire need to rein in inflation, and that education is best left to communities and parents.

They, too, took turns taking shots at Budd, who was invited to take the podium at any point in the debate.

Eastman is a newcomer to the race and, for that matter, politics. A Californian by birth, Eastman is an Army veteran who served from 2002 to 2012. Her experience outside the military includes work as an author, speaker, and indepen-

Certainly having been governor helps McCrory. He would not be as well-known and enjoy as many advantages — access to national party networks and important donors — if he had not been our chief executive for those four years.

- Andy Taylor, political science professor at N.C. State University



Most observers presume Cheri Beasley, a former chief justice of the N.C. Supreme Court, will have an easy path to victory in the Democratic primary.



U.S. Rep. Ted Budd, representing North Carolina's 13th Congressional District, picked up an endorsement last summer from former President Trump.

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dent consultant, according to Ballotpedia.

One of the debate's hottest moments took place when McCrory welcomed "Marjorie" to North Carolina and to the Republican Party, referencing that Eastman registered as a Republican a few weeks before filing for office, and has never voted in a Republican primary.

Eastman called McCrory's comments "insulting" and asked whether he served in the military, a consistent mantra by Eastman throughout the debate. She explained that she did not want to register with a political party while serving in the military or as a mil-

itary spouse. No federal or state laws block service members or their spouses from affiliating with a political party.

"I'm proud to be a North Carolinian," she shot back at McCrory.

Walker feigned ducking for cover behind the podium. "I'm the one who served in combat here."

The candidates diverged on the primary question: Why are they the best candidate to represent North Carolina in the U.S. Senate alongside Thom Tillis?

Eastman didn't miss a chance to talk about her military service and that she was the only "mom" on stage. She called herself an outsider who wants to serve North Carolina. Eastman says she is the education-first candidate and always listens to parents.

"You can pick a politician, or you can pick a fresh voice who wants to serve her country again," she said.

McCrory made repeated reference to his record as North Carolina governor, taking a \$2.3 billion deficit and turning it into a \$4 billion surplus. He talked of ridding the government of nonproductive workers and demanding efficiency.

"I knew it as a governor, and I knew it as a mayor," said McCrory, the third Republican elected governor in North Carolina since the Civil War.

"I fought for every one of you, and I stood up for the values of North Carolina, and it might have cost me the [2020 governor's] election. I'm proud of my work."

Says Cooper, "McCrory's record

as governor matters and certainly helps more than it hurts. It's difficult to imagine that he would be a top-tier candidate if he had not held statewide elected office. Certainly, his record as governor opens up lines of attack in both the primary and general election that wouldn't be available otherwise, but had he not been governor, I doubt anyone would feel the need to attack him at all."

Walker, flanked at the debate by Eastman to his left and McCrory to his right, focused on his record in Congress.

"I know what it's like to get things done in the U.S. Congress," he said.

He touted his record against voting on big spending plans, including calling out senators who

voted for the same plans.

Walker talked about dedication to diversity, yet a commitment to hiring the best person for the job, when filling jobs on his staff. "I didn't hire them because they were black or brown, I hired them because they were the best."

He said we, as Americans, are in the midst of a spiritual crisis. That individualism and hope are key to a constitutional republic, and that individual rights are bestowed not by government but, rather, "God Almighty" alone.

Shrinking government is a priority for Walker.

"The smaller you can make government, the better chance of making it effective."

"I want government to be so small you can't even see it."

Unaffiliated voters surpass Democrats in N.C.

BY DAVID N. BASS

Unaffiliated voters have overtaken Democrats as the largest voting group in North Carolina, according to the latest data from the N.C. State Board of Elections.

The number of unaffiliated voters now stands at 2,503,997, compared to 2,496,434 Democrats and 2,192,073 Republicans. There are 48,654 registered Libertarians.

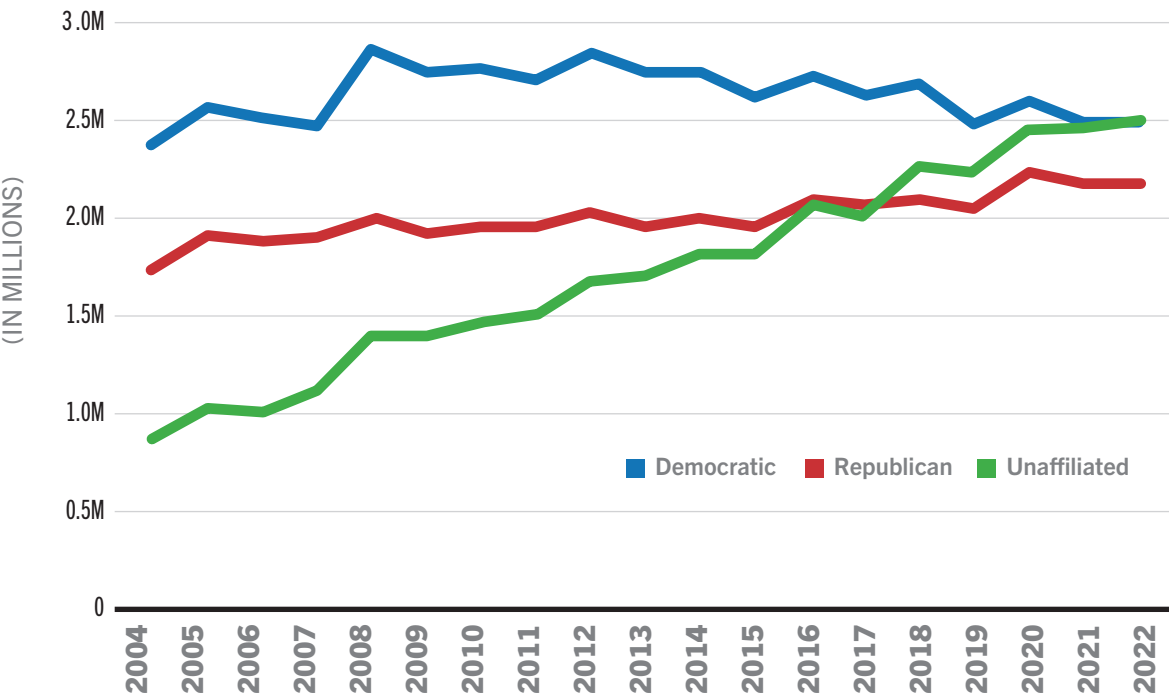
That shift reflects a growing trend in recent years of voters refusing to identify with either political party. Over the past decade, the percentage of registered Democrats has steadily declined in the Tar Heel State, while GOP voter rolls have grown moderately. Unaffiliated voters overtook registered Republicans in 2017.

Unaffiliated voters are now ascendant in the state's most populous county, Wake, at 319,913 — compared to 288,365 Democrats and 179,911 Republicans. In the second-most populous county, Mecklenburg, Democrats are still on top, but unaffiliated voters are nipping at their heels (333,505 to 282,400).

Even in the progressive stronghold of Orange County, unaffiliated voters are gaining ground — 43,303 compared to 50,412 Democrats.

Andy Taylor, a political science professor at N.C. State University, said the trend shows voters' grow-

North Carolina voter registration by party over time (2004-present)
Unaffiliated voters have overtaken Democrats as the largest voting group in North Carolina.



SOURCE: NORTH CAROLINA BOARD OF ELECTIONS

ing "cynicism" toward politics. "Voters are basically disgruntled with established political institutions," he said.

Young voters are driving the trend in the growth of unaffiliated voters, according to Michael Bitz-

er, professor of politics and history at Catawba College in Salisbury. Forty-seven percent of N.C. registered voters among Generation Z — born between 1997 and 2012 — are unaffiliated.

"When it comes to their voting

behavior, some of the analysis that I've done based on precinct returns seems to indicate that as the percentage of unaffiliated voters goes up, they tend to be slightly more Republican in leaning," Bitzer said.

But he cautioned that research-

ers are still seeking to fully understand the behavior of unaffiliated voters.

"The big question for a lot of researchers is whether these are masked partisans — meaning they don't like the party label — but they are partisan in their voting behavior. That seems to be the indication at the national level," he said.

Andy Jackson, director of the Civitas Center for Public Integrity at the John Locke Foundation, cautioned that voter registration should not be confused with voter behavior.

"Most unaffiliated voters behave like weak partisans, voting for one party or the other most of the time," Jackson said. "One thing that makes them less predictable than party members is they tend to turn out for elections less than either registered Democrats or Republicans."

Bitzer pointed to another contributing factor to the rise of unaffiliated voters: how the two parties have sorted themselves ideologically in recent years.

"It's very clear, if you're a conservative, you're not in the Democratic Party any more," he said. "If you're [a progressive], you're not in the Republican Party anymore. Unlike 50, 60, or 70 years ago. So what I would suggest is that if somebody registers as a partisan, they are a true partisan. They are going to vote their party."

6 ELECTION 2022

Partisan index from Civitas shows slight GOP edge headed into midterms

BY DAVID BASS

A new partisan index for seats in the N.C. General Assembly shows a slight Republican advantage over Democrats headed into midterm elections.

The 2022 Civitas Partisan Index places 58 seats in the state House in the “safe,” “lean,” or “likely” GOP category, compared to 56 seats for Democrats. Six seats are labeled “toss-ups.” In the Senate, 24 seats tend to favor Republicans, and 22 seats Democrats, with four seats rated toss-ups.

The CPI is modeled after the Cook Political Report Partisan Voting Index at the national level. Although the CPI does not predict elections, using the tool would have successfully predicted 94% of state legislative races in 2020.

On Feb. 23, a three-judge panel upheld redrawn maps for the state’s legislative races after Democrats challenged the original maps created by the GOP-controlled General Assembly. The state Supreme Court refused all appeals to reverse the three-judge panel’s decision.

Andy Jackson, director of the Civitas Center for Public Integrity, noted that court-approved maps are much friendlier to Democratic candidates overall but fall short of creating more competitive districts across the board.

“If the courts’ goal was to help Democrats win more seats, they succeeded. They achieved that primarily by reducing the number of districts in urban areas where Re-

publicans could effectively compete,” said Jackson. “For example, there were two Republican-leaning competitive districts in the Granville-Wake county cluster in the original Senate map. Now there are none.

“What the court-ordered maps do not do is make more competitive districts,” Jackson added. “The total number of competitive seats in the General Assembly, in which neither party has more than a 5-percentage-point advantage, remained unchanged at 36.”

The most competitive House districts include District 20 (on the coast east of Wilmington), District 43 (in eastern Fayetteville), District 47 (in Robeson County), District 62 (in western Guilford County), District 74 (just west of Winston-Salem), and District 98 (north of Charlotte).

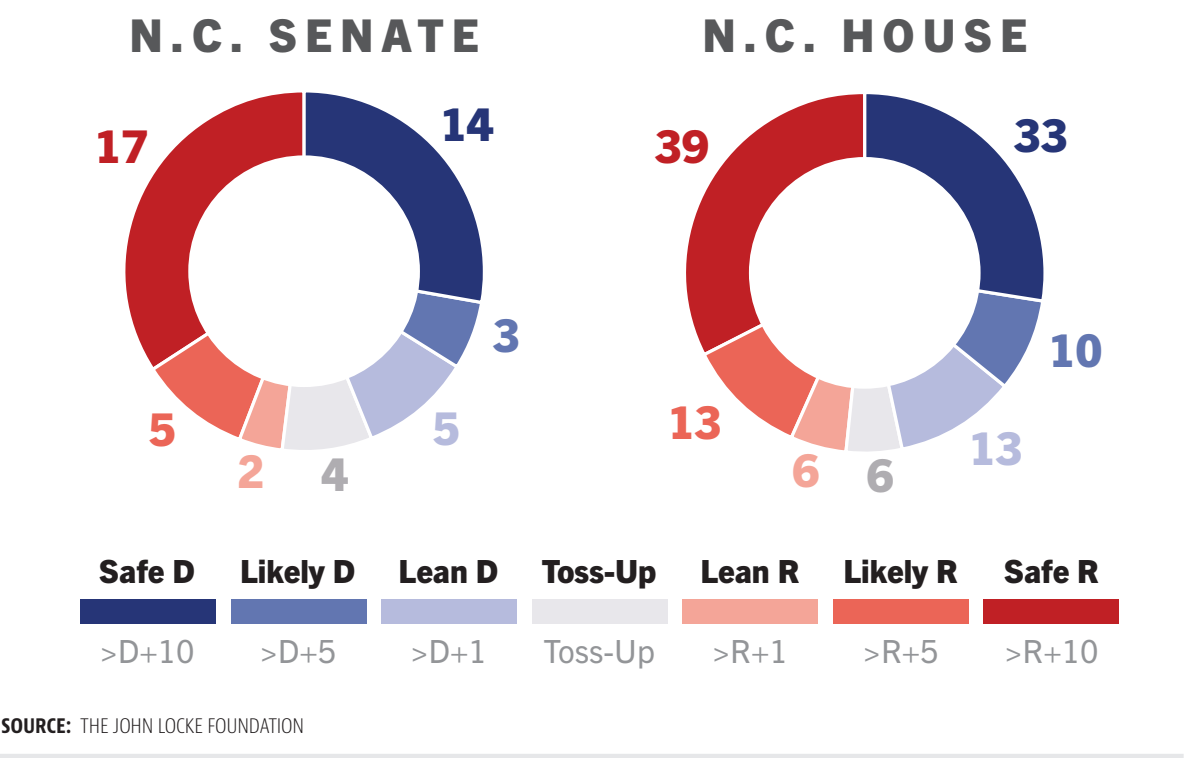
On the Senate side, competitive districts include District 4 (Wilson, Wayne, and Greene counties), District 7 (New Hanover County), District 21 (Cumberland and Moore counties), and District 24 (Hoke, Robeson, and Scotland counties).

The path to a majority or supermajority remains more likely for Republicans compared to Democrats. To maintain a majority in the Senate, the GOP would need to win 22 likely or safe seats plus both Republican-leaning seats and two toss-up seats. By contrast, Democrats would need to win all their safe, likely, and lean seats plus all four toss-up seats.

Democrats’ path to a supermajority of 30 seats is even more

Partisan breakdown of the North Carolina General Assembly districts

The Civitas Partisan Index suggests the following partisan breakdown between the 50 seats in the Senate and 120 seats in the House.



Redistricting battles wane — for now

BY CJ STAFF

Legal wrangling over N.C. election maps is over, for now.

