



North Carolina Spirits Association

Legislative Report
March 8, 2024

Primary Election Report

March 5 marked the primary election date for North Carolina, with thousands of voters casting ballots in races for president, governor, lieutenant governor, state legislative primaries, and Congress. Voters also voted in local races across the State. Several races will head to a primary runoff election, to be held May 14, 2024. Here are the latest statewide results from the North Carolina's primary election, with some commentary about certain results and the upcoming general elections.

Council of State Races

Democrat Primary for Governor:

Josh Stein – 69.64%

Mike Morgan – 14.1%

Republican Primary for Governor:

Mark Robinson – 64.85%

Dale Folwell – 19.16%

Bill Graham – 16%

As expected, Attorney General Josh Stein and Lt. Governor Mark Robinson handily won their party's Gubernatorial nominations. The Republican race was slightly more competitive but the outcome for each was never seriously in doubt. This will be the most competitive Gubernatorial campaign in the country this fall.

Lt. Governor Democrat Primary:

Rachel Hunt – 70.36%

Ben Clark – 16.47%

Mark H. Robinson – 13.17%

Lt. Governor Republican Primary:

Hal Weatherman – 19.61%

Jim O'Neill - 15.85%

Deanna Ballard – 14.96%

Democrat Senator Rachel Hunt from Mecklenburg County and daughter of former North Carolina Governor Jim Hunt won the Democrat primary over former Senator Ben Clark of Hoke County. While Senator Hunt was the favorite, the margin was wider than expected. On the

Republican side, former Chief of Staff to Dan Forest Hal Weatherman took home first place ahead of Forsyth County DA and the 2020 Republican nominee for Attorney General Jim O’Neill. Former State Senator Deanna Ballard came in a close third, but Weatherman and O’Neill will head to a runoff in May with no candidate securing 30%. Having run statewide three times, the advantage in the runoff will be with O’Neill.

Attorney General Democrat Primary:

Jeff Jackson – 54.85%

Satana Deberry – 33.08%

Tim Dunn – 12.07%

Congressman Jeff Jackson won the hard-fought Democrat nomination over Durham’s District Attorney to take on Republican Congressman Dan Bishop in what is sure to be a marquee race this fall.

State Auditor Republican Primary:

Jack Clark – 23.24%

Dave Boliek – 22.12%

General Assembly staffer Jack Clark came out ahead of attorney and University of North Carolina Chapell Hill Board of Trustee member Dave Boliek for this open seat. This race will also head to a runoff with Boliek likely having the advantage. The Democrat nominee was set when Governor Cooper replaced Beth Wood with Jessica Holmes after Wood’s resignation in December.

Commissioner of Insurance Democrat Primary:

Natasha Marcus – 77.61%

David Wheeler – 22.39%

Commissioner of Insurance Republican Primary:

Mike Causey – 60.59%

Andrew Marcus – 21.91%

C. Robert Brawley – 17.50%

Current State Senator Natasha Marcus will take on incumbent Insurance Commissioner Mike Causey this fall who survived two primary challengers. Marcus will raise money and put up a fight with Mike Causey so this will be an interesting race to watch but Causey certainly starts off with strong prospects to keep his position.

Commissioner of Labor Republican Primary:

Luke Farley – 36.92%

Jon Hardister – 28.07%

Chuck Stanley – 21.60%

Former Labor Commissioner Cherrie Berry’s endorsed candidate and labor lawyer Luke Farley won over current Labor Commissioner Josh Dobson’s endorsed candidate NC Representative

Jon Hardister. Farley avoided a runoff and will take on the Democrat, former Charlotte City Councilman Braxton Winston.

Secretary of State Republican Primary:

Chad Brown – 43.28%

Christine Villaverde – 29.97%

Jesse Thomas – 26.75%

Gaston County Commissioner Chad Brown won the nomination to take on longtime incumbent Elaine Marshall.

