

2020 ELECTION GUIDE

A SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT TO THE RICHMOND COUNTY DAILY JOURNAL

INDEX:

Pg1: National

Pg2: State

Pg3: State, County Commissioners

Pg4: County Commissioners

Trump vs. Biden: Where they stand on health, economy, more

WASHINGTON (AP) — Amid the tumult of the 2020 presidential campaign, one dynamic has remained constant: The Nov. 3 election offers voters a choice between substantially different policy paths.

President Donald Trump, like many fellow Republicans, holds out tax reductions and regulatory cuts as economic imperatives and frames himself as a conservative champion in the culture wars. The president has offered few details about how he would pull the levers of government in a second term. His most consistent argument focuses on stopping Democratic opponent Joe Biden and his party from pushing U.S. policy leftward.

Biden, for his part, is not the socialist caricature depicted by Trump. But he is every bit a center-left Democrat who frames the federal government as the force to combat the coronavirus, rebuild the economy and address centuries of institutional racism and systemic inequalities. The former vice president and U.S. senator also offers his deal-making past as evidence he can do it again from the Oval Office.

A look at where the rivals stand on key issues:

ECONOMY, TAXES

Low unemployment and a soaring stock market were Trump's calling cards before the pandemic. While the stock market has clawed its way back after cratering in the early weeks of the crisis, unemployment stands at 7.9%, and the nearly 10 million jobs that remain lost since the pandemic began exceed the number that the nation shed during the entire 2008-2009 Great Recession.

Trump has predicted that the U.S. economy will rebound in the third and fourth quarters of this year and is set to take off like a "rocket ship" in 2021. He promises that a coronavirus vaccine or effective therapeutics will soon be available, allowing life to get back to normal. His push for a payroll tax cut over the summer was thwarted by stiff bipartisan opposition. But winning a second term — and a mandate from voters — could help him resurrect the idea.

First and foremost, Biden argues that the economy cannot fully recover until COVID-19 is contained. For the long-term recovery, he pitches sweeping federal action to avoid an extended recession and to address longstanding wealth inequality that disproportionately affects nonwhite Americans.

His biggest-ticket plans include a \$2 trillion, four-year push to eliminate carbon pollution in the U.S. energy grid by 2035 and a new government health insurance plan open to all working-age Americans (with generous subsidies). He proposes new spending on education, infrastructure and small businesses, along with raising the national minimum wage to \$15 an hour.

Biden would cover some but not all of the new costs by rolling back much of the 2017 GOP tax overhaul. He wants a corporate income tax rate of 28% (lower than before but higher than now) and broad income and payroll tax hikes for individuals with more than \$400,000 of annual taxable income. All that would generate an estimated \$4 trillion or more over 10 years.

Biden frames immigration as an economic matter as well. He wants to expand legal immigration slots and offer a citizenship path for about 11 million residents who are in the country illegally but who, Biden notes, are already economic contributors as workers and consumers.