When the U.S. Supreme Court decided March 7 to reject an emergency appeal from Republican state legislative leaders, the justices effectively shut the door on North Carolina’s mapmaking disputes for the 2022 election cycle.

The result is three new maps that have generated three different responses from partisans battling for control of the N.C. General Assembly and the state’s delegation to the U.S. House of Representatives.

The least contentious map in use for this year’s elections spells out the 120 districts for the N.C. House of Representatives. Drawn by Republicans but altered by multiple Democratic amendments, the map ended up securing widespread bipartisan support from both chambers of the General Assembly. The House approved the map, 115-5, while the Senate approved it, 41-3.

Analysis from the John Locke Foundation’s Civitas Center for Public Integrity suggests the map is likely to yield a Republican majority under most electoral circumstances. The districts point toward a 63-57 partisan split favoring Republicans, though an exceptionally strong GOP year could push the party past the 72 seats needed to



POPULATION GROWTH. North Carolina gained a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, creating opportunity for substantial revisions of congressional district lines.

secure a veto-proof supermajority. Democrats could secure a House majority in an election year tilting especially “blue.”

While legislators of both parties coalesced around a House map, the map setting out 50 state Senate districts generated much more partisan friction. No Democrat voted for the plan as the Senate it approved it, 26-19, and the House followed suit, 67-52.

The most likely result from the approved Senate map is a 28-22

GOP majority, according to Locke experts’ analysis. Republicans’ path to a 30-seat veto-proof supermajority depends on a strong Republican year. Democrats would need a blue wave election year to secure control of the legislature’s upper chamber.

Both maps emerged from the General Assembly on Feb. 17 after the N.C. Supreme Court tossed out earlier versions. With a party-line 4-3 vote, the high court’s four Democrats agreed that the original

by holding onto all their seats plus three toss-ups. Democrats would need to win all their seats plus five of the six toss-up seats.

According to Jackson, these dynamics mean that legislative races will be more vulnerable to wave elections.

The most surprising aspect of the new districts to Jackson? How the maps advantage Democrats in

2021 House and Senate maps were unconstitutional partisan gerrymanders. The justices called on lawmakers to draw new maps for a three-judge Superior Court panel overseeing the election map dispute.

That panel accepted revised House and Senate maps, and the state Supreme Court refused requests to throw them out.

The story was different for North Carolina’s new congressional map. Gaining a 14th seat in the U.S. House of Representatives because of population growth, mapmakers had an opportunity for substantial revisions of congressional district lines.

Like the original state House and Senate maps, the first version of the congressional map ran afoul of the state Supreme Court’s four Democratic justices. Once legislators’ remedial maps reached the three-judge Superior Court panel, the congressional map faced a different fate than the legislative maps.

Republican lawmakers tout-

close races but are not more competitive broadly.

“Much of the complaining we heard about the original districts is that they were not responsive to different voting outcomes, but the new maps do little to address that,” he said. “What we did get was a small shift in the partisan lean of several districts in favor of Democrats.”

ed their updated map as likely to produce some of the nation’s most competitive congressional elections. Analysis suggested that the map was likely to yield six typically Republican seats and four Democratic seats, with four competitive districts that could swing back and forth with the electoral winds.

That would mean a congressional delegation ranging from 10-4 Republican in a strong GOP year to 8-6 Democrat in a year with contrasting electoral conditions.

Relying on input from three appointed special masters, the three-judge panel rejected that competitive map.

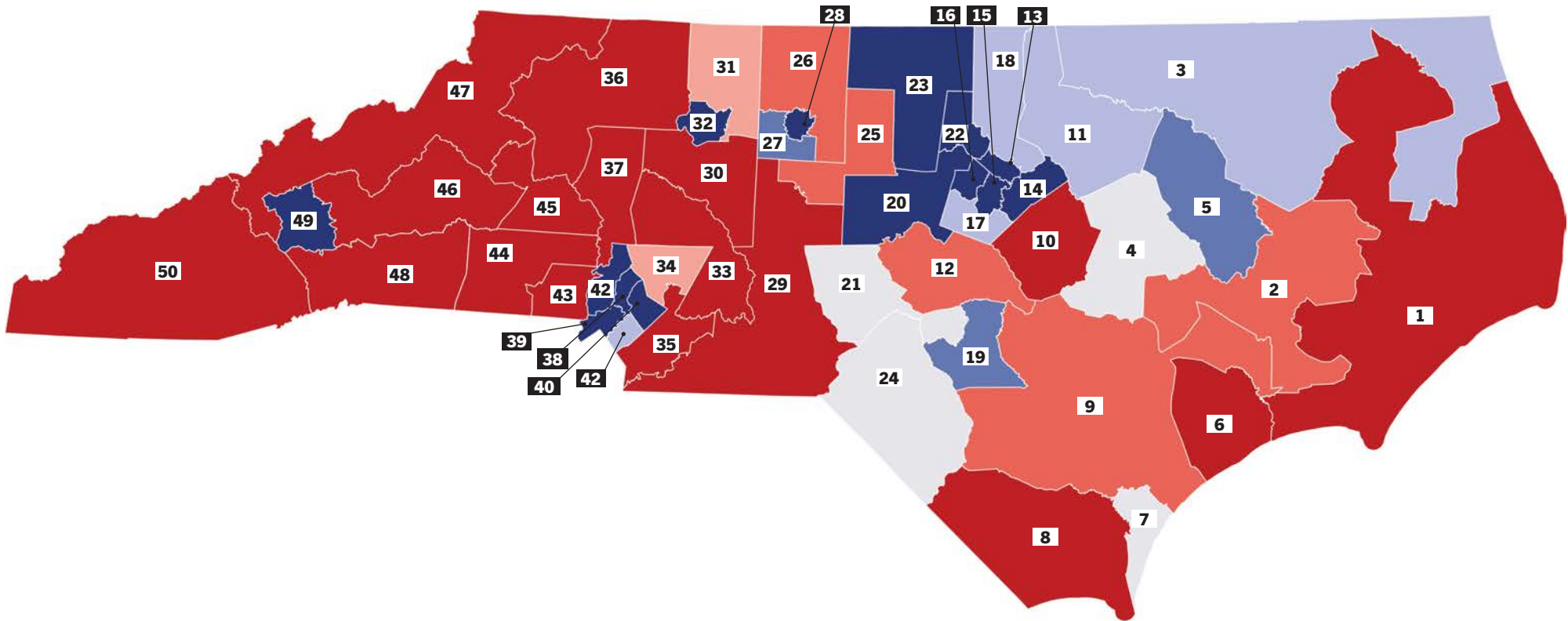
Judges put forward an alternative with just one undeniably competitive seat. Analysis suggested it would be hard for Republicans to secure more than an 8-6 advantage, while Democrats also could secure an 8-6 advantage in a strong year for their party. The most likely outcome would be a 7-7 split.

While legislators of both parties coalesced around a House map, the map setting out 50 state Senate districts generated much more partisan friction.

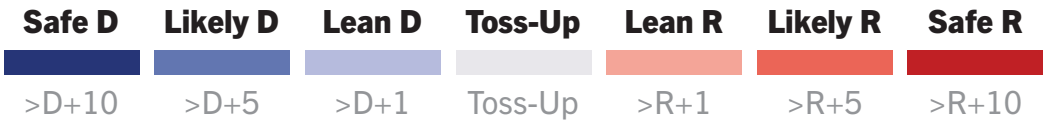
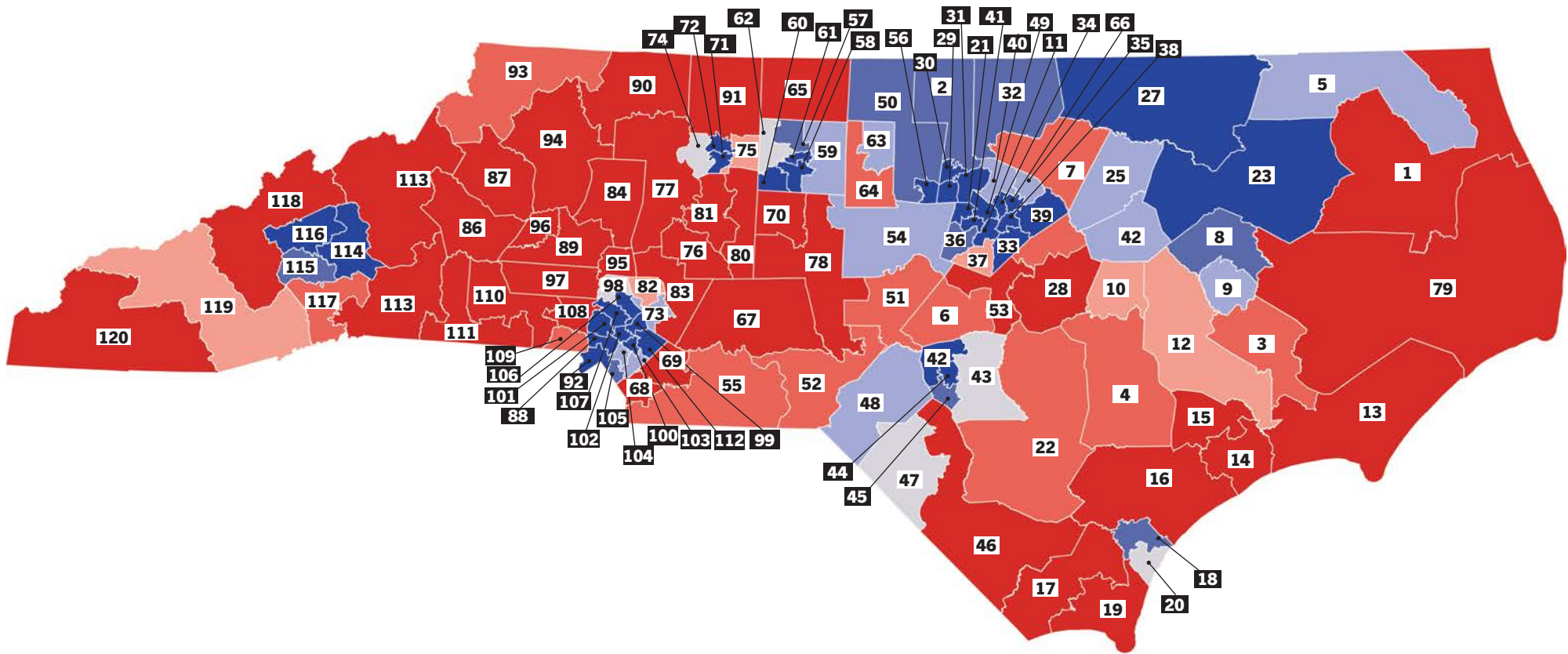
Partisan breakdown of the North Carolina General Assembly districts

The Civitas Partisan Index applied to maps of North Carolina General Assembly districts

N.C. SENATE



N.C. HOUSE



SOURCE: THE JOHN LOCKE FOUNDATION

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Redistricting

continued from PAGE 6

The state Supreme Court refused appeals to alter any of the three-judge panel’s work on legislative or congressional districts. That decision left only the U.S. Su-

preme Court to consider possible intervention in the election map dispute. State legislative leaders sought such intervention. They argued in an emergency petition that N.C. courts overstepped their authority in imposing the congressional map. With a 6-3 vote, the Supreme Court declined to take up the case. Three dissenters, led by Justice

Samuel Alito, argued the case presented an “exceptionally important and recurring question of constitutional law.” That question involves state courts’ proper rule in addressing legislatures’ maps for federal elections. A fourth justice, Brett Kavanaugh, agreed the Supreme Court should address the issue later. Once the courts issued their final decisions, most partisans ac-

cepted the remedial state House map, Democrats objected to the state Senate map, and Republicans criticized the court-imposed congressional map. With election districts now set for the year, candidates and state election officials have been working toward the May 17 primary. Winners of primary races will compete in the Nov. 8 general election.

Since the court-imposed congressional map has been slated for use only this year, it’s likely that a new General Assembly will tinker again with the state’s 14 congressional seats in 2023. If next year’s legislature draws a new congressional map that shifts the House delegation’s partisan split, we can expect a fresh round of courtroom battles.

8 ELECTION 2022

NCGA primaries take shape as candidates vie to represent their parties in midterms

BY DAVID BASS

After months of rancor and uncertainty, the district lines for North Carolina's House and Senate districts are set. That's established a number of competitive primaries as candidates vie to represent their parties in the 2022 midterm election.

Ten House members and six Senate members are double bunched — meaning two incumbents are in the same district and will face off in the primary. With one exception, all are Republicans. In contrast, 24 House and 10 Senate races have no competition in either the primary or general election.

Here are a handful of the more interesting primaries.

Senate District 47

Court-ordered redrawn maps put two key Republican leaders in the Senate in a double-bunched scenario. That's set up what could be an uncomfortable primary between the lawmakers.

Sen. Deanna Ballard has represented the old Senate District 45 since 2016. As chair of both the Senate Education Committee and the Senate Education Appropriations Committee, Ballard has significant influence on setting policy and spending priorities for the state's \$10.9 billion K-12 budget. Ballard is also seen as a rising star in GOP political circles.

Meanwhile, Sen. Ralph Hise has represented the old Senate District 47 since 2010, when the GOP retook control of the General Assembly for the first time since Reconstruction. Hise is a chief budget writer and chairs the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee.

The redrawn Senate District 47 — now stretching from Alleghany County to Haywood County in western North Carolina — puts both candidates in the same district. The district heavily favors Republicans, and no other candidates have filed, meaning its winner will go on to victory in the general election.

According to Jim Stirling, research fellow at the John Locke Foundation, neither candidate has represented Avery, Caldwell, or Haywood counties in recent years. "That leaves 6,392 potential primary voters who haven't recently seen their names on the ballot," Stirling said. "This election will likely come down to who picks up more votes in those three counties."

Senate District 1

Another double-bunching scenario for Republican candidates has unfolded on the other side of the state. The new Senate District 1 includes large portions of coastal North Carolina, including Dare, Hyde, Pamlico, and Carteret counties. Redrawn maps put Sen. Bob Steinburg and Sen. Norman Sanderson in the same district.