Superintendent of Public Instruction Democrat Primary:

Mo Green – 65.88%

C.R. Katie Eddings - 24.88%

Superintendent of Public Instruction Republican Primary:

Michelle Morrow – 52.10%

Catherine Truitt – 47.90%

In the biggest upset of the night, Michelle Morrow took out the incumbent Catherine Truitt. Morrow, a nurse, will go up against former Guilford County Schools Superintendent Mo Green.

NC Treasurer Democrat Primary:

Wesley Harris – 66.61%

Gabe Esparza – 33.39%

NC Treasurer Republican Primary:

Brad Briner – 39.94%

Rachel Johnson – 34.51%

A.J. Daoud – 25.55%

Mecklenburg County State Representative Wesley Harris with a PhD in Economics will battle it out with Investment Professional Brad Briner for the ability to invest the state's pension fund, oversee the state's healthcare plans and chair the Local Government Commission.

Judicial/Appellate

NC Supreme Court Associate Justice Seat 6 Democrat Primary

Allison Riggs – 69.11%

Lora Christine Cabbage – 30.89%

Governor Cooper appointee and incumbent Justice Riggs over former Lora Christine Cabbage, who has served as an ADA, Assistant AG and as a District and Superior Court Judge. The Republican candidate, Judge Jefferson Griffin, did not have a primary. This race is sure to be expensive as the Democrats try to chip at the Republican majority on the State Supreme Court.

NC Court of Appeals Judge Seat 15

Chris Freeman – 62.64%

Hunter Murphy – 37.36%

The incumbent, Judge Hunter Murphy, was defeated by District Court Judge Chris Freeman of Rockingham and Caswell County. Judge Freeman will be running for the seat against Democrat Martin Moore, a Buncombe County Commissioner.

General Assembly Races to Watch

NC House

District 14 Republican Primary:

Wyatt Gable – 50.98%

George Cleveland – 49.02%

10-term Representative Cleveland from Onslow County was upset on Tuesday night by 21-year-old ECU college student Wyatt Gable. This is a safe Republican seat so Gable will very likely be joining the NC House in January of 2024.

District 25 Republican Primary:

Allen Chesser – 66.57%

Yvonne McLeod – 33.43%

First-term Representative Allen Chesser easily dispatched his opponent in a rematch of the 2022 primary that was decided by 300 votes. This is a seat that leans Republican but is competitive, but Rep. Chesser retains the advantage to win re-election in November.

District 27 Democrat Primary:

Rodney Pierce – 50.18%

Michael Wray – 49.82%

10-term incumbent Representative Michael Wray from Halifax lost by 42 votes. He was a target of the Young Democrats and other groups for his support of some Republican legislation.

District 60 Democrat Primary:

Cecil Brockman – 50.69%

James Adams – 49.32%

5-term incumbent Cecil Brockman held onto the Democratic nomination for this house seat in Guilford County. He was targeted as well by the Young Democrats and other groups for his votes across the aisle.

District 62 Republican Primary:

John Blust – 34.11%

Britt Moore – 19.73%
Michelle Bardsley 18.98%
Ann Schneider 16.69%
Jaxon Barber – 10.49%

Former State Senator and State Representative John Blust won the Republican nomination to replace Rep. Hardister in this Guilford County NC House seat due to Hardister's run for Labor Commissioner. This is a safe Republican seat so it is very likely that Blust will rejoin the legislature in January.

District 73 Republican Primary:

Johnathan Almond – 54.43%
Holly Edwards – 46.57%

This race was decided by ~600 votes for the chance to run against freshman incumbent Democrat Representative Diamond Staton-Williams. Staton-Williams won a competitive seat in 2022 but this district has moved to the right after the redraw.

District 80 Republican Primary:

Sam Watford – 50.40%
Eddie Gallimore – 49.60%

4 term Davidson County Representative Sam Watford squeaked by his primary opponent but will cruise to re-election in November in this safe Republican seat.