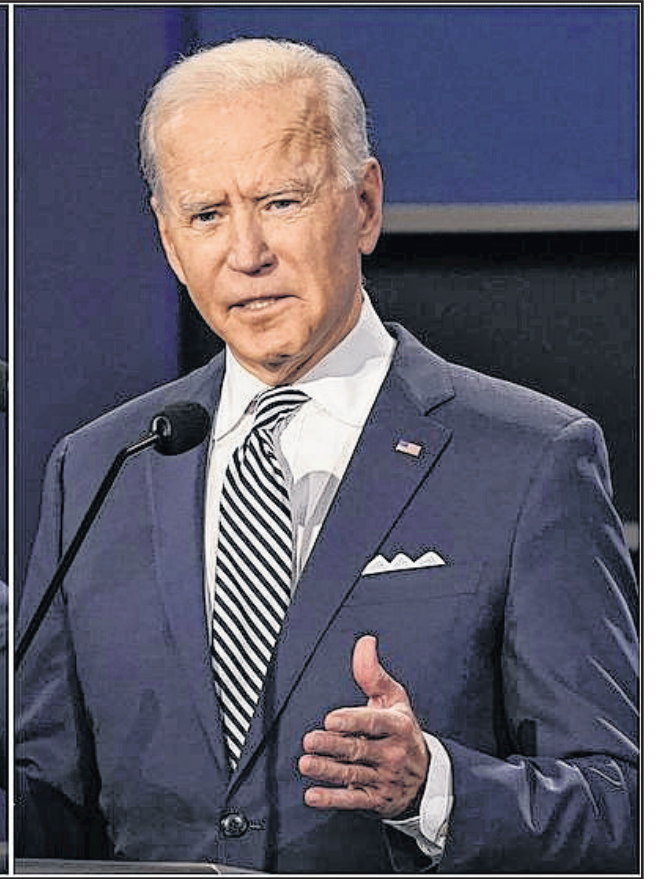
HEALTH CARE

As a candidate for the White House, Trump promised that he would "immediately" replace President Barack Obama's health care law with a plan of his own that would provide "insurance for everybody." Americans are still waiting for his plan.

Trump recently returned to health care amid disapproval of his administration's handling of the coronavirus pandemic and growing uncertainty about the future of the Affordable Care Act, which his administration is asking the Supreme Court to overturn. He is reiterating his 4-year-old promises for quality health care at affordable prices, lower prescription drug costs, more consumer choice and greater transparency.

He also announced executive orders calling for an end to surprise medical bills and declaring it the policy of the U.S. government to protect people with preexisting conditions, even if Obamacare is struck down. However, protections for preexisting conditions are already the law, and Trump would have to go to Congress to cement a new policy through legislation. In the first presidential debate, Trump also held out the repeal of Obamacare's individual mandate to have health insurance as significant progress, while ignoring questions about his lack of a comprehensive plan.

Biden wants to expand Obama's law to provide more generous coverage to a greater number of people and add a "Medicare-like public option" that would compete with private insurers and be available to working-age Americans. Biden estimates that would cost about \$750 billion over 10 years. That positions Biden between Trump, who wants to scrap the 2010 law, and progressives, who want a single-payer system to replace private insurance altogether. Biden sees his



The Associated Press

Amid the tumult of the 2020 presidential campaign, one dynamic has remained constant: The Nov. 3 election offers voters a choice between substantially different policy paths.

approach as the next step toward universal coverage and one he could get through Congress.

Biden also has sought to turn the current Supreme Court vacancy into a health care matter, noting that the late liberal Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was a key vote in upholding the 2010 health care law, while Trump's nominee, federal appellate Judge Amy Coney Barrett, has criticized the court's reasoning in that decision.

CORONAVIRUS

Over the course of the summer, Trump went from acknowledging that the pandemic may "get worse before it gets better" to declaring that the U.S. is "rounding the corner" on the crisis. Then he tested positive for the virus himself.

The pandemic remains the biggest obstacle for his reelection hopes, and his bout with the virus just weeks before Election Day only brightened the spotlight on the issue.

Roughly 7 in 10 Americans think the nation is on the wrong track, and just 39% of Americans approve of Trump's handling of the crisis that has killed more than 207,000 people in the U.S., according to a recent poll The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Congress approved about \$3 trillion in coronavirus relief in March and April, and Democrats and the White House have been at loggerheads over another significant round of funding, with Trump sending mixed messages on what he wants.

Trump has largely placed responsibility with governors for leading the response.

Biden draws some of his sharpest contrasts with Trump on the pandemic, arguing that the presidency and federal government exist for such crises and that Trump has been an abject failure responsible for tens of thousands of preventable deaths.

Biden endorses generous federal spending to help businesses and individuals, along with state and local governments. He's also promised aggressive use of the Defense Production Act, a wartime law a president can use to direct certain private-sector activity. Additionally, Biden promises to elevate the government's scientists and physicians to communicate a consistent message to the public, and he would have the U.S. rejoin the World Health Organization. He's also willing to use executive power for a national mask mandate, but whether that is enforceable is questionable.

ABORTION

Years before his run for the White House, Trump described himself as a strong abortion rights proponent. But since coming to Washington, he has been cheered by anti-abortion groups for his administration's efforts to restrict access to the procedure.

As a candidate and as president, Trump has consistently expressed his opposition to the landmark Roe v. Wade decision that legalized abortion nationwide and said the issue should be decided by states.

He has expressed support for the Hyde Amendment, which prohibits Medicaid from being used to pay for abortions in most circumstances, and he's sought to restrict access to two drugs that are used to induce abortions in the first 10 weeks of pregnancies.