Steinburg served three terms in the House before winning a Senate seat in the 2018 election, while Sanderson has served five terms in the Senate, since 2013. Steinburg chairs the Senate Select Committee on Prison Safety and has been a key player in mov-



Sen. Deanna Ballard, R-Watauga



Sen. Ralph Hise, R-Mitchell



Sen. Norman Sanderson, R-Pamlico



Sen. Bob Steinburg, R-Chowan



Gov. Roy Cooper with senate candidate Val Applewhite



Sen. Kirk deViere, D-Cumberland

ing prison reforms through in recent years. Sanderson is chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Senate District 1 is rated R+10 in the Civitas Partisan Index, meaning the district votes about 10 percentage points more Republican than the state as a whole. This suggests the primary's winner will go on to victory in the general election. A key factor in the primary's outcome will be fundraising, according to Stirling.

"The question really is going to come down to if Steinburg can continue to outraise Sanderson and use that money to get his name identification up," he said.

Senate District 19

On the Senate side, the primary drama isn't limited to Republicans. In March, Gov. Roy Cooper tossed a political monkey wrench into Senate District 19 when he

endorsed a sitting Democratic senator's primary opponent.

Sen. Kirk deViere has served two terms in that chamber representing the district that encompasses Cumberland County. DeViere has been among a handful of moderate Democrats in the Senate who have parted ways with Cooper a number of times, including on the state budget and legislation reopening public school classrooms.

That independent streak won deViere a spot — along with four other Democrats — on a budget conference committee appointed by GOP leaders. It also drew the ire of Cooper, who endorsed Val Applewhite, a former Fayetteville City Council member, saying she would stand up to "right-wing Republicans."

"This primary challenge is a direct result of putting my community over partisan politics and not

being a rubber stamp," deViere said in a news release.

The winner of that Democratic primary will face either Dennis Britt or Wesley Meredith — a former lawmaker — in the general election. CPI rates the district D+6, meaning it's winnable for Republicans but an uphill battle.

House District 37

On the House side, the primary in House District 37 in southwestern Wake County is shaping up to be both competitive and combative. Democrats Mary Bethel, Christine Kelly, and Elizabeth Parent are facing off for the right to challenge incumbent Republican Rep. Erin Pare in November.

The primary has already been heated, with one candidate who withdrew claiming that other local Democrats tried to "intimidate" her to make that decision.

The district is rated R+2, meaning the general election could be competitive. Pare is the only GOP member of the House delegation from Wake County.

Other primaries to watch

House District 52: Republican incumbents Jamie Boles and Ben Moss are double bunched.

House District 113: Republican incumbents Jake Johnson and David Rogers are double bunched.

Senate District 3: A competitive Democratic primary features Ernestine Bazemore and Valerie Jordan, who was twice appointed to the state's Department of Transportation Board by Cooper.

House District 74: A competitive Democratic primary pits Carla Catalan Day against Sean Lew.

2022 PRIMARY VOTER GUIDE

UNITED STATES SENATE



Greg Antoine
DEM
Fayetteville



Cheri Beasley
DEM
Raleigh



Chrelle Booker
DEM
Columbus



James L. Carr, Jr.
DEM
Harrisburg



Jen Banwart
REP
Holly Springs



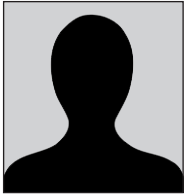
Lee A. Brian
REP
Clayton



Leonard L. Bryant
REP
Fayetteville



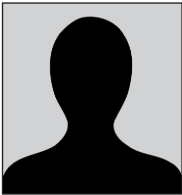
Ted Budd
REP
Raleigh



Drew Bulecza
REP
Lincolnton



Robert Colon
DEM
Wilmington



Alyssia Hammond
DEM
Raleigh



Lov Johnson
DEM
Charlotte



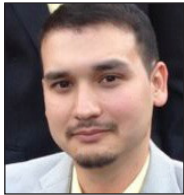
Tobias LaGrone
DEM
Greensboro



Marjorie Eastman
REP
Wake Forest



David Flaherty
REP
Cameron



Benjamin Griffiths
REP
Fayetteville



Kenneth Harper, Jr
REP
Archdale



Pat McCrory
REP
Charlotte



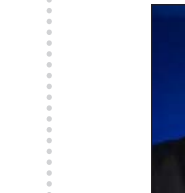
B.K. Maginnis
DEM
Charlotte



Rett Newton
DEM
Beaufort



Marcus Williams
DEM
Lumberton



Shannon W. Bray
LIB
Apex



Charles Moss
REP
Randleman



Lichia Sibhatu
REP
Raleigh



Debora Tshiovo
REP
Moravian Falls



Mark Walker
REP
Summerfield

UNITED STATES CONGRESS

DISTRICT	RATING		CANDIDATE	PARTY	CITY
1	LEAN DEM	D+5	Don Davis	DEM	Snow Hill
			Erica D. Smith	DEM	Gaston
			Jason Albert Spriggs	DEM	Henderson
			Jullian C. Bishop, Sr.	DEM	Garner
			Brad Murphy	REP	Macon
			Ernest Reeves	REP	Greenville
			Brent Roberson	REP	Williamston
			Sandy Roberson	REP	Rocky Mount
			Sandy Smith	REP	Rocky Mount
			Billy Strickland	REP	Wilson
			Henry Williams II	REP	Greenville
			Will Aiken	REP	Warrenton
2	SAFE DEM	D+13	Deborah K. Ross	DEM	Raleigh
			Mahesh (Max) Ganorkar	REP	Pittsboro
			Adina Safta	REP	Raleigh
			Christine E. Villaverde	REP	Fuquay-Varina
3	SAFE REP	R+12	Barbara D. Gaskins	DEM	Greenville
			Joe Swartz	DEM	Swansboro
			Tony Cowden	REP	Harrells
			Eric Earhart	REP	Gatesville
			Brian Michael Friend	REP	Wilmington
			Greg Murphy	REP	Greenville
			George J. Papastrat	REP	Jacksonville
4	SAFE DEM	D+16	Crystal Cavalier	DEM	Mebane
			Valerie P. Foushee	DEM	Hillsborough
			Matt Grooms	DEM	Butner
			Stephen J. Valentine	DEM	Durham
			Ashley Ward	DEM	Mebane
			Richard L. Watkins	DEM	Durham
			Clay Aiken	DEM	Durham
			Nida Allam	DEM	Durham
			Courtney Geels	REP	Hillsborough
			Robert Thomas	REP	Durham
5	LIKELY REP	R+10	Kyle Parrish	DEM	Cary
			Virginia Foxx	REP	Banner Elk
			Michael Ackerman	REP	Boone
6	LIEKLY DEM	D+6	Kathy Manning	DEM	Greensboro
			Thomas Watercott	LIB	Greensboro
			Christian Castelli	REP	Asheboro
			Mary Ann Contogiannis	REP	Greensboro
			Lee Haywood	REP	Summerfield
			Laura Pichardo	REP	Pelham
			William (Bill) Schuch	REP	Greensboro
			Gerry Austin	REP	Greensboro
			Marvin Boguslawski	REP	Jamestown
7	LEAN REP	R+5	Charles E. Evans	DEM	Fayetteville
			Charles Graham	DEM	Lumberton
			Yushonda Midgette	DEM	Wilmington
			Steve Miller	DEM	Wilmington
			David Rouzer	REP	Wilmington
			Max Southworth-Beckwith	REP	Currie

DISTRICT	RATING		CANDIDATE	PARTY	CITY
8	SAFE REP	R+17	Scott Huffman	DEM	Harrisburg
			Dan Bishop	REP	Charlotte
9	LEAN REP	R+3	Ben Clark	DEM	Raeford
			Richard Hudson	REP	Concord
			Francisco Rios	REP	Charlotte
			Mike Andriani	REP	Fayetteville
			Jen Bucardo	REP	Asheboro
10	SAFE REP	R+19	Michael Felder	DEM	Arden
			Pam Genant	DEM	Valdese
			Jeff Gregory	REP	Shelby
			Michael Magnotta	REP	Morganton
			Patrick McHenry	REP	Statesville
			Gary Robinson	REP	Statesville
			Richard Speer	REP	Lincolnton
			David Adam Coatney	LIB	Fletcher
			Jay Carey	DEM	Hendersonville
			Katie Dean	DEM	Swannanoa
			Marco Gutierrez	DEM	Clyde
11	LEAN REP	R+5	Bo Hess	DEM	Asheville
			Bynum M. Lunsford	DEM	Mars Hill
			Jasmine Beach-Ferrara	DEM	Asheville
			Madison Cawthorn	REP	Hendersonville
			Chuck Edwards	REP	Flat Rock
			Rod Honeycutt	REP	Alexander
			Wendy Marie-Limbaugh Nevarez	REP	Asheville
			Bruce O'Connell	REP	Candler
			Kristie Sluder	REP	Weaverville
			Michele V. Woodhouse	REP	Hendersonville
			Matthew Burril	REP	Fletcher
			John Sharkey	DEM	Charlotte
			Alma S. Adams	DEM	Charlotte
			Andrew Huffman	REP	Concord
12	SAFE DEM	D+14	Nalini Joseph	REP	Salisbury
			Tyler Lee	REP	Charlotte
			Nathan Click	DEM	Raleigh
			Denton Lee	DEM	Clayton
			Wiley Nickel	DEM	Raleigh
			Sam Searcy	DEM	Holly Springs
			Ms. Jamie Campbell Bowles	DEM	Clinton
			Kelly Kathleen Daughtry	REP	Smithfield
			Renee Ellmers	REP	Dunn
13	TOSS UP	D+1	Bo Hines	REP	Winston Salem
			Kent Keirse	REP	Apex
			Jessica Morel	REP	Fayetteville
			Chad Slotta	REP	Holly Springs
			Kevin Alan Wolff	REP	Apex
			DeVan Barbour	REP	Benson
			Jeff Jackson	DEM	Charlotte
			Ram Mammadov	DEM	Pineville
			Pat Harrigan	REP	Catawba
14	LIEKLY DEM	D+6	Jonathan Simpson	REP	Charlotte

NORTH CAROLINA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DISTRICT	RATING/CPI		CANDIDATE	PARTY	CITY
001	SAFE REP	R+11	Edward C. Goodwin	REP	Edenton
002	LIKELY DEM	D+7	Ray Jeffers	DEM	Roxboro
			Gavin Bell	LIB	Leasburg
			Larry Yarborough	REP	Roxboro
			Steve Tyson	REP	New Bern
003	LIKELY REP	R+8	Steve Tyson	REP	New Bern
004	LIKELY REP	R+8	Wesley L. Boykin	DEM	Warsaw
			Jimmy Dixon	REP	Warsaw
			Howard Hunter III	DEM	Ahoskie
			Donald Kirkland	REP	Ahoskie
005	LEAN DEM	D+2	Donald Kirkland	REP	Elizabeth City
			Bill Ward	REP	Elizabeth City
			Kiara Johnson	DEM	Cameron
006	LIKELY REP	R+6	Murray Simpkins	REP	Sanford
			Joe Pike	REP	Sanford
			Matthew Winslow	REP	Youngsville
007	LIKELY REP	R+6	Matthew Winslow	REP	Youngsville
008	LIKELY DEM	D+9	Sharon McDonald Evans	DEM	Greenville
			Gloristine Brown	DEM	Bethel
			Charles (Drock) Vincent	REP	Greenville
009	LEAN DEM	D+3	Brian Farkas	DEM	Greenville
			Tony P. Moore	REP	Winterville
			Timothy Reeder	REP	Ayden
010	LEAN REP	R+3	John Bell	REP	Goldsboro
011	SAFE DEM	D+16	Allison A. Dahle	DEM	Raleigh
012	LEAN REP	R+2	Lillie Williams	DEM	Kinston
			Chris Humphrey	REP	La Grange
			Katie Tomberlin	DEM	Newport
			Celeste Cairns	REP	Emerald Isle
013	SAFE REP	R+18	Pete Benton	REP	Morehead City
			Eden Gordon Hill	REP	Swansboro
			Eric Whitfield	DEM	Hubert
014	SAFE REP	R+11	Isaiah (Ike) Johnson	DEM	Jacksonville
			George G. Cleveland	REP	Jacksonville
			Debbie Burke	REP	Maysville
015	SAFE REP	R+12	Christopher Schulte	DEM	Richlands
			Phillip Shepard	REP	Jacksonville
			Carson Smith	REP	Hampstead
016	SAFE REP	R+16	Carson Smith	REP	Hampstead
017	SAFE REP	R+11	Edward M. McKeithan	DEM	Bolivia
			Eric Terashima	DEM	Leland
			Frank Iler	REP	Shallotte
018	LIKELY DEM	D+6	Deb Butler	DEM	Wilmington
			John Hinnant	REP	Wilmington
			Charlie Miller	REP	Southport
019	SAFE REP	R+10	Charlie Miller	REP	Southport
020	TOSS UP	D+1	Amy Block DeLoach	DEM	Wilmington
			Ted Davis, Jr.	REP	Wilmington
			Ya Liu	DEM	Cary
021	SAFE DEM	D+18	Joshua Morris	LIB	Cary
			Gerard Falzon	REP	Morrisville
			William Brisson	REP	Dublin
022	LIKELY REP	R+7	William Brisson	REP	Dublin
023	SAFE DEM	D+12	Shelly Willingham	DEM	Rocky Mount
			James Crowell Proctor	REP	Whitakers
			Linda Cooper-Suggs	DEM	Wilson
024	LEAN DEM	D+2	Ken Fontenot	REP	Wilson
			James D. Gailliard	DEM	Rocky Mount
			Nick Taylor	LIB	Nashville
			Yvonne McLeod	REP	Rocky Mount
025	LEAN DEM	D+3	Allen Chesser	REP	Middlesex
			Alsey Heth Hopkins	REP	Middlesex
			Linda Bennett	DEM	Zebulon
026	LIKELY REP	R+6	Donna McDowell White	REP	Clayton
			Rick Walker	REP	Clayton
			Michael H. Wray	DEM	Gaston
027	SAFE DEM	D+13	Jerry McDaniel	DEM	Roanoke Rapids
			Wes Tripp	REP	Halifax
			Wendy Ella May	DEM	Micro
028	SAFE REP	R+15	Larry C. Strickland	REP	Pine Level
			Jim Davenport	REP	Kenly
			Vernetta Alston	DEM	Durham
029	SAFE DEM	D+33	Vernetta Alston	DEM	Durham
030	SAFE DEM	D+35	Marcia Morey	DEM	Durham
			Guy Meilleur	LIB	Durham
			William G. Antico	REP	Durham
031	SAFE DEM	D+29	Zack Hawkins	DEM	Durham
			Sean Haugh	LIB	Durham
			Terry Garrison	DEM	Henderson
032	LIKELY DEM	D+7	Frank Sossamon	REP	Henderson
			Rosa U. Gill	DEM	Raleigh
			Nate Blanton	DEM	Raleigh
033	SAFE DEM	D+13	Chris Costello	LIB	Garner
			Stephanie Dingee	REP	Raleigh
			Grier Martin	DEM	Raleigh
034	SAFE DEM	D+12	Kat McDonald	LIB	Raleigh
			Joshua Jordan	REP	Raleigh
			Ashley Seshul	REP	Raleigh
035	LEAN DEM	D+2	Terence Everitt	DEM	Wake Forest
			Joseph Serio	LIB	Wake Forest
			Fred Von Canon	REP	Wake Forest
			Brandon Panameno	REP	Wake Forest
			Julie von Haefen	DEM	Apex
036	LIKELY DEM	D+7	Kyle Ward	LIB	Apex
			John Harris	REP	Raleigh
			Elizabeth Parent	DEM	Fuquay Varina
037	LEAN REP	R+2	Christine Kelly	DEM	Holly Springs
			Mary Bethel	DEM	Fuquay-Varina
			Christopher Robinson	LIB	Fuquay Varina
			Erin Pare	REP	Holly Springs
			Abe Jones	DEM	Raleigh
038	SAFE DEM		Christopher Mizelle	LIB	Raleigh
039	SAFE DEM	D+12	James A. Roberson	DEM	Knightdale
			Greg Jones	REP	Wendell
			Joe John	DEM	Raleigh
040	LEAN DEM	D+5	Marguerite Creel	DEM	Raleigh
			Michael Nelson	LIB	Raleigh
			Marilyn Avila	REP	Raleigh
041	SAFE DEM	D+14	Maria Cervania	DEM	Cary
			Travis Groo	LIB	Cary
			Bruce K. Forster	REP	Cary