District 82 Republican Primary:

Brian Echevarria – 50.94%
Kevin Crutchfield – 49.06%

Freshman Representative Crutchfield lost his primary by 171 votes to Echevarria. Echevarria lost a competitive NC House seat in 2022 but was carried by Lt. Governor Mark Robinson's endorsement in the primary against Rep. Crutchfield.

District 83 Republican Primary:

Grant Campbell – 52.27%
Brad Jenkins – 47.73%

Physician and Veteran Grant Cambell won the primary to replace Rep. Kristen Baker in this Cabarrus and Rowan County seat in the House. He was endorsed by Rep. Kristen Baker and Rep. Kevin Crutchfield.

District 94 Republican Primary:

Blair Eddins – 43.33%
Stoney Greene – 31.02%

Businessman and Farmer Blair Eddins won this primary to replace Rep. Jeffrey Elmore, who ran for Lt. Governor instead of running for re-election to the NC House.

District 98 Democrat Primary:

Beth Gardner Helfrich – 65.54%

Lisa Jewel – 34.46%

Helfrich won the Democrat nomination for the most competitive seat in the NC House. Rep. Bradford is the incumbent but ran for Congress and lost that primary. Melinda Bales, the Mayor of Huntersville, ran unopposed for the Republican nomination. This will be a tightly contested and hard-fought campaign.

District 105 Democrat Primary:

Nicole Sidman – 57.26%

Yolanda Holmes – 37.97%

Nicole Sidman won the Democrat nomination to take on Democrat-turned-Republican Representative Tricia Cotham in what will be a hotly contested race in November.

District 111 Republican Primary:

Paul Scott – 34.28%

David Allen – 30.48%

In an upset, Pastor and Rutherford County School Board member Paul Scott beat David Allen to succeed Speaker Tim Moore in the NC House. Allen was the Speaker's preferred candidate, so this outcome was unexpected.

NC Senate

District 3 Republican Primary:

Bob Brinson – 54.40%

Michael Speciale – 45.60%

New Bern Alderman Bob Brinson beat former State Representative Michael Speciale in a bid to succeed Senator Jim Perry in this safe Republican seat.

District 13 Republican Primary:

Scott Lassiter – 52.97%

Vicki Harry – 47.03%

Lassiter bested Vicki Harry in this Wake County primary for the Republican nomination to run against freshman Senator Lisa Grafstein. This seat leans Democrat but could be competitive.

District 22 Democrat Primary:

Sophia Chitlik – 57.55%

Mike Woodard – 42.45%

6 term Senator Mike Woodard of Durham lost his bid for the Democrat nomination. He is a leader on transportation issues and tries to work with Republicans at times, likely leading to dissatisfaction in this heavily Democratic district.

District 42 Republican Primary:

Stacie McGinn – 51.70%

Jaime Daniell – 48.30%

Attorney and Business Executive, McGinn won the Republican nomination for the seat currently held by Senator Rachel Hunt, now the Democrat nominee for Lt. Governor. This seat was redrawn last year, and although it is competitive, it leans slightly Democrat.

Congressional Primaries

First Congressional District

Republican Primary

Laurie Buckhout – 53%

Sandy Smith – 46%

Laurie Buckhout won the Republican nomination, setting up a general election contest against incumbent Democrat Don Davis in what is widely seen as the most competitive Congressional race in North Carolina.

Second Congressional District

Democratic Primary

Rep. Deborah Ross – 93%

Michael Camero – 6%

Republican Primary

Alan Swain – 59%

Eugene Douglas – 22%

Robert Vergara – 17%

Incumbent Rep. Deborah Ross cruised to an easy reelection in one of only two contested Democratic Congressional primaries. She is a favorite against former Congressional Candidate Alan Swain in a heavily Democratic-leaning district.

Third Congressional District

Incumbent Rep. Greg Murphy is defacto re-elected as he faced no primary or general election opponent.

Fourth Congressional District

Republican Primary

Eric Blakenburg – 70%

Mahesh Ganorkar – 29%

Incumbent Rep. Valerie Foushee (D) is almost certain to be re-elected in this strong Democratic-leaning district.