In his Republican National Convention speech in August, Trump declared that "children, born and unborn, have a God-given right to life." Nominating Barrett, a 7th Circuit Court of Appeals judge, has the

anti-abortion movement hopeful that the high court — should she win confirmation — will tilt decisively to the right and pave the way for the court to eventually overturn the Roe case.

Biden has declined to offer his own list of prospective Supreme Court nominees, but he's said repeatedly that he supports Roe v. Wade's finding that the Constitution establishes a woman's right to terminate a pregnancy. He's endorsed calls for Congress to codify that right, a move that would keep abortion legal statutorily even if the court struck down the constitutional protections.

A practicing Catholic, Biden talked publicly for years of his personal struggle over abortion as a moral issue. He cited that as a reason he supported the Hyde Amendment ban on federal taxpayer funding for abortion services. But he reversed that position early in his 2020 campaign after coming under pressure from women's groups and Democratic activists. Biden said he wasn't bowing to pressure but instead argued that Republican legislatures around the country had restricted abortion access to the point that the Hyde Amendment had become an untenable barrier for poor or working-class women to access a constitutional right.

TRADE

Trump views the signing of two major trade deals — an updated pact with Mexico and Canada and Phase 1 of a China agreement — as signature achievements of his presidency. U.S. and China signed Phase 1 in January, less than two months before the pandemic put an enormous strain on U.S.-China relations. Trump says Phase 1 led to China buying roughly \$200 billion over two years in U.S. agricultural products, energy and other American products. In return, the U.S. canceled planned U.S. tariffs on Chinese-made smartphones, toys and laptop computers. The U.S. also cut in half, to 7.5%, the tariff rate levied on \$120 billion in other China imports.

Phase 2 of the deal is expected to focus on some tougher issues between the countries, including Trump's wish to get China to stop subsidizing its state-owned enterprises. But for Trump, who has come to frequently refer to the coronavirus as the "China virus," it remains to be seen whether he will be able to effectively reengage Beijing on trade. Trump recently said he's currently "not interested" in talking to China.

Biden has joined a growing bipartisan embrace of "fair trade" abroad — a twist on decades of "free trade" talk as Republican and Democratic administrations alike expanded international trade. Biden wants to juice U.S. manufacturing by directing \$400 billion of federal government purchases to domestic firms (part of that for buying pandemic supplies) over a four-year term.

He wants \$300 billion in new support for U.S. technology firms' research and development. Biden says the new domestic spending must come before he enters into any new international trade deals. He pledges tough negotiations with China, the world's other economic superpower, on trade and intellectual property matters. China, like the U.S., is not yet a member of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the multilateral trade agreement that Biden advocated for when he was vice president.

Tillis vs. Cunningham: U.S. Senate race tight

Republican Sen. Thom Tillis and Democrat Cal Cunningham are locked in a toss-up Senate race in North Carolina, where roughly a quarter of voters say the challenger's extramarital affair is important in their vote but with far more saying control of the Senate and the incumbent's support for President Trump matter, a Washington Post-ABC News poll finds.

The Post-ABC poll shows that, among likely voters, Cunningham is at 49% and Tillis is at 47%, a gap well within the survey's 4.5-percentage-point margin of sampling error. More than nine in 10 Democrats and Republicans support their party's candidate, while independents split almost down the middle: 48% for Cunningham and 45% for Tillis.

Cunningham is fueled by a 16-percentage-point advantage among female voters, while Tillis holds a 14-point edge among men. That gender gap is slightly wider than in the presidential race in North Carolina, where Biden leads by 11 points among women and Trump leads by 10 points among men.

The last few weeks of the Senate campaign have been dominated by revelations that Cunningham exchanged illicit text messages this summer with a woman who is not his wife. Cunningham, an officer in the Army Reserve who is a married father of two and has argued about the importance of character,

has apologized for the texts but requested privacy, calling the issue a "personal matter."

Republicans have criticized Cunningham, with Tillis demanding a full explanation of the affair and a super PAC aligned with Senate Republican leadership airing an ad focused on the text messages that asks, "What else is he hiding?"

The Post-ABC poll suggests that while the scandal is a factor for some voters, it has not become the dominant issue for the overall electorate.

Cunningham's 49% support among likely voters is identical to that of Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden, knotted in a close race against Trump, who stands at 48%.