DISTRICT	RATING/CPI		CANDIDATE	PARTY	CITY
042	SAFE DEM	D+22	Marvin W. Lucas	DEM	Spring Lake
			Naveed Aziz	DEM	Spring Lake
			Gloria Carrasco	REP	Fayetteville
043	TOSS UP	D+0	Elmer Floyd	DEM	Fayetteville
			Prince Christian	DEM	Fayetteville
			Kimberly Hardy	DEM	Linden
			Diane Wheatley	REP	Linden
			Clarence W. Goins, Jr.	REP	Eastover
			Charles Smith	DEM	Fayetteville
044	SAFE DEM	D+13	Terry L. Johnson, Sr.	DEM	Fayetteville
045	LIKELY DEM	D+8	Chris Davis	DEM	Fayetteville
			Keith Byrd	DEM	Hope Mills
			Frances Jackson	DEM	Fayetteville
			Susan Chapman	REP	Fayetteville
046	SAFE REP	R+12	Brenden H. Jones	REP	Tabor City
047	LEAN DEM	D+5	Aminah Ghaffar	DEM	Lumberton
			Charles Townsend	DEM	Fairmont
			Jarrold Lowery	REP	Pembroke
			Mickey Biggs	REP	Lumberton
048	LEAN DEM	D+5	Garland E. Pierce	DEM	Wagram
			Melissa Swarbrick	REP	Aberdeen
			Cynthia Ball	DEM	Raleigh
049	SAFE DEM	D+18	Michael Oakes	LIB	Raleigh
			David Robertson	REP	Raleigh
			Renee Price	DEM	Hillsborough
050	LIKELY DEM	D+8	Matt Hughes	DEM	Hillsborough
			Charles Lopez	REP	Mebane
			Malcolm Hall	DEM	Carthage
051	LIKELY REP	R+9	John Sauls	REP	Sanford
052	LIKELY REP	R+6	Ben Moss	REP	Rockingham
			Jamie Boles	REP	Southern Pines
			Newanda L. Colvin	DEM	Dunn
053	SAFE REP	R+14	Howard Penny, Jr.	REP	Coats
			Brian Hawley	REP	Angier
			Robert T. Reives	DEM	Goldston
054	LEAN DEM	D+4	Walter Petty	REP	Goldston
			Craig Kinsey	REP	Pittsboro
			Mark Brody	REP	Monroe
055	LIKELY REP	R+9	Brandon Smith	REP	Morven
056	SAFE DEM	D+36	Allen Buansi	DEM	Chapel Hill
			Jonah Garson	DEM	Chapel Hill
			Ashton Clemmons	DEM	Greensboro
057	LIKELY DEM	D+8	Michelle C. Bardsley	REP	Greensboro
058	SAFE DEM	D+23	Amos Quick	DEM	Greensboro
			Chrissy Smith	REP	Greensboro
			Sherrie Young	DEM	Greensboro
059	LEAN DEM	D+2	Eddie Aday	DEM	Gibsonville
			Jon Hardister	REP	Whitsett
			Cecil Brockman	DEM	High Point
060	SAFE DEM	D+13	Bob Blasingame	REP	Jamestown
061	SAFE DEM	D+31	Mary Price (Pricey) Harrison	DEM	Greensboro
062	TOSS UP	D+1	Brandon Gray	DEM	Oak Ridge
			John Faircloth	REP	High Point
			Ricky Hurtado	DEM	Graham
063	LEAN DEM	D+3	Ed Priola	REP	Mebane
			Stephen Ross	REP	Burlington
			Peter Boykin	REP	Mebane
064	LIKELY REP	R+9	Ron Osborne	DEM	Graham
			Dennis Riddell	REP	Snow Camp
			Jay Donecker	DEM	Reidsville
065	SAFE REP	R+14	Gary L. Smith	DEM	Eden
			Joseph A. Gibson III	REP	Stokesdale
			Reece Pyrtle	REP	Stoneville
066	SAFE DEM	D+21	Frank (Jeremiah) Pierce	DEM	Raleigh
			Wesley Knott	DEM	Raleigh
			Sarah Crawford	DEM	Raleigh
			Micao Penaflor	LIB	Raleigh
			Ives Brizuela de Sholar	REP	Raleigh
067	SAFE REP	R+21	Wayne Sasser	REP	Albemarle
068	SAFE REP	R+10	David Willis	REP	Waxhaw
069	SAFE REP	R+13	Leigh Coulter	DEM	Indian Trail
			Dean Arp	REP	Monroe
			Susan Lee (Susie) Scott	DEM	Asheboro
070	SAFE REP	R+25	Brian Biggs	REP	Trinity
			Pat B. Hurley	REP	Asheboro
			David M. Moore	DEM	Winston Salem
071	SAFE DEM	D+21	Kanika Brown	DEM	Winston-Salem
			Frederick N. Terry	DEM	Winston Salem
			Amber M. Baker	DEM	Winston Salem
072	SAFE DEM	D+25	Shelton Stallworthy	REP	Winston Salem
073	LEAN DEM	D+3	Diamond Staton-Williams	DEM	Harrisburg
			Catherine Whiteford	REP	Harrisburg
			Brian Echevarria	REP	Raleigh
			Parish Moffitt	REP	Concord
			Carla Catalan Day	DEM	Winston Salem
074	TOSS UP	R+1	Sean Lew	DEM	Clemmons
			Jeff Zenger	REP	Lewisville
			Donny C. Lambeth	REP	Winston Salem
075	LEAN REP	R+5	Donny C. Lambeth	REP	Winston Salem
076	SAFE REP	R+11	Harry Warren	REP	Salisbury
077	SAFE REP	R+25	Julia C. Howard	REP	Mocksville
078	SAFE REP	R+23	Erik Davis	DEM	Asheboro
			Neal Jackson	REP	Robbins
			Cory Bortree	REP	Asheboro
			David Ashley	REP	Climax
079	SAFE REP	R+10	Keith Kidwell	REP	Chocowinity
			Ed Hege	REP	New Bern
			Dennis S. Miller	DEM	Thomasville
080	SAFE REP	R+24	Sam Watford	REP	Thomasville
081	SAFE REP	R+21	Joe Watkins	DEM	Lexington
			Larry W. Potts	REP	Lexington
			Katherine Jeanes	DEM	Kannapolis
082	LEAN REP	R+2	Kristin Baker	REP	Concord
			Brad Jenkins	REP	China Grove
			Grayson Haff	REP	China Grove
083	SAFE REP	R+23	Kevin Crutchfield	REP	Midland

2022 PRIMARY VOTER GUIDE

DISTRICT	RATING/CPI		CANDIDATE	PARTY	CITY
084	SAFE REP	R+15	September McCrady Jeffrey C. McNeely	DEM REP	Statesville Stony Point
085	SAFE REP	R+22	Robert Cordle Dudley Greene	DEM REP	Marion
086	SAFE REP	R+18	Hugh Blackwell	REP	Valdese
087	SAFE REP	R+22	Barbara Kirby Destin Hall	DEM REP	Hudson Granite Falls
088	SAFE DEM	D+18	Mary Belk Anne Marie Peacock	DEM REP	Charlotte Charlotte
089	SAFE REP	R+23	Mitchell Smith Setzer Kelli Weaver Moore Benjamin Devine	REP REP REP	Catawba Newton Newton
090	SAFE REP	R+24	Sarah Stevens Benjamin Romans	REP REP	Mount Airy Roaring River
091	SAFE REP	R+18	Kyle Hall James Douglas Stephen L. James	REP REP REP	King Rural Hall King
092	SAFE DEM	D+20	Terry Brown Mario J. Robinson, Sr.	DEM REP	Charlotte Charlotte
093	LIKELY REP	R+6	Ben Massey Ray Pickett	DEM REP	Grassy Creek Blowing Rock
094	SAFE REP	R+25	Chuck Hubbard Jeffrey Elmore	DEM REP	Wilkesboro North Wilkesboro
095	SAFE REP	R+23	Amanda B. Kotis Grey Mills	DEM REP	Mooresville Mooresville
096	SAFE REP	R+12	Jay Adams	REP	Hickory
097	SAFE REP	R+22	Jason R. Saine	REP	Lincolnton
098	TOSS UP	R+1	Christy Clark John R. Bradford III	DEM REP	Huntersville Cornelius
099	SAFE DEM	D+35	Nasif Majeed Elsa Karman	DEM REP	Charlotte Charlotte
100	SAFE DEM	D+26	John Autry	DEM	Charlotte
101	SAFE DEM	D+27	Carolyn G. Logan Steve Mauney	DEM REP	Charlotte Charlotte
102	SAFE DEM	D+28	Becky Carney Cynthia Eleanor Clementi	DEM REP	Charlotte Charlotte
103	LEAN DEM	D+2	Laura Budd Ann Harlan Bill Brawley	DEM DEM REP	Matthews Matthews Matthews

DISTRICT	RATING/CPI		CANDIDATE	PARTY	CITY
104	LEAN DEM	D+4	Brandon Lofton Don Pomeroy	DEM REP	Charlotte Charlotte
105	LIKELY DEM	D+7	Wesley Harris Joshua Niday	DEM REP	Charlotte Charlotte
106	SAFE DEM	D+20	Carla Cunningham Karen Henning	DEM REP	Charlotte Charlotte
107	SAFE DEM	D+33	Kelly Alexander Vermanno Bowman Mark Alan Cook	DEM DEM REP	Charlotte Charlotte Charlotte
108	SAFE REP	R+15	John A. Torbett	REP	Stanley
109	LIKELY REP	R+8	Eric Hughes Lauren Bumgardner Current Donnie Loftis Ronnie Worley John Gouch	DEM REP REP REP REP	Charlotte Gastonia Gastonia Cramerton Belmont
110	SAFE REP	R+16	Kelly Hastings	REP	Cherryville
111	SAFE REP	R+18	Tim Moore	REP	Kings Mountain
112	SAFE DEM	D+12	Jay Holman Rodney W. Moore Yolanda Holmes Tricia Cotham Tony Long	DEM DEM DEM DEM REP	Charlotte Charlotte Charlotte Mint Hill Charlotte
113	SAFE REP	R+15	Jake Johnson David Rogers	REP REP	Columbus Rutherfordton
114	SAFE DEM	D+16	J. Eric Ager Everett D. Pittillo	DEM REP	Fairview Black Mountain
115	LIKELY DEM	D+6	Lindsey Prather Pratik Bhakta Sherry M. Higgins	DEM REP REP	Enka Asheville Arden
116	SAFE DEM	D+10	Caleb Rudow Mollie Rose	DEM REP	Asheville Weaverville
117	LIKELY REP	R+9	Michael Greer O'Shea Chelsea Walsh Dennis Justice Jennifer Capps Balkcom	DEM REP REP REP	Mills River Hendersonville Fletcher Raleigh
118	SAFE REP	R+11	Josh Remillard Mark Pless	DEM REP	Canton Canton
119	LEAN REP	R+5	Al Platt Mike Clampitt	DEM REP	Brevard Bryson City
120	SAFE REP	R+22	Karl E. Gillespie	REP	Franklin