Fifth Congressional District

Republican Primary

Rep. Virginia Foxx – 67%

Ryan Mayberry – 32%

Incumbent Rep. Virginia Foxx won her primary easily and is heavily favored over Democratic challenger Chuck Hubbard in November.

Sixth Congressional District

Republican Primary

Addison McDowell – 26%

Mark Walker – 24%

Christian Castelli – 21%

Bo Hines – 14%

Jay Wagner – 9%

Mary Ann Contogiannis – 5%

Political newcomer Addison McDowell, who received an endorsement from former President Donald Trump, and former Rep. Mark Walker will advance to the runoff. The winner will face no Democratic opponent in November for the Congressional seat.

Seventh Congressional District

Republican Incumbent Rep. David Rouzer will face Democrat Marlando Pridgen. The seat is rated as Safe Republican.

Eighth Congressional District

Republican Primary

Mark Harris – 30%

Allan Baucom – 27%

John Bradford – 17%

Don Brown – 10%

Leigh Brown – 9%

Chris Maples – 4%

Pastor and former Congressional Candidate Mark Harris narrowly avoided a runoff in this heavily contested seat. Mark Harris won election to the seat in 2018, only to see the election nullified by the State Board of Elections due to an illegal balloting harvesting operation that his campaign operated. Mark Harris will face Democrat Justin Dues in November, but the seat leans heavily Republican. Former Rep. John Bradford came in third place in the primary election.

Ninth Congressional District

Republican Primary

Rep. Richard Hudson – 83%

Tony Tarazon – 16%

Incumbent Congressman Rep. Richard Hudson easily won his primary and is expected to beat democratic challenger Nigel Bristow in November. Rep. Hudson is currently the chair of the National Republican Congressional Committee and manages the political operation of Congressional Republicans.

Tenth Congressional District

Republican Primary

Pat Harrigan – 41%

Grey Mills – 38%

Brooke McGowan – 10%

Charles Eller – 6%

Diana Jimison – 3%

Green Beret and former Congressional candidate Harrigan narrowly defeated State House member Rep. Grey Mills to win the Republican primary in an election that featured massive outside spending on both sides. Harrigan will face Ralph Scott Jr. for the vacant congressional seat. Patrick McHenry (R) had held the seat until he announced he would not run for reelection to Congress in December 2022.

Eleventh Congressional District

Republican Primary

Rep. Chuck Edwards – 68%

Christian Reagan – 31%

Incumbent Rep. Chuck Edwards won his primary and is expected to best Democratic challenger State House Rep. Caleb Rudow in the General Election.

Twelfth Congressional District

With no primary competition, incumbent Democrat Rep. Alma Adams will face Republican Amir Ali in November. The seat is rated as Safe Democrat.

Thirteenth Congressional District

Republican Primary

Kelly Daughtry – 27%

Brad Knott – 18%

Fred Von Canon – 17%

DeVan Barbour – 15%

Josh McConkey – 7%

Kenny Xu – 4%

David Dixon – 2%

Matt Shoemaker – 2%

Chris Baker – 1%

Eric Stevenson – 1%

Marcus Dellinger – 0.9%

Siddhanth Sharma – 0.7%

James Phillips – 0.6%

Steve Von Loor – 0.5%

Kelly Daughtry and Brad Knott have advanced to the runoff for the Republican nomination. Given the large number of candidates and high level of spending in the election, a runoff was widely expected in this race. The runoff election will be held on May 14th. The winner will face Democrat Frank Pierce in November in a seat that is viewed a favorable for the Republican nominee.

Fourteenth Congressional District

Democratic Primary

Pam Genant – 60%

Brendan Maginnis – 39%

Republican Primary

Tim Moore – 75%

Jeff Gregory – 12%

Lillian Joseph – 12%

Republican State House Speaker Rep. Tim Moore easily won his primary and will go on to face Democrat Pam Genant. Speaker Moore is heavily favored in the conservative-leaning district.

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