The poll finds 89% of likely voters in North Carolina are supporting the same party in the presidential and Senate elections, including 45% who support Biden and Cunningham and 44% who support Trump and Tillis. A 92% majority of Biden supporters back Cunningham, the same percentage of Trump supporters who back Tillis.

The close alignment between presidential and Senate support is not surprising given the degree to which voters are focused on which party controls the U.S. Senate. An 81% majority of North Carolina registered voters say control of the Senate is "extremely" or "very" important in their vote, including



Tillis



Cunningham

nearly nine in 10 Democrats and Republicans as well as about seven in 10 independents.

Trump also looms large as a factor in the minds of voters, with a 56% majority saying Tillis's support for the president is important in their vote, including majorities of Republicans and Democrats and just under half of independents.

Asked directly about the importance of Cunningham's affair, 26% of registered voters say it is extremely or very important in their vote, including 41% of Republicans, 24% of independents and 11% of Democrats.

There is no gender gap on this question. Roughly seven in 10 male and female voters alike say Cunningham's affair is "somewhat important" or "not so important," while about a quarter of both men and women

say it is "very important" or "extremely important."

More than four in 10 White evangelical Protestants say the scandal is important in their vote, though the heavily Republican group expresses the same level of support for Tillis in the Senate race as for Trump in the presidential election (82%).

Cunningham's service the U.S. Army Reserve, including tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, figured to put him in a strong position in a state in which nearly half of voters say someone in their household has served in the military. Voters in veteran households divide evenly, 47% for Cunningham to 48 percent for Tillis, almost the same as their 47-to-50 split between Biden and Trump in the presidential race.

The poll finds 28% of voters in military households say the affair is extremely or very important in their vote, roughly similar to 23% of voters in nonmilitary households.

The Washington Post-ABC News poll was conducted by telephone Oct. 12-17 among a random sample of 795 adults, including 706 registered voters and 646 likely voters in North Carolina, with 75% of interviews completed on cellphones and the remainder on landlines. The margin of sampling error for results among both registered voters and likely voters is plus or minus 4.5 percentage points.

Bishop faces Wallace for U.S. House District 9

(AP) — Incumbent Republican U.S. Rep. Dan Bishop is being challenged by Democrat Cynthia Wallace in the North Carolina 9th Congressional District election.

Bishop secured the seat in a special election in September 2019, defeating Democrat Dan McCready. Bishop served in the state House and state Senate before pursuing his congressional seat and spent most of his career as an attorney.

Wallace has been the chairperson for the 9th Congressional District of the North Carolina Democratic Party for three years. She is an executive at a financial service company and has spent more than 25 years in the industry.

The district includes Union, Anson, Richmond, Scotland and Robeson counties and parts of Mecklenburg, Cumberland and Bladen counties.

Before winning the seat, Bishop took a pledge to vote against tax increases. He

signed the Americans for Tax Reform's Taxpayer Protection Pledge, a written commitment to oppose higher income taxes.

While in Congress, Bishop introduced the Increasing Opportunities for Small Businesses Act to boost investments in Opportunity Zones, which were created by the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act as a way for the private sector to help low-income communities.

"The Trump tax cuts led to one of the strongest economies our nation has ever seen. Dan will work to rebuild that strong economy and keep taxes low," Bishop's campaign website reads.

Bishop also has proposed a resolution denouncing the Modern Monetary Theory, which argues that countries with their own currency never can fall short of money.

As a member of the House Committee on Small Business, Bishop helped pass



Bishop



Wallace

the Paycheck Protection Program, which was included in Congress' Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act. He also advocates for gun rights and has been endorsed by the National Rifle Association.

Wallace is an advocate for gun safety reforms.

"Gun violence is more than mass shootings

- it's everyday violence like domestic violence, community violence, suicide and more," Wallace tweeted.

Wallace said she wants to increase affordable health care, create jobs and provide "quality" education.

"I will protect (and) expand the Patient Bill of Rights that my opponent and his party have spent a decade trying to kill," Wallace wrote on Twitter. "Coverage of pre-existing conditions is only one of the benefits of the [Patient Bill of Rights], passed into law in the [Affordable Care Act] ..."

Wallace supports keeping small businesses open during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"When I am elected as congresswoman to represent District 09, one of my goals will be to ensure small businesses continue to open safely," she tweeted.