NORTH CAROLINA SENATE

DISTRICT	RATING/CPI		CANDIDATE	PARTY	CITY
1	SAFE REP	R+10	Bob Steinburg Norman W. Sanderson	REP REP	Edenton Minnesott Beach
2	LIKELY REP	R+7	Jim Perry	REP	Kinston
3	LEAN DEM	D+5	Valerie Jordan Ernestine (Byrd) Bazemore Bobby Hanig	DEM DEM REP	Warrenton Aulander Powells Point
4	TOSS UP	R+1	Milton F. (Toby) Fitch Raymond E. Smith, Jr. Joe Democko Buck Newton	DEM DEM REP REP	Wilson Goldsboro Lagrange Wilson
5	LIKELY DEM	D+8	Kandie D. Smith Lenton Brown Karen Kozel	DEM DEM REP	Greenville Grifton Greenville
6	SAFE REP	R+14	Michael A. Lazzara	REP	Jacksonville
7	TOSS UP	D+0	Jason Minnicozzi Michael Lee	DEM REP	Wilmington Wilmington
8	SAFE REP	R+10	Bill Rabon	REP	Winnabow
9	LIKELY REP	R+9	Brent Jackson	REP	Autryville
10	SAFE REP	R+11	Gettys Cohen, Jr. Jill Homan Matt Ansley Benton Sawrey	DEM REP REP REP	Smithfield Archer Lodge Archer Lodge Clayton
11	LEAN DEM	D+2	Mark Speed Lisa Stone Barnes	DEM REP	Louisburg Nashville
12	LIKELY REP	R+9	Richard Chapman David Buboltz Jim Burgin Ernie Watson	DEM REP REP REP	Fuquay-Varina Lillington Angier Sanford
13	SAFE DEM	D+14	Patrick Buffkin Lisa Grafstein Michael C. Munger Jeff Werner David Bankert	DEM DEM LIB REP REP	Raleigh Raleigh Raleigh Raleigh Raleigh
14	SAFE DEM	D+22	Dan Blue Matthew Laszacs Chris Baker	DEM LIB REP	Raleigh Raleigh Wendell
15	SAFE DEM	D+18	Jay J. Chaudhuri Sammie Brooks Emanuela Prister	DEM LIB REP	Raleigh Raleigh Cary
16	SAFE DEM	D+16	Gale Adcock Dee Watson James Powers	DEM LIB REP	Raleigh Cary Cary
17	LEAN DEM	D+2	Mrs. Sydney Batch Patrick J. Bowersox Mark Cavaliero	DEM LIB REP	Raleigh Holly Springs Apex
18	LEAN DEM	D+2	Mary Wills Bode Ryan Brown Dimitry Slabyak E. C. Sykes	DEM LIB REP REP	Oxford Creedmoor Raleigh Raleigh
19	LIKELY DEM	D+6	Kirk deViere Val Applewhite Ed Donaldson Dennis Britt Wesley Meredith	DEM DEM DEM REP REP	Fayetteville Fayetteville Fayetteville Fayetteville Fayetteville
20	SAFE DEM	D+20	Natalie S. Murdock Alvin Reed	DEM REP	Durham Sanford
21	TOSS UP	D+0	Frank McNeill Tom McClnnis	DEM REP	Aberdeen Pinehurst
22	SAFE DEM	D+29	Mike Woodard Ray Ubinger John Tarantino Larry Coleman	DEM LIB REP REP	Durham Durham Durham Durham

DISTRICT	RATING/CPI		CANDIDATE	PARTY	CITY
23	SAFE DEM	D+16	Graig R. Meyer Jamie DeMent Holcomb Bill Cooke Landon Woods	DEM DEM REP REP	Hillsborough Hillsborough Chapel Hill Yanceyville
24	TOSS UP	D+1	Darrel (BJ) Gibson, Jr. Danny Earl Britt, Jr.	DEM REP	Laurinburg Lumberton
25	LIKELY REP	R+8	Sean C. Ewing Amy Scott Galey	DEM REP	Mebane Burlington
26	LIKELY REP	R+6	Philip E. (Phil) Berger	REP	Eden
27	LIKELY DEM	D+8	Michael Garrett Richard (Josh) Sessoms	DEM REP	Greensboro Greensboro
28	SAFE DEM	D+26	Gladys A. Robinson Paul Schumacher	DEM REP	Greensboro Greensboro
29	SAFE REP	R+16	Brooke Crump David (Dave) Craven, Jr.	DEM REP	Mt Gilead Asheboro
30	SAFE REP	R+22	Monique D. Johnson Steve Jarvis Eddie Gallimore	DEM REP REP	Thomasville Lexington Thomasville
31	LEAN REP	R+5	Joyce Krawiec	REP	Kernersville
32	SAFE DEM	D+10	Paul Lowe, Jr. George K. Ware	DEM REP	Winston Salem Winston Salem
33	SAFE REP	R+19	Tangela (Lucy Horne) Morgan Carl Ford	DEM REP	China Grove China Grove
34	LEAN REP	R+4	Keshia Sandidge Paul R. Newton	DEM REP	Concord Mount Pleasant
35	SAFE REP	R+12	Todd Johnson	REP	Monroe
36	SAFE REP	R+26	Shirley B. Randleman Eddie Settle Vann Tate Lee Zachary	REP REP REP REP	Wilkesboro Elkin Toast Yadkinville
37	SAFE REP	R+14	Vickie Sawyer Tom Fyler	REP REP	Mooresville Mooresville
38	SAFE DEM	D+30	Mujtaba A. Mohammed	DEM	Charlotte
39	SAFE DEM	D+14	DeAndrea Salvador Mark Robeson	DEM REP	Charlotte Charlotte
40	SAFE DEM	D+21	Joyce Waddell Bobbie Shields	DEM REP	Charlotte Charlotte
41	SAFE DEM	D+18	Natasha Marcus Bonni Leone	DEM REP	Davidson Cornelius
42	LEAN DEM	D+5	Rachel Hunt Scott Stone Cheryl Russo	DEM REP REP	Charlotte Charlotte Charlotte
43	SAFE REP	R+11	Brad Overcash	REP	Belmont
44	SAFE REP	R+19	Ted Alexander	REP	Shelby
45	SAFE REP	R+19	Austen Gilbert Dean Proctor	DEM REP	Granite Falls Hickory
46	SAFE REP	R+11	Billy Martin Mark Crawford Warren Daniel	DEM REP REP	Marion Montreat Morganton
47	SAFE REP	R+12	Deanna Ballard Ralph Hise	REP REP	Blowing Rock Spruce Pine
48	SAFE REP	R+13	Stephanie A. Justice Tim Moffitt	DEM REP	Columbus Hendersonville
49	SAFE DEM	D+14	Sandra Kilgore Julie Mayfield Taylon Breeden John Anderson	DEM DEM DEM REP	Asheville Asheville Asheville Candler
50	SAFE REP	R+13	Karen Burnette McCracken Kevin Corbin	DEM REP	Almond Franklin

Demos to pick up seat, maybe two, under new congressional maps

BY DAVID LARSON

The 2022 congressional districts imposed by the N.C. Supreme Court after a monthslong battle improve Democrats’ chances in the upcoming midterm elections. The current 8-5 Republican majority in the state’s U.S. House delegation will almost certainly become a narrower 8-6 majority or an even 7-7 split with the addition of a new seat and the court’s maps.

“The map is definitely a victory for the Democrats, because under the initial maps that the General Assembly drew, the delegation could have been as much as 11-3 Republican,” said Mitch Kokai, senior political analyst for the John Locke Foundation.

Out of the 14 new districts, only the 13th Congressional District is a true swing district, Kokai said, making it the deciding factor on whether Democrats pick up one or two seats.

District 13

The new 13th District covers Johnston, southern Wake, northern Harnett, and western Wayne counties. Voting analysis provided by the General Assembly shows 49.7% of the vote went to Democrats and 49.1% went to Republicans in recent statewide elections.

Five Democrats have filed, including former state Sen. Sam Searcy and two-term state Sen. Wiley Nickel. Kokai said Nickel’s progressive reputation could help him in the primary but would prove less helpful in November in a swing district. Searcy, on the other hand, has “a little bit stronger case.”

For Republicans, the battle among the eight candidates could come down to whether the local Republican Party infrastructure wields more influence, or whether social-media stardom and outside money win the day.

“I think if you had this same sort of race 10 or 20 years ago, the candidates to watch would definitely be Kelly Daughtry or DeVan Barbour, because they both have strong connections to the old Johnston County Republican base,” Kokai said.

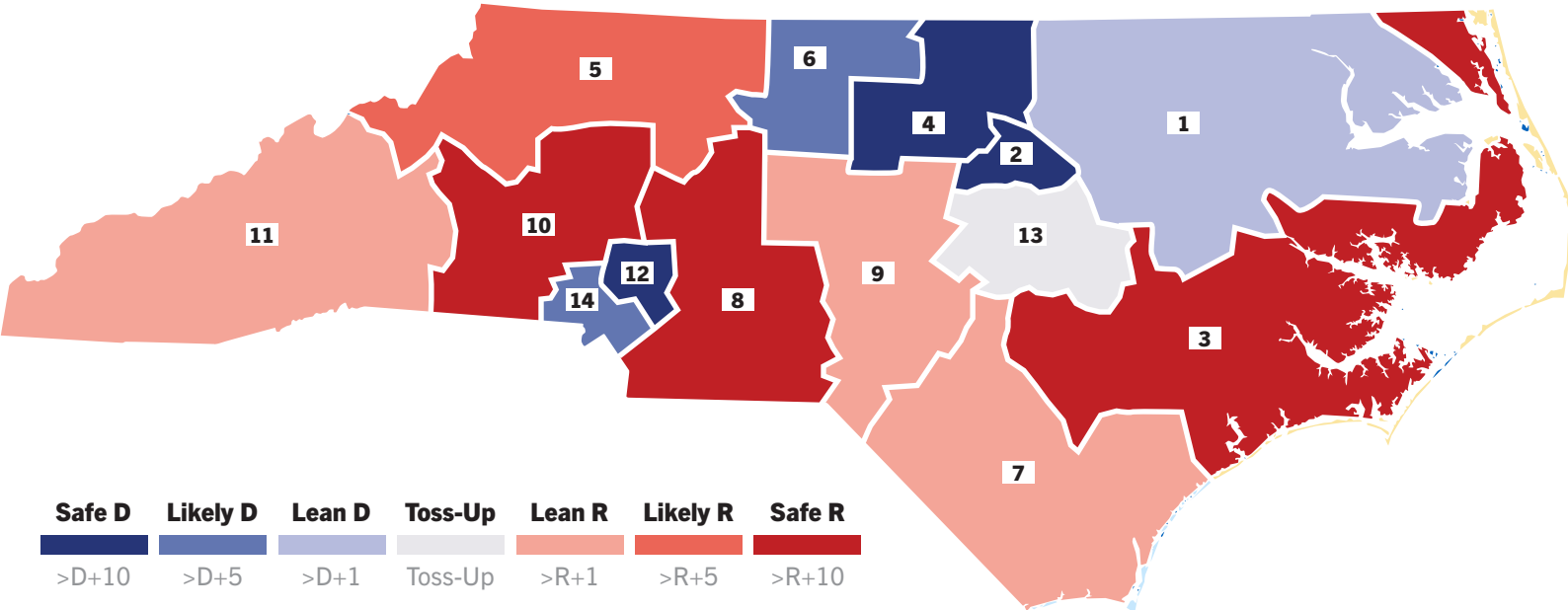
But with 26-year-old former college football player Bo Hines receiving money from Club for Growth and a big endorsement announcement from former President Trump, it may overshadow those traditional channels for nominating a candidate.

“It remains to be seen how much Trump’s name will help with 2022 congressional races,” Kokai said. “But it certainly does help Hines distinguish himself from the crowd. It also sets up an interesting contrast between ‘Trump Republicans’ and old-school Republicans who might recognize the names Daughtry and Barbour as long-time Johnston County conservative families.”

Other districts

Other than the 13th, there are other districts that might have a chance of becoming competitive or that have interesting primaries. District 1 in the rural north-

Locke partisan leanings for North Carolina's congressional districts



east has the best chance of joining the 13th as a competitive district. While Democrats have a nine-point advantage (54%-45%), the retirement of incumbent U.S. Rep. G.K. Butterfield and a strong partisan wave building for Republicans in this cycle makes it at least an outside chance for an upset.

“It really depends on just how strong of a Republican wave year it is,” Kokai said of whether the 1st District could be competitive, but added, “It’s the Democrats’ race to lose.”

The Democratic primary could be competitive between state Sen. Don Davis, a veteran and a moderate Democrat who has served in the state Senate for six terms, and Erica Smith, a former state senator who ran for U.S. Senate in the last election cycle.

District 6 gives an 11-point advantage to Democrats (55%-44%). This Triad-area district includes Greensboro, High Point, and part of the Winston-Salem area. The urban population and incumbency advantage of current 6th Congressional District Rep. Kathy Manning makes it a fairly safe bet for Democrats, but after the 1st District, it may be considered the next-most-likely steal if the GOP were to have a massive wave.

“I think this is a little bit stronger one for Democrats just in having Kathy Manning, who will have the incumbency advantage, whereas they don’t have that in the 1st District,” Kokai said. “But once again, if Republicans were able to win this district or even come pretty close to Manning, that would be a good sign for Republicans nationally and statewide that it will be a good night.”

Most seats are unlikely to be competitive, both because many have strong incumbents and because of the partisan leaning of the voters. Below is a quick breakdown of these races:

District 2 in northern Wake County gives Democrats a 25-point advantage (62%-37%), and incumbent Rep. Deborah Ross is expected to win.

District 3 along the coast gives Republicans a 24-point advantage (61%-37%), and incumbent U.S. Rep. Greg Murphy is expected to hold onto the seat.

District 4 in the western Tri-

angle gives Democrats a 33-point edge (66%-33%). While the race isn’t competitive in a partisan sense, it will be one to watch because longtime U.S. Rep. David Price’s retirement leaves the door open to a new N.C. representative. Among the long list of Democratic contenders are Durham County Commissioner Nida Allam, N.C. Sen. Valerie Foushee, and even former “American Idol” contestant Clay Aiken. Kokai believes Foushee is the natural front-runner.

“What do the Democratic primary voters in that district want?” asked Kokai. “Do they want an African American woman who put forward a consistent record in local government and the state Senate [Foushee]? Do they want someone from Durham who is a Muslim woman who might fit in well with the Squad [Allam]? Or do they want this ‘American Idol,’ ‘Celebrity Apprentice’ guy who can bring in a celebrity factor [Aiken]?”

District 5 in the northwest mountains gives Republicans a 21-point advantage (60%-39%), and incumbent U.S. Rep. Virginia Foxx is expected to hang on to the seat.

District 7 in the southeast part of the state leans 11 points in Republicans’ favor (55%-44%), and incumbent U.S. Rep. David Rouzer is favored to win.

District 8, covering many of the rural counties south of the Triad and east of Charlotte, gives Republicans a 33-point edge (66%-33%). To make matters easier for the incumbent, U.S. Rep. Dan Bishop has no Republican primary and a little-known Democrat challenger.

District 9 in the southern Piedmont area may appear more competitive, with Republicans only having a 7-point advantage (53%-46%), but the strong incumbency advantage of Republican U.S. Rep. Richard Hudson and the weak year for Democrats makes those seven points close to insurmountable.

District 10 in the southern foothills of the mountains gives Republicans their greatest advantage, with a 39-point edge (69%-30%), and incumbent U.S. Rep. Patrick McHenry is expected to

Comparing to other measures

The first column is Locke’s baseline partisan leanings for each district. The second column is a head-to-head comparison of the two-party outcomes for the district using Locke’s data and methodology, which is about twice as large as each district’s partisan lean. That rating allows for apples-to-apples comparisons with measures from FiveThirtyEight and Dave’s Redistricting.

District	Locke, Partisan Leanings	Locke, Head-to-Head	538	Dave's Redistricting
1	D+5	D+10	D+5	D+10
2	D+13	D+25	D+24	D+26
3	R+12	R+24	R+29	R+24
4	D+16	D+31	D+30	D+35
5	R+10	R+20	R+24	R+20
6	D+6	D+12	D+9	D+13
7	R+5	R+11	R+16	R+11
8	R+17	R+33	R+38	R+33
9	R+3	R+7	R+11	R+6
10	R+19	R+38	R+43	R+37
11	R+5	R+10	R+14	R+10
12	D+14	D+29	D+25	D+28
13	D+1	D+1	R+3	D+1
14	D+6	D+12	D+11	D+12

win.

District 11 in the far-western mountain counties provides Republicans an 11-point advantage (55%-44%), but the primary is worth watching. Incumbent U.S. Rep. Madison Cawthorn has become controversial both in and out of the party, and voters have several potentially viable alternatives in the Republican primary.

“The biggest one would be state Sen. Chuck Edwards, who has a legislative record, who has a history of running elections and has a way to get a megaphone for some of the things that he’s saying,” Kokai said of Cawthorn’s challengers. “I just don’t know if he has enough support to counteract the folks that are aligned behind Cawthorn. We just don’t know at this point.”

District 12 is a northern Charlotte-area district with a 28-point advantage (63%-35%) for Democrats, and incumbent U.S. Rep. Alma Adams is favored to maintain the seat.

District 14 is a western Charlotte-area district with an 11-point advantage (55%-44%) for Democrats. State Sen. Jeff Jackson, a

well-known area Democrat, is favored to win the seat.

This amounts to 10 incumbents who are likely safe — seven Republicans and three Democrats — three open seats where Democrats are likely to win — 1st, 4th, and 14th — and one open seat, which is a true swing, that being the 13th.

With the current N.C. House delegation consisting of eight Republicans and five Democrats, and the two likely options after the 2022 elections being an 8-6 Republican majority or a 7-7 even delegation, Democrats are in position to either gain one or two seats.

This guaranteed improvement for Democrats imposed by the courts under the guise of political balance likely contributed to state House Speaker Tim Moore, R-Cleveland, and Senate leader Phil Berger, R-Rockingham, announcing March 17 they were again seeking to petition the U.S. Supreme Court to review state courts’ role in throwing out election maps drawn by state legislatures.

Exploring the future of K-12 education in North Carolina

BY DAVID BASS

Student enrollment in traditional public schools has plummeted since the start of the pandemic, with parents turning to schools of choice which, they say, provide better education and more freedom. Daniel Gomez is one such parent. He grew up attending public school and specifically chose to send his children to the Wake County Public School System because of testing scores. But he decided to move his family from public schools to the private Thales Academy in Raleigh for one reason — masking policy. Gomez’s kindergarten-age son has cold-induced asthma and wears glasses for an eye condition. His fourth-grader has asthma and a food allergy. “I did not want my child to be masked,” Gomez said. “The school is not a doctor. They can’t decide to ignore my sons’ conditions over something they decide is more important. When I asked for an exemption from school, they told me no, they were just following orders. I immediately enrolled my kids at Thales, and they have been mask-free for over a year.” Gomez says his kids are getting an “exceptional” education and already test above their respective grade levels.

The school is not a doctor. They can’t decide to ignore my sons’ conditions over something they decide is more important.

- Daniel Gomez

Seeking to create a K-12 education system that fits the needs of parents like Gomez is the purpose of the new committee in the N.C. House called the Select Committee on an Education System for North Carolina’s Future. Chaired by Rep. John Torbett, R-Gaston, and composed of nine members, the study committee will spend the next two years researching the best approaches in the world of K-12 education and making recommendations. “If today there was no education system in North Carolina, what would this body of individuals do to create one and what would it look like to carry us for the next 100 years?” asked Torbett during the committee’s kickoff meeting Jan. 24. “Our task is twofold: to continue to expand what is working across North Carolina, while at the same time to critically examine our system with brutal honesty, stop what is not working, and change the system,” said Eric Davis, chair of the N.C. State Board of Education, addressing the committee in February. The committee is meeting in communities across the state to hear from the public. Two key



Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson speaks at a legislative news conference.

speakers in recent weeks have been Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson and Superintendent of Public Instruction Catherine Truitt, both Republicans. Robinson brought his recommendations for K-12 public school reform to the committee Feb. 21, touching on themes of accountability, discipline, and restoring common sense. He called out a lack of discipline in public school classrooms, the presence of political issues and agenda-driven indoctrination, missing transparency, and lack of rigor in curriculum to train students for the job market. The state’s first black lieutenant governor took aim at ad-

ministrators who prioritize social engineering above the basics of reading, writing, and mathematics. “There is no reason to be sitting in an elementary school class and have a teacher talking to children about social engineering, when the child can’t spell ‘social’ or ‘engineering,’” said Robinson. Robinson also set his sights on a lack of discipline, control, and safety in the classroom. He cited one story from a teacher, a 24-year veteran of the profession, planning to quit because of discipline and safety issues in the classroom. Robinson referenced statistics showing that North Carolina high school classrooms have

nearly double the crime rate, when compared to the state overall. “Teachers have got to stop going to school in fear for themselves, and the same goes for our students,” Robinson said. “We see the chaos in our schools, and part of the reason why is because we’re no longer providing the discipline in those walls that we need to.”

Clearing a path for careers

Robinson’s recommendations include reforms to the way young people are prepared for careers. Truitt echoed those comments in a meeting of the committee earlier in February, when she emphasized that K-12 students must be prepared for technical-oriented jobs short of requiring a four-year degree from a university. “We need to make sure that our students are introduced to the notion of a K-12 career path early on,” Truitt said. “Students need to hear about something other than becoming a doctor or a lawyer or a nurse. The college-for-all cry from the ‘90s and 2000s needs to become careers-for-all.” “If we continue to say we’re so proud of our 87% high-school graduation rate, and yet only 31% of students are attaining a credential of marketplace value, then that diploma does not have the integrity that we want it to have,” Truitt added. She said the Great Resignation has put employees in the driver’s seat, necessitating a transition in how K-12 public education approaches teaching. “We are not going back to normal in education, nor should we. We need to think about, How can we improve this system we have in order to get different results?”

Parent stories show that N.C. school choice is not monolithic

BY DAVID BASS

Fading myth in K-12 education is that parents approach the decision of where to send their child monolithically — once a public school family, always a public school family. Once a private school family, always a private school family. And so on. But the changing face of school choice in North Carolina disproves this myth. Particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, parents have been nimble in their educational decisions. At a recent meeting of the N.C. State Board of Education, Catherine Truitt, state superintendent of public instruction, said many families cycle between private, charter, traditional public, or homeschooling throughout their child’s educational journey. “It’s very unusual that someone would be in a private or homeschool setting for their entire K-12 journey,” said Truitt, a Republican. “Many families in North Carolina might begin in homeschool, but then family circumstances change and so that child attends a charter school. And then that charter school only goes to the eighth grade, and then that student attends a public high school. We also have families where a sibling attends a private school but another sibling in the same family goes to public school. They’re all our kids. They’re all our future.”



Kenzie and neighborhood friend Stephan work on an Egyptian history project at Kathleen Mason's homeschool.

While no government agencies track how families of school-age children split their educational decisions, examples of mixed school-choice families abound. Tony and Nadja Young from Holly Springs are one. The couple sends their oldest daughter, Gabrielle, to Pine Springs Preparatory Academy, a charter school. But the Youngs send their second daughter to a traditional public school in Holly Springs, where she has been “thriving.” Nadja, a former public school teacher, shared with Carolina Journal that transitioning Gabrielle from a traditional public school to Pine Springs was the right choice for their family. In addition to academic challenges at the traditional school, Gabrielle faced a negative social environment. “Students were not inclusive, cliques formed, and kids focused on fashion and brand names,” Nadja said. “My daughter wanted a

more positive learning environment and was ready to give Pine Springs a try.” Gabrielle’s new school has been “a breath of fresh air,” Nadja said. “We’re now six months into the school year, and Gabrielle is just as enthusiastic as she was in week one. Students want to be there; teachers want to be there.” Another similar story is that of Xavier and Donna Coto. They moved to Denver, North Carolina, from the Mountain West in the middle of 2021. Their 12-year-old son, Paxton, had experience in both a traditional public school and a public charter. The Cotos specifically wanted another charter school in North Carolina, and they chose Lincoln Charter School. They say the experience has been transformational. What they like about Lincoln Charter is the keen focus on academics mixed with character development and an emphasis on giving back to the community. “I think it’s the neatest thing, that we’re expected to give back, and that we’re involved in our community,” said Donna. “It’s been a night-and-day experience,” Xavier added. Clearly, the pandemic has contributed to parents moving their children from different educational environments. Public school systems lost 63,000 students during the 2020-21 school year. That figure rebounded by 12,571 enrollments for the 2021-

22 school year, still well short of pre-pandemic levels. Meanwhile, 23% of students now attend a school of choice. Kathleen Mason is one of the newly minted homeschool parents. The mother of three from Cary started homeschooling her youngest and oldest children in recent months. Her middle daughter still attends a public charter school. At the height of the pandemic, Mason left her job to be at home with her three kids because of the demands of virtual schooling. Particularly for her youngest child, Kenzie, the experience was negative. “Where she had been learning multiplication the year before, she was tossed back to learning basic addition,” Mason said. “It felt like we were checking in throughout the day, but not really getting anything out of it. It turned her off of learning. It was stressing her out. I ended up buying homeschool curriculum and teaching her that while she was still enrolled in the virtual school.” Mason launched her homeschool at the start of the 2021-22 school year. In January, her oldest child, Ryan, wanted to come home. The best thing about homeschooling? “The freedom,” said Mason. “We can go as deep as we want to into subjects. We can customize it to what they really enjoy.”

OPINION



DUCCIO DI BUONINSEGNA, THE CALLING OF THE APOSTLES PETER AND ANDREW, COURTESY NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, WASHINGTON

Entitlement is not just bad politics, but a sickness of the soul

RAY NOTHSTINE
OPINION EDITOR



Jussie Smollett's release from jail mere days into his sentence for faking a hate crime reveals another example of entitlement culture run amok. It's not just that Smollett likely got preferential treatment with his release because of his money and status, but that he never apologized or admitted any wrongdoing from his hoax. When held to account by one judge, the disgraced actor then threw an epic tantrum, weaseling his way out of a few months of prison in Chicago with the help of attorneys.

Many of us witness entitled behavior every day, whether leaving a cart in the middle of a parking lot, cutting in line, or barking at a restaurant server over a minor inconvenience. We're all guilty of acting entitled to some extent,

but it significantly increases cultural rot when it infects the criminal justice system or other institutions.

The 2019 college admissions scandal is another prime example of toxic entitlement. Actress Felicity Huffman is one of at least 53 that were charged. Prosecutors described her behavior as "driven by entitlement." In *The Atlantic*, Caitlin Flanagan writes about a parent exploding over questioning his son's fake water polo credentials. "The word entitlement — even in its full, splendid range of meanings — doesn't begin to cover the attitudes on display," writes Flanagan.

Another trend of spoiled entitlement on many campuses is the inability to hear differing opinions without melting down like a toddler. Even Yale law students, the type of students likely asked to defend our Constitution in the future, heckled and interrupted speakers on campus addressing



Those who express and wallow in their sense of entitlement are at war with the truth and the human condition: we are sinners in need of humility and grace.

the topic — you guessed it — freedom of speech.

Politicians and the coronavirus lockdowns revealed a truth many of us already know: those who lead often have little to no intention of following their own mandates. Governors mandating masks and then caught without one or hosting raucous parties showed us that they simply believed rules don't apply to them. This reveals an empty form of righteousness among leaders. In-

stead of believing what one says or preaches to the public, authority is used to craft a narrative that merely signals virtue rather than instilling it.

When politicians call out entitlement culture, they are often harshly admonished. Who can forget Democrat West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin's warning that all of Biden's spending proposals are turning America into "an entitlement society?" For holding up another huge spending bill — much of it consisting of wealth transfers from middle-class to higher-income Americans — Manchin was scathed by many in the media and politicians in his own party. Ultimately, the message is that entitlement is not a big deal if one embodies the right ideological policies and beliefs.

In the end, those who express and wallow in their sense of entitlement are at war with the truth and the human condition: We are sinners in need of humility and

grace. "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble," writes Jesus's brother James in the New Testament.

We see many central planners and the envious in society embracing the victim mentality today. They've turned the constitutional order on its head by claiming special rights and privileges for themselves. Like Smollett, they demand constant attention while falsely disparaging opponents. Most striking, the unchecked entitlement is sewing moral chaos and confusion throughout the land. Still, we can reject the politics of entitlement by speaking the truth and holding bad actors accountable for their actions. The antidote to all this entitlement is more gratitude. If that vanishes, so do the health and vitality of our society.

Ray Nothstine is Carolina Journal opinion editor and Second Amendment research fellow at the John Locke Foundation.

Muddled theory contends some votes carry greater value, even for losing candidates

MITCH KOKAI
CONTRIBUTOR



If your preferred candidate loses an election, it might surprise you to be told that your losing vote holds greater value than a vote cast for the winning candidate.

Of course that's not true. Both votes hold equal value.

But the theory that a losing vote might carry more weight than a winning vote stands as one of the most bizarre elements of the recent legal attack on N.C. election maps.

A brief exchange during the trial over those maps brought the theory to the public eye, at least for a few moments.

Attorney Tom Farr, representing Republican legislative leaders, questioned Daniel Magleby, a political scientist at Binghamton University in New York. The conversation focused on elections to North Carolina's 120-member state House of Representatives.

"In North Carolina, when we go to vote, do we vote for 120 representatives or just one?" Farr asked.

"In North Carolina, you vote in single-member districts, electing a single representative," Magleby responded.

"In my district, if I vote for the candidate who loses, which has often been the case because I live in Raleigh, would that indicate that my vote didn't count to the same degree as the people who voted for the winning candidate?" Farr followed up.

The correct answer is no. Farr's vote counts just as much as a vote cast for the winning candidate. A candidate wins by securing more votes, but each legally tabulated



Can a vote for a losing candidate carry more value than one cast for a winner?

vote holds the same value.

That's not the answer Magleby offered.

"The proper way, I think, to understand it, Mr. Farr, is how the system of districts generates representation for people in North Carolina," he said.

"I think you've explained your opinion," Farr responded. "But I'm just asking you: In that election, my vote would count the same as the person who voted for the winning candidate, at least in terms of that election is concerned."