Wallace also said she wants to increase retirement and disability benefits, reduce the gender pay gap and improve infrastructure.

NC HOUSE DISTRICT 66

Gavin Stone
News Editor

The North Carolina House District 66 race, Scott Brewer (D), who was appointed

the remainder of Ken Goodman's term last year, is facing Ben Moss (R), who is currently serving as a Richmond County commissioner.

The Daily Journal sent each candidate the same set

of questions. Below are their answers, some of which have been edited to fit the limit of 150 words per answer. The candidates are listed in alphabetical order by last name.

| Photo | Daily Journal: Should the state approve a measure to legalize the use of marijuana? Why? | DJ: Is there a path forward that will allow the state to pass a new budget? | DJ: Has the governor's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic been good or bad for the state? Why? | DJ: One of the more serious issues in our region is the lack of access to high-speed internet. What can be done to improve that? | DJ: Why should voters support you over your opponent? |
|--------------------------------|---|--|---|---|--|
| <p>Scott Brewer (D)</p> | <p>We should create a multi-disciplinary study group of people ranging from law enforcement to agricultural interests to medical professionals to study the issue and put forward recommendations. Science has shown some medical benefits from marijuana and should be examined. A study is needed because marijuana and hemp, which is legal, are indistinguishable by touch, smell and sight. This puts law enforcement in the middle of trying to figure out a legal from illegal product and creates problems. A study by professionals can provide answers we need.</p> | <p>There is no path forward on a budget with the current Republican leadership in the NC House and Senate. From the moment of the sneak vote on September 11, 2019 to override the budget veto in the House, leadership has taken an "our way or no way" position on the budget. There was no attempt to bridge the differences. Instead, Republican leadership tried to use the promise of "pork" projects to obtain votes. As a former judge I have experience in trying to help parties find a middle ground, which is what we should be doing in Raleigh. Finally, Republican leadership abandoned the budget in April of this year, realizing it was too flawed to be enacted. Only new leadership can change this dynamic.</p> | <p>Governor Cooper's approach to COVID has been good for the state as our leaders have tried to balance reopening with the health and safety of our citizens. Georgia has roughly the same population as we do: they reopened quickly with almost no restrictions, and now they have seen almost twice as many cases and twice as many deaths as NC. South Carolina, another state who reopened quickly, has a much smaller population, but has just as many deaths from COVID as North Carolina. As NC has moved to Phase 3, cases have risen significantly. Part of the problem is we have a large part of our population that refuses to wear masks or support a mask mandate. Despite near universal medical opinion supporting the need to wear masks, politicians, including Republican candidates for higher office, refuse to listen. The "dimmer switch" approach by Cooper has saved lives.</p> | <p>High speed broadband access is the key infrastructure issue of this century. Rural areas such as ours are falling behind our urban areas. There is a \$1.4 billion need to have high-speed broadband to reach all of our citizens. While the \$30 million in funding for the GREAT grant program is a step forward, it's a very small one. We should approve a \$250 million bond immediately for broadband access in the legislature. The legislature should also commit a minimum of \$60 million a year to programs like the GREAT grant program, repeal legislation that restricts municipalities and local governments from entering into providing broadband services and look at targeted tax breaks to companies that significantly expand access in rural areas. Tentative measures are no longer enough – the COVID pandemic has exposed the disparities in our communities.</p> | <p>I have a broader range of life and career experiences which helps me to address the needs of our state. My background as a prosecutor, judge and lawyer in private practice has allowed me to see how the lack of educational opportunity, income disparity, well-paying job opportunities and access to quality and affordable medical care impacts peoples' lives. Solving these issues is crucial to moving our state forward. I am an independent voice that will search for solutions. My campaign has not been funded by outside dark money groups, and I have always spoken for myself. As a former judge I had to make tough decisions in people's lives, especially concerning children, by myself as the decision maker. Those were sometimes very tough calls. The experiences I had have prepared me for making the tough, independent choices that have defined my record in the legislature.</p> |
| <p>Ben Moss (R)</p> | | | | | <p>Candidate Ben Moss did not respond to a questionnaire emailed to him on Oct. 14, nor three follow up emails to himself and campaign spokesperson Conrad Pogorzelski. Texts to Moss on Wednesday the 14th, 15th, 16th and 18th were not acknowledged. A phone call on the 18th was not returned, and a voicemail could not be left because the candidate's mailbox was full. Additionally, attempts to reach Moss through Richmond County Republican Party Chairman Jerry Austin over this same period were unsuccessful. Moss' campaign website, BenMossForNC.com, lists four points on the "platform" section. Those points are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "As an avid sportsman and member of the NRA, Moss firmly supports the 2nd amendment." • "A good steward of the tax payers money." • "Focused on promoting economic growth." • "Committed to strengthening our education system and community colleges and teach trades that are needed in our society." |