"In terms of the way your vote is aggregated into representation statewide, depending on how the districts are drawn, your vote may count for more or less in the effect of the general composition of the legislature," Magleby concluded.

Put another way, the individual election between candidate A and candidate B doesn't really matter, according to Magleby's reasoning. What matters is how many seats candidate A's party wins within the state House, compared to the seats won by candidate B's party. The value of your individual vote depends on whether you voted for the candidate of the party that ultimately wins control of the legislative chamber.

Support a winning candidate in election after election, and you still might be casting a vote with less value than your neighbor who votes the opposite way. What really matters is partisan control.

Most of us consider the right to vote as a right to cast the ballot, free from unnecessary obstacles

like poll taxes or literacy requirements. Our preferred candidates might not win each time, or ever, but the tabulation of our legally cast ballot means our right has been honored.

Magleby's reasoning twists the proper understanding of that right. If our preferred political party doesn't win control of a legislative chamber, or a majority within North Carolina's congressional delegation, our vote loses some of its value. The electoral system has somehow violated our rights.

Beyond one single expert witness testifying in Raleigh, the same argument motivates continual attacks on election maps drawn by Republican legislators. If those maps tend to produce

outcomes favoring the GOP on a statewide basis, that must mean a violation of Democrats' voting rights, according to critics.

But it's not clear how constitutional provisions designed to protect individuals' rights translate into the partisan nature of the political arena. If at some point the partisanship that is part and parcel of politics becomes unconstitutional, there must be a line between acceptable and unacceptable.

No court has yet been able to agree on where — or even how — to set that line. The U.S. Supreme Court gave up trying.

"This Court's one-person, one-vote cases recognize that each person is entitled to an equal say in the election of representatives," the court indicated in *Rucho v. Common Cause* in 2019. "It hardly follows from that principle that a person is entitled to have his political party achieve representation commensurate to its share of statewide support. Vote dilution in the one-person, one-vote cases refers to the idea that each vote must carry equal weight. That requirement does not extend to political parties; it does not mean that each party must be influential in proportion to the number of its supporters."

Our state Supreme Court has taken a different view. But even that court fell short of setting a clear standard that would explain why one vote might be worth more than another.

And no court is likely to convince the average person that a vote for a losing candidate ever carries more value than one cast for a winner.

Mitch Kokai is senior political analyst for the John Locke Foundation.

GOT AN OPINION?

Carolina Journal is accepting letters to the editor and guest opinions (op-eds)* on issues related to North Carolina. We cover the state from a limited-government and free-market perspective but will consider varying viewpoints, depending on relevance and quality. A good guideline for letters is 200-500 words and 550-800 words for op-eds. A letter to the editor is comment or disagreement with a published CJ piece; an op-ed is a guest opinion argument.

Please email any submissions to opinion editor
Ray Nothstine | rnothstine@lockehq.org

*We retain the right to edit or to not publish any submitted letters or op-eds.



Ask candidates these four questions

DR. TERRY STOOPS
CONTRIBUTOR

Election season is in full swing, and concerned citizens have started collecting information on candidates in preparation for the May 17 statewide primary and the Nov. 8 general election. When I encounter candidates who want my vote, I will ask them to answer the following four questions.

How do you plan to address learning loss?

A sobering report published by the N.C. Department of Public Instruction's Office of Learning Recovery and Acceleration used state test score data to assess the statewide academic impact of the loss of instructional time during the pandemic. Researchers concluded that the effect was negative "for all students, for all grades, for almost every subject (except English II)."

Government-imposed coronavirus mitigation measures harmed some student subgroups more than others. The performance of female students lagged, and the racial/ethnic achievement gap widened.

Economically disadvantaged middle school students, in particular, lost significant ground in reading and math. Even academically and intellectually gifted students struggled to maintain pre-pandemic levels of academic growth. Unsurprisingly, researchers concluded that schools offering in-person learning and targeted student support fared better than those compelled to remain in often substandard online learning environments.



While research is ongoing, the most promising academic interventions include intensive or "high-dosage" tutoring, summer academies and afterschool programs staffed with highly effective teachers, and, most importantly, a return to normal.

Do you favor state support for public, private, and home school options?

This year, North Carolina will reach a milestone that seemed like a pipe-dream just a decade ago. In 2012, around 13% of N.C. students attended a public charter, private, or home school. Thanks

in part to the family-focused policies enacted by the General Assembly over the last decade, an estimated 25% of students – one in four children – attended a school of choice this year.

But parents are not the only ones who have embraced the expansion of school choice. According to the January 2022 Civitas Poll, 81% of likely North Carolina voters agree that parents should have the ability to choose where their child attends school, while a meager 12% disagree. Support for parental choice is strong across all demographic, political, and ideological categories. Those who op-

pose it appear to spend much of their time on social media regurgitating long-debunked claims about the academic, social, and financial shortcomings of schools of choice.

The truth is that parents want their children to attend schools attuned to their unique needs and circumstances. Access to a variety of public, private, and home school options increases the likelihood that they will find it.

What is the role of parents in ensuring children receive a high-quality education?

When schools locked their

doors and initiated mandatory online learning, parents witnessed classroom instruction that fell far short of their expectations. Some parents were alarmed that teachers appeared to spend more time focused on political indoctrination and social justice activism than traditional course content. This produced a resurgence in parental advocacy, particularly at the school board level, and spawned dozens of grassroots organizations in North Carolina and beyond.

Some elected officials have embraced the parental empowerment movement. Superintendent of Public Instruction Catherine Truitt recently announced plans to convene a 48-member advisory committee that includes parents who selected one or more charter, private, and home school options for their children.

State lawmakers such as Rep. Hugh Blackwell have proposed academic transparency legislation to ensure that parents have easy access to lesson plans and instructional materials used in public school classrooms. Sadly, however, others pay little attention to parents who have the courage to speak out in support of policies and practices that they believe to be detrimental.

Schools thrive when educators and school leaders create an environment that nurtures family and community engagement. Nothing that a school does should be a mystery or beyond reproach. A parents' bill of rights is one way to guarantee that schools always place families first.

Do you read the outstanding content on JohnLocke.org and subscribe to Carolina Journal?

If you ask me, this is a deal-breaker.

Are there good answers to your inflation questions?

MICHAEL WALDEN
CONTRIBUTOR

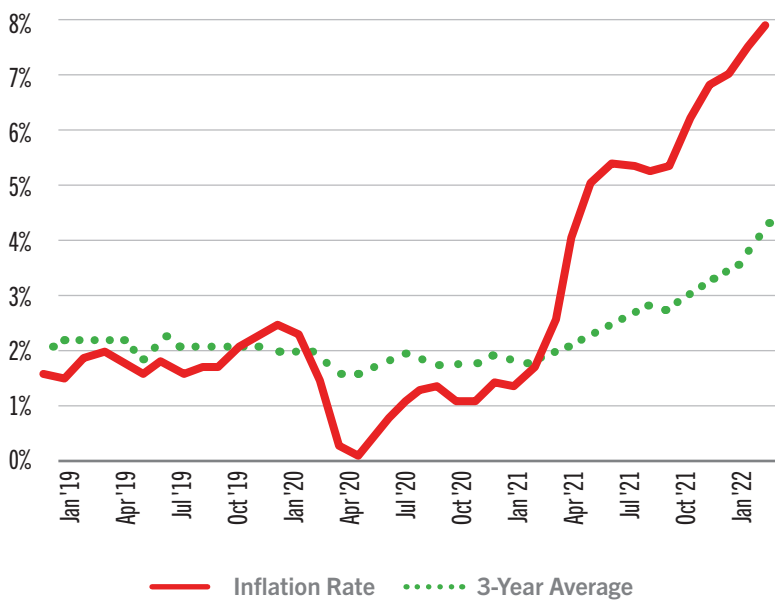
ACCORDING TO polls, inflation is the number one issue in the country. This is understandable. The most recent data show the inflation rate in the past year was 7.5%. In the 21st century, the annual inflation rate was above 3% only four times, and it never rose more than 4% until last year. In this column, I will answer several questions about inflation.

What is inflation? Inflation is the average increase in the prices of common products and services we purchase. Price changes of products or services that are more important to our budgets receive greater weight in the average. Inflation is expressed as a percentage. So a 7.5% inflation rate means the average weighted price of products and services rose 7.5%.

Why are we concerned about inflation? Inflation increases the cost of living. If your income rises less than the inflation rate, then your standard of living falls. Hence, if your income rose less than 7.5% in the last year, then economically you fell behind.

When was the last time the inflation rate was as high as to-

Inflation has climbed to a 40-year high



SOURCE: U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

day? In 1981 the inflation rate was 10.3%. In 1980 it was 13.5%

What's caused the jump in the inflation rate? There are two reasons. First is continuing problems with the "supply chain." This simply means it's taking longer to get many products to sellers' shelves. Also, the ongoing shortage of workers is adversely impacting

the availability of some services. Lower supply of many products and services means those that are available are worth more, meaning their price is higher.

The second reason has resulted from generous federal programs during the past two years. In 2020 and 2021 the federal government appropriated over \$5 trillion in a

variety of programs to help households, businesses, and institutions survive in the pandemic. The result is that there is money to spend. As consumers, especially, attempt to spend the money on a limited amount products and services, their actions put further upward pressure on prices.

Can't the government simply control price changes? Forty years ago, price controls were imposed by the federal government to deal with a similar inflation situation. There were two problems that emerged as a result.

Changes in prices serve as signals to tell firms how to adjust production to eliminate both surpluses and shortages. Controls on prices eliminate this important function. Also, some firms used schemes and even fraud to get around the controls. When the price controls were removed, the inflation rate tripled.

Then what can the government do to curtail inflation? The government agency that can have the quickest impact is the Federal Reserve (the "Fed"), which is the central bank of the country.

To reduce the inflation rate, the Fed will want to moderate consumer spending. The Fed will do this by raising interest rates – thereby making it more expensive for people to borrow and spend – as well as by pulling cash out of the

economy.

Are these actions by the Fed guaranteed to work? The Fed certainly has the tools to slow the economy and reduce the inflation rate. The problem is their actions can put the economy in reverse – meaning a recession. This is what happened 40 years ago when the inflation rate was in double digits. The Fed was able to reduce the inflation rate to 3% within three years, but the cost was two recessions in those three years.

How will these actions impact investments? Typically, the stock market reacts negatively to increases in interest rates. An exception is if equity investors expect the interest rate hikes will quickly subdue inflation. However, if stock market investors expect the Fed's actions will bring on a recession, stock prices would likely fall.

Inflation hasn't been a big worry in the economy for four decades. So many individuals are witnessing the debates about inflation for the first time. Hopefully, my questions and answers will help everyone decide how they will respond to the ongoing inflation battle.

Michael Walden is a Reynolds Distinguished Professor Emeritus at North Carolina State University.

Newspapers are failing as watchdogs, so that job becomes ours

JOHN TRUMP
MANAGING EDITOR



Blame the demise of American newspapers on anything you like. Choices abound.

Disappearing real estate ads and classifieds. A universal move to the internet. Plain old hubris, the refusal to believe a business model well more than 100 years old still works.

Denial.

“For as long as I can remember, newspaper publishers, editors, and the large corporations pulling the so-called strings have made innumerable and mostly ill-fated attempts to revive an industry and business plan that began cracking around the edges some 30 years ago. Now it’s crumbling in chunks.”

I wrote the above paragraph some five years ago.

Newspapers, at one time, were the proverbial gatekeepers, crucial cogs in maintaining the ideals of individual freedom and liberty, and in upholding the tenets of our Constitution.

And now they’re gone, for all intents and purposes. And now we suffer because no one is left to watch the store. Cash drawers are emptied, and shelves are plundered. Everyone who was supposed to watch the store is now gone.

This is what’s left.

In one recent case, the state auditor’s office found that a former accounting technician in



Newspapers, at one time, were the proverbial gatekeepers, crucial cogs in maintaining the ideals of individual freedom and liberty, and in upholding the tenets of our Constitution.

Spring Lake outside Fayetteville misappropriated more than \$430,000 in taxpayer funds for personal use. The investigation continues, at high levels, but Auditor Beth Wood’s office found more than \$36,000 in cash missing from the Revenue Department and the Recreation Department daily deposits, as well as questionable credit card purchases from town employees using nearly \$103,000 in town funds.

Earlier this month, the audi-

tor’s office found Johnston County Sheriff Steve Bizzell bought vehicles and gas masks without obtaining the proper written quotes, in violation of the county’s purchasing policy. Wood’s report said that, by not following this policy, the sheriff’s office potentially overpaid for these items, wasting taxpayer money.

Between January 2019 and April 2020, Carolina Journal reported, the Johnston sheriff’s office purchased equipment total-

ing \$262,000 without following the purchasing and bidding requirements required by the county’s purchasing policy. That policy requires at least three written quotes for any purchase over \$7,500. The sheriff’s office bought seven vehicles for \$250,049 and 40 gas masks totaling \$11,960, according to the report.

Taxpayer money that no one is watching. That’s money once largely protected by the work of the Fourth Estate, which is now mostly memories and discarded ideas. Forgotten ideals, really.

Two once-great newspapers covered those towns with blankets of newsprint, with a kind of resourceful diligence that becomes inherent in veteran reporters. Asking questions and then asking them again. Expecting answers from sources and refusing their silence. Those papers, while still retaining their names if not their buildings, have lost their heft. Calls and emails go unanswered or ignored, when someone deems to ask them. They often don’t, and it has become our problem.

In no way am I criticizing today’s reporters, as most are doing their best without resources and, in many cases, experienced editors and proper training. I spent most of my adult life in newspapers, some 25 years at dailies, including five in North Carolina. I knew what it was like then, and I know what it’s like now.

Ugly. That’s one word that comes to mind.

Privately funded journal-

ism projects and think tanks in some ways are filling the void, but mostly in niche ways and through elevated views over state capitals and Washington. But reporting at the local level is nearly lost. School boards and city councils, places where all government begins and radical — sometimes innovative — decisions are made.

I don’t have an answer to fix this, other than encouraging people to get involved in their local boards, committees, and commissions. Letting local officials know someone is watching. That there’s a price for corruption and malfeasance.

State Treasurer Dale Folwell told Carolina Journal he worries about the millions of taxpayer dollars that flow into the coffers of small towns, often lacking capable accountants and transparency. And Folwell, who serves as chairman of the LGC, told CJ the problem is not an easy fix because “you can’t legislate common sense and common courtesy.”