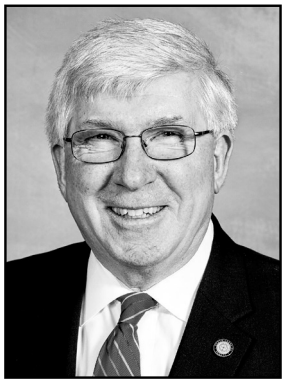

McInnis, Mills face off for Senate seat

Gavin Stone
News Editor

In the North Carolina Senate District 25 race, incumbent Tom McInnis (R) is facing challenger Helen Probst Mills (D). District 25 includes Anson, Richmond, Scotland and

Moore counties.

The Daily Journal sent each candidate the same set of questions. Below are their answers, some of which have been edited to fit the limit of 150 words per answer. The candidates are listed in alphabetical order by last name.

| Photo | Daily Journal: Should the state approve a measure to legalize the use of marijuana? Why? | DJ: Is there a path forward that will allow the state to pass a new budget? | DJ: Has the governor's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic been good or bad for the state? Why? | DJ: One of the more serious issues in our region is the lack of access to high-speed internet. What can be done to improve that? | DJ: Why should voters support you over your opponent? |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|
|  <p>Tom McInnis (R)</p> | No as I will stand with the law enforcement community and they do not agree that we should approve such legalization. | Very simple process, the Governor simply signs the budget after reasonable negotiations with the General Assembly. | His COVID response has been devastating to many business in our state as well as our schools, non profits, churches and businesses. He should have trusted the citizens to use common sense and personal responsibility for a better outcome for every situation. | I have worked on the expansion of the internet in rural NC since day one. We have to many needs and not enough providers, especially for the last mile. We have made great strides by allowing the REA's to use their assets to expand broadband but we still have much to do. | I have been successful in the representation of all citizens throughout the district. I have seniority and chairmanships of several powerful committees that result in more opportunities for our citizens, schools and businesses. I am rated as one of the most effective members of the Senate which equates to a better outcome on the issues that affect the citizens of the 25th District of the NC Senate. We have much work to do and I am in position to make it happen in the next session of the General Assembly. |
|  <p>Helen Probst Mills (D)</p> | I think there are legitimate medicinal purposes in which marijuana can be used. I believe we need further study of the long-term ramifications of recreational use. I would support policies that are guided by science. If the state were to consider recreational use, I would support studying how that can be achieved without abuse. Additionally, if the medicinal or recreational use is approved, we need to ensure that there is appropriate regulation in place. | A big obstacle to getting things done is extreme partisanship. There has been too much partisanship in the NC Legislature for too long. Acknowledging that legislators must serve their citizens, and thereby work to solve the issues in their district will put the focus of governing back on the needs of the people. We need certainty that our state budget isn't caught up in a political battle. I will support an independent, non-partisan redistricting committee so that we can draw fair legislative maps. Once we put the power back in the hands of the people, then legislators will need to compromise. | Gov. Cooper has implemented policies which are mindful of the threat to public health, balanced against the need to keep the economy and public education going. He has listened to scientists and offered steady leadership throughout this crisis. He has also empowered local governments to determine if their schools should open. Local determination is important as the rate of transmission is different from county to county. Gov. Cooper has been an effective advocate in ensuring that North Carolina gets what it needs from the federal and state government to get through this crisis. | High speed internet must be classified as a public utility so rural North Carolina has a level playing field with the rest of the state. Lack of reliable internet has put rural areas at a long-term disadvantage in both economic development as well as education. The pandemic and the need to learn and work from home, as well as the rise in tele-health, has clearly shown us that we must make access to high-speed internet for all citizens a priority. | I am the only candidate who favors Medicaid expansion. We are sending billions of our tax dollars to other states because politicians like my opponent refuse to expand Medicaid, which will not only lower premiums for everyone, but will bring thousands of good paying jobs to the district. This is simply bad business. Thirty-nine states, Republican and Democrat (including Indiana when Mike Pence was Governor), have expanded Medicaid. North Carolina has the highest health care costs in the nation. That is ridiculous! In the midst of a raging pandemic, we need jobs and affordable health care. |