Folwell said it’s up to local citizens to become more involved to ensure their tax dollars aren’t squandered. “The communities have to be more engaged and interested in the process,” he said.

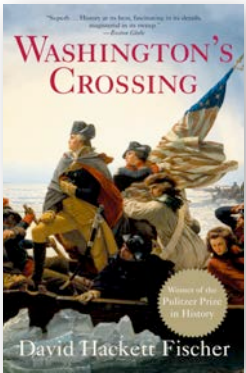
Words of wisdom, to be sure.

Keeping our local wallets safe from pickpockets is now on us. Newspapers can’t, or in some cases won’t, do it for us. As I wrote five years ago, what was once a chunk of solid rock, save for a couple of national newspapers, is now so much dust floating in the wind. Slowly vanishing, then soon gone.

BOOK REVIEWS: AMERICA'S HISTORY OF LIBERTY

By Ray Nothstine

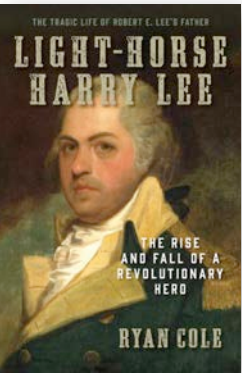
Almost all Carolina Journal readers love history, particularly stories about the glories of the American experiment and our own expansion of human freedom in this nation. Here are some book recommendations on that topic — that are not only great stories — but have deeply shaped my own understanding of America’s brand of liberty.



WASHINGTON’S CROSSING
David Hackett Fischer

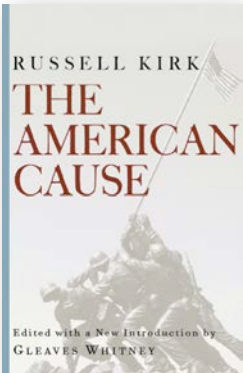
Most readers are familiar with “1776” by David McCullough, and many have read it. “Washington’s Crossing” is even better. Much better! Fischer won a Pulitzer Prize for the book in 2005. Washington’s crossing of the Delaware to attack the Hessian forces on Christmas Day is one of the seminal moments in American history. Nobody covers the entire saga, as well as the odds stacked against Washington, like Fischer.

An interesting tidbit is that Fischer defends the painting by Emanuel Leutze that has come under attack for its accuracy in recent decades.



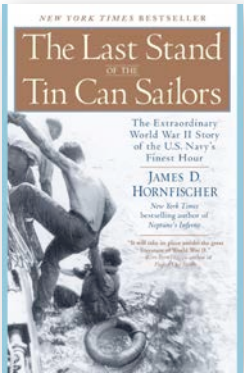
LIGHT-HORSE HARRY LEE: THE RISE AND FALL OF A REVOLUTIONARY HERO
Ryan Cole

Henry Lee III is the father of Confederate General Robert E. Lee, and his journey from war hero to poverty and scandal is a fascinating tale. Washington himself was very fond of Lee but kept his distance when he noticed the reckless spending schemes and debt Lee was piling up. Lee even spent time in debtor’s prison. At any rate, the book sheds a lot of light on some of the nuances and downfalls of a founding hero who remained loyal and defended American ideals despite his own personal failings.



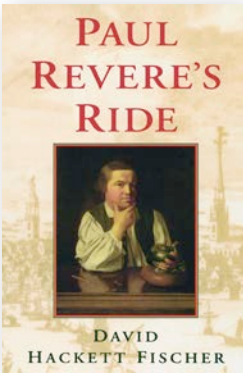
THE AMERICAN CAUSE
Russell Kirk

Few Americans can better explain the reasons that led to the American experiment and ordered liberty than Russell Kirk. The return to first principles is vital if our nation wants not just to recover a sense of civic pride but flourish as a society. I don’t think there is a better account that summarizes the moral, social, and economic principles that established the United States as an exceptional nation.



THE LAST STAND OF THE TIN CAN SAILORS
James D. Hornfischer

I’m throwing in a World War II-era book only because it’s a true masterpiece. This is by far the very best account of the Battle of Samar — in the Leyte Gulf. It’s very possible the reader will be moved to tears learning about the heroics of American sailors who battled overwhelming odds against a much larger Japanese armada in the Philippine Sea. Hornfischer, who unfortunately passed away prematurely last year, is still one of the greatest naval historians of all time. His book “The Fleet at Flood Tide” is worth reading as well.



PAUL REVERE’S RIDE
David Hackett Fischer

The anniversary of Paul Revere’s ride is coming up (April 18). As a kid, I always loved Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s poem “Paul Revere’s Ride.” Fischer’s book is a superb read not only on Paul Revere but about the men from Lexington and Concord who first took up arms against the British Empire. As James Madison reminds us, “The free men of America did not wait till usurped power had strengthened itself by exercise.”

Property rights are worth defending

JOHN HOOD
CONTRIBUTOR



There's always a cost to protecting property rights. No rational person has ever suggested otherwise. In free societies that place a high value on the individual right to own and control private property, it's more expensive for governments to build roads or public facilities. It's harder to piece together parcels of land for redevelopment. And what your neighbors choose to do with their property may annoy you.

These costs are well worth paying, however, because the alternative is a more stagnant and stultifying society. If you're unsure whether some future politician or bureaucrat might confiscate your property, or diminish its value through capricious regulation, you're less likely to invest significant resources in it. And you're less free to live as you choose.

An underappreciated accomplishment over the past decade is that North Carolina's protection of property rights has gotten a lot



COURTESY CATHERINE H. BARBER MEMORIAL SHELTER

When the zoning board of Wilkesboro denied a permit for a homeless shelter to expand, the shelter went to court and won.

stronger. Still, each leap forward drew passionate critics.

When in 2012 the General Assembly essentially did away with forced annexation, critics predict-

ed dire economic and financial consequences for cities and towns. When the N.C. Supreme Court struck down the state's nearly 30-year-old Map Act in 2016, crit-

ics predicted that having to compensate people in the path of future roads for government restrictions on the use of their land would make road-building inefficient and unwieldy.

Neither objection held water, in my view. North Carolina's annexation and road-corridor regulations were wildly out of step with those of most other states, where somehow municipalities and highway departments managed to deliver their services without relying on unjust laws.

Our latest leap forward in property-rights protections came in December, in a federal court case involving a homeless shelter in North Wilkesboro.

The Catherine H. Barber Memorial Shelter opened its doors in the Wilkes County town more than three decades ago. When board members expressed a need for a larger space to accommodate the growing needs of the shelter, a local dentist and his wife stepped up to donate a two-story office building.

Barber Shelter officials were delighted — until the local zoning board denied its application for a permit, citing a potential loss of

property value among neighboring parcels as well as an alleged threat to public health because of the shelter's location on a busy highway.

Rather than take it on the chin, the Barber Shelter took the zoning board to court, arguing that other businesses would have received permits to operate in the same location. District Court Judge Kenneth Bell agreed, writing that the board "apparently believes — incorrectly — that it can say the magic words 'traffic and safety' and this Court will rubber stamp the classification no matter the facts."

Examining those facts, Bell concluded that "North Wilkesboro intentionally treated the Shelter differently from other similarly situated uses, and there is no rational basis for the difference in treatment."

To their credit, town leaders decided not to appeal and will pay \$180,000 in attorney fees. The Barber Shelter is relocating as planned. And local officials in North Carolina and beyond got a clear message: infringing on property rights may be costly — for you.

Sidelined workers help fuel inflation

BY JOHN HOOD

WHAT'S THE HOTTEST political issue right now? According to recent poll results, it's inflation. Welcome to the 1970s, folks.

When inflation ramps up, it often outranks other issues in political salience for two interrelated reasons. First, it's highly visible and affects most of us directly. Second, because the best definition of inflation is too much money chasing too few goods, it has a broad range of plausible causes and remedies — which means we can all grab our favorite hobbyhorse from the corner and ride it for a good long while.

Too much money? Well, that means the Federal Reserve has pumped up the economy with too much credit, or that the federal government has run massive deficits to fund excessive "stimulus" schemes. Too few goods (and services)? That means COVID and the resulting restrictions have screwed up our supply chains, or that workers need more child care or other government help so they can fill jobs, or that COVID-era subsidies and regulations have kept too many workers on the sidelines of the labor market, crimping supply even as they spend stimulus dollars to boost demand.

BY THE NUMBERS

59.4%

Labor-force participation rate for North Carolina in December.

Let's run with that last causal narrative for a moment. Here in North Carolina, the headline U-3 unemployment rate in December was 3.7%, down from 6.1% a year ago and 13.5% at the height of the brief but painful COVID recession. That represents lots of shuttered businesses reopening, new businesses starting, and sidelined workers coming back to work.

Not nearly enough of the latter, however. If you look only at the U-3 rate, you miss that. The share of working-age North Carolinians who are either employed or actively looking for work, a measure called labor-force participation, was 59.4% in December. That's also a significant improvement from the April 2020 rate (56.2%). But in February 2020, it was 61.3%.

I don't think there's a magic wand we can wave to make the labor shortage go away. I remain convinced that politicians offered too many subsidies for too long, through expanded unemployment insurance

and other means, inducing workers on the margin to stay home. Still, those effects have largely run their course. Most jurisdictions and establishments are also lifting COVID restrictions, including whatever vaccine, social distancing, and mask mandates they may have imposed. That will help, though not instantaneously.

Looking beyond short-term remedies, there's plenty of evidence that many potential workers face a range of structural obstacles to becoming gainfully employed. Some were poorly served by schools and lack basic skills. Some have untreated mental illnesses and addictions. Some

would like to enter new, higher-paid occupations or start their own small businesses but are stymied by unwise occupational-licensing laws and other regulations. A recent study by Utah State University professor Alicia Plemmons found that states with more burdensome licensing laws tend to fare worse in business starts and employment than do states with freer labor markets.

In the 1970s, high marginal tax rates were a big factor on the supply side of inflation. Today, it's more likely to be regulation. The right response is still the right response, however: unshackle supply.

I am woman...

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chromosomes. I'm a woman.

A man is an adult male human with one X and one Y chromosome. Regardless of how Lia Thomas identifies, what he calls himself, or what others call him, he is a man. We're supposed to celebrate Thomas beating a bunch of women as if he shattered some sort of glass ceiling. It's ridiculous. Worse, it's dangerous because we've just turned women's athletics into a man's world for any guy who can't compete against his X-Y equals.

Blackburn's question was part of a larger exchange regarding the 1996 landmark case about the Virginia Military Institute's male-only admission policy. Read Washington Examiner chief political corre-

spondent Byron York's column for more on the ramifications of the inability to differentiate between a man and woman.

Jackson's response is an example of the progressive left's disingenuous and dangerous word play to keep America divided and the left in power. Even leftist feminist favorite Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg acknowledged biological differences in the VMI case: "Physical differences between men and women, however, are enduring: 'The two sexes are not fungible.'" But that was over 25 years ago.

Girl power is so yesterday. Based on how so-called feminists have treated conservative women over the last decade, we've always known that their support for women's rights was just a convenient conduit for leftists to seize power. Something that could be tossed aside like a cheap, out-of-season handbag when no longer needed. That time is now. Look how quickly they abandoned Afghani women, who can no longer go out without a chaperone nor



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go to secondary school, or suburban moms in the U.S. who show concern over what their kids are learning in school.

They gaslight women by claiming the United States is the oppressor because the new power structure is transgender. Lia Thomas is a high-profile example of how it works. An average collegiate male athlete (ranked No. 462 in swimming) decides he's going to be a woman, now competes against female athletes, wins commandingly, rockets to No. 1 in the

sport, and proudly stands on the podium as if all of it is fine and natural. Our elite institutions — academia, the media, the NCAA, and government — champion the charade. If the rest of us don't, then we're proof that the U.S. is oppressive, intolerant, transphobic, evil, or whatever word du jour.

In the early 1970s my goal in life was to be a bat boy for the St. Louis Cardinals. I met all requirements save one; I wasn't a boy. I sent in my application anyway. The front office sent me a polite response thanking me for my interest, but ultimately reminded me of my gender. (I wish I had kept the letter!) I didn't pretend to be a boy, and no one said about needing a biologist to verify.

I'm sure I wasn't the only little girl with that dream. Eventually the Cardinals changed their policy and began accepting girls. By that time, I'd moved on. Rather than be angry that my dream didn't come true, I choose to believe I played a small part in the change that made the dream come true for a young

girl who came along behind me. Call it "wisdom born of pain."

I didn't get to play baseball or be a bat boy, but as a young girl I excelled at softball and played through high school and collegiate intramurals. I wouldn't have had the opportunity, nor fond memories, had boys played with me or against me. I wasn't that good.

I'm not a fan of Title IX, nor identity politics for that matter, but I'm even less a fan of the dishonest and disingenuous discourse surrounding athletes like Lia Thomas. I don't care if I pay a price for not going along with the charade. Hear me roar: Lia Thomas is a biological man who shouldn't be competing against females. Absent an immediate infusion of truth and wisdom, women are on the verge of losing much of what we've gained.

Confession — I did take advanced biology in high school and college, and I'm old enough to have enjoyed Reddy's signature tune when it was at the top of the charts.

16 PHOTO GALLERY

SCENES FROM THE CAROLINA LIBERTY CONFERENCE

The 2022 Carolina Liberty Conference, sponsored by the John Locke Foundation, was held at the Raleigh Marriott Crabtree Valley on Feb. 25 and 26.

CLC, which sold out, is North Carolina's largest center-right gathering of its kind and regarded as the premier liberty-oriented conference in the state. The two-day event brought together 300 activists, legislators, and engaged people to network, learn, and celebrate freedom-minded ideas.

Featured speakers this year included Seth Dillon, CEO of the Babylon Bee, and Andy Puzder, former CEO of CKE restaurants, as well as state lawmakers and leaders, including House Speaker Tim Moore, R-Cleveland, and Senate leader Phil Berger, R-Rockingham.



Amy O. Cooke speaks at sold out 2022 Carolina Liberty Conference, held at Raleigh Marriott Crabtree Valley



House Speaker Tim Moore, R-Cleveland



Andy Puzder, former CEO of CKE restaurants



Carolina Journal's Donna King and ABC 11's Jonah Kaplan



Pat McCrory



Marjorie Eastman



Mark Walker



McCrory, Walker, and Eastman



Seth Dillon, Babylon Bee CEO



Senate Leader Phil Berger, R-Rockingham



Libby Spain of the John Locke Foundation introduces child to Thomas Jefferson and George Washington

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