RICHMOND COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Gavin Stone
News Editor

The Richmond County Board of Commissioners race is set to change the shape of the board in a major way, with two board members — Chairman Ken Robinette and Vice Chairman John Garner — stepping down. Plus, Commissioner Ben Moss is in the running for North Carolina House District 66. If Moss wins, the Executive Committee of the local Republican Party will appoint someone to serve out his remaining term. If Moss losses, he returns to

the Board of Commissioners.

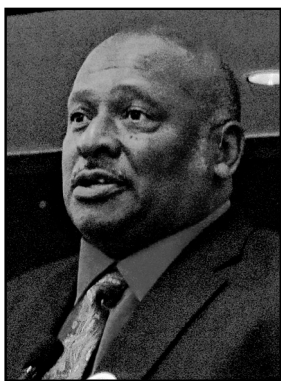
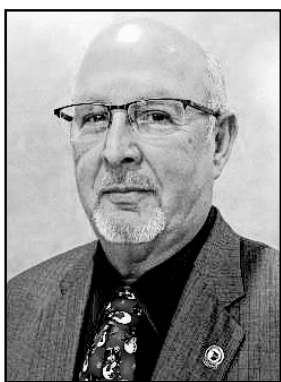
This leaves Jimmy Capps (D) the only incumbent. The other candidates gunning for one of the three open seats are, in alphabetical order, Dewey L. Brower (D), Andy Grooms (R), Michael Legrand (D), Toni Maples (R) and Jeff Smart (R).

Maples joined the race in August following former Ellerbe Mayor Lee Berry dropping out of the race due to family concerns. Since then, Maples has worked to put together her campaign and platform to run as the Republicans' third primary victor. Grooms and Legrand are


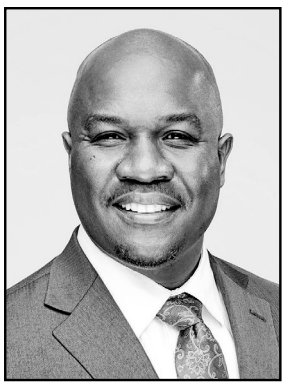


both running for their first elected office, while Smart and Brower have both previously served — Smart as Mayor of Hamlet for six years and Brower as a Hamlet City Council member for one term.

Commissioners elected to the board serve at-large, meaning they do not represent any specific district.

The Daily Journal sent each candidate the same set of questions. Below are their answers, some of which have been edited to fit the limit of 150 words per answer. The candidates are listed in alphabetical order by last name.

| Photo | Daily Journal: What steps would you take to undo the mistrust between municipalities and the county following the county deciding to change the sales tax distribution method without prior notice? | DJ: Would you continue the county's past practice of using enterprise funds and fund balance to balance the budget? If so, why? If not, how would you address future budget shortfalls? | DJ: What would you do to help Richmond County be more competitive with other counties throughout the state for business and industrial development? | DJ: Why should voters support you over the other candidates? |
|--|--|---|--|---|
|  <p>Dewey Brower (D)</p> | First I would try to get a representative from each municipality and the county manger to meet and see what we can do to reverse the sales tax loss, there has got to be a way we can do it together to help each other out with out bitterness. We just have to find a way to do it. | I would like to answer this question, but I would need more information on enterprise funds in order to fund the balance. I would have to do my homework on this. We should not have to take from one fund to another to help out the budget. We need to go back to find out what we can do to strengthen the budget shortfall without hurting our employees. | To help Richmond County grow, I would like to visit other counties to see what they had to do to encourage other business and industries to come. And use some incentives to try to keep them here and find a way to make it so that if they leave, it would not hurt the county by us paying off their debts. | I am a people person and always looking to learn new ideas and suggestions. I've lived here all my life and I want nothing but the best for my county, and I want my county to succeed. |
|  <p>Jimmy Capps (D)</p> | <p>Candidate Jimmy Capps did not respond to a questionnaire emailed to him on Oct. 14 and a follow up sent that weekend, nor repeated phone calls and voicemails left with his place of business between the 14th and Oct. 19. The following is Capps' bio from the Daily Journal's pre-primary coverage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education: Richmond Senior High School, associate degree in business from Richmond Community College • Profession: Owner of J.C.'s Pawn & Jewelry, Inc. and owner of J.C.'s Trailer Sales and Used Appliances • Past elected office: running for third term on Board of Commissioners • Platform: Capps said that, in his two terms as a commissioner, he has seen Richmond County make many positive gains and that if re-elected, he wants to "help keep the momentum going," which can be done by continuing to support the community college's job training efforts. <p>Capps also said that if re-elected, he would "push hard" for work to begin to update the Richmond County Jail, which has been a major expense on the horizon — whether they decide to demolish or renovate the building — for decades. He called the jail an "eyesore."</p> | | | |

RICHMOND COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

| Photo | Daily Journal: What steps would you take to undo the mistrust between municipalities and the county following the county deciding to change the sales tax distribution method without prior notice? | DJ: Would you continue the county's past practice of using enterprise funds and fund balance to balance the budget? If so, why? If not, how would you address future budget shortfalls? | DJ: What would you do to help Richmond County be more competitive with other counties throughout the state for business and industrial development? | DJ: Why should voters support you over the other candidates? |
|---|--|--|--|---|
|  <p>Andy Grooms (R)</p> | <p>I will make strides to be more transparent and inquisitive than we have seen. It's going to take a better working relationship between the county board and the town councils. Unfortunately it's also going to take a team effort from all parties and that may only come with changes in the members of said boards. In the county's case, 3-5 members are going to be the same, so their knowledge and opinions are still in play and it will take working with them and a willingness to make things better, which I'm ready to do.</p> | <p>That practice was stopped for a reason and I see no need to bring it back. Any extra money in the enterprise funds need to stay there. The county balanced the budget without this practice this past year and that trend needs to continue. In the event this can't take place I would advocate for aggressive contractions in the budget.</p> | <p>The key to this is keeping the county tax rate as low as feasibly possible. All the county departments are asked to cut cost and run efficiently, which of course will have to continue. I believe we must also continue the practice of investing in the shell buildings in the industrial parks to entice businesses into the county. Having available structures for immediate investment is a huge leg up on the surrounding counties. It is also critical that we make the best effort to recruit industry and businesses that compliment our community college programs. Having the training facility, the industry and jobs in the same county will be nothing but a benefit for the citizens of Richmond County.</p> | <p>I'm sure my opponents as I do, want what's best for our county. What I don't believe is that any of them will out work me when it comes to putting in the effort and try to make best use of county resources. I don't believe any will be better team players than me which is what the board is, a team. I don't believe any of my opponents will push the envelope on issues that may arise like I will to make sure that decisions are always in the best interest of the county at large. And I don't believe any will try as hard as me to be more transparent with the towns citizenry and governments as well as the county's. No matter who the voters put on the board I will work diligently with them to make sure our county's future is bright.</p> |
|  <p>Michael Legrand (D)</p> | <p>We owe it to the citizens of Richmond County to operate with transparency, respect and integrity. It is imperative to have a good working relationship between the county and the municipalities. I will reach out to the municipalities to try and repair the lines of communications and to ensure them that what happened before will never happen again.</p> | <p>I don't have access to all the information regarding the budget so I'm not sure if using enterprise funds and fund balance is the best route. There may be some areas where the county needs to make cuts in order to avoid shortfalls. That is something we definitely will have to take a look at.</p> | <p>Find out what it will take for companies to come to Richmond County. We have a lot of smart, talented hard working people here in Richmond County. We have plenty of land and water here and I think any company that comes here will do exceptionally well. Richmond County is in a great location and we can draw from surrounding counties.</p> | <p>I want what is best for all the citizens of Richmond County. I want everyone to do well regardless of their race or economic status. We all have value and it's important that we work together to make Richmond County a better Richmond County.</p> |
|  <p>Toni Maples (R)</p> | <p>As stated in my platform, I am working with Rural Development in grants to fill the void for the municipalities in replacing some if not all of the monies they lost. However, being that all of the current commissioners voted on this, one from Hoffman-Hamlet-Rockingham-Dobbins Heights, they obviously know something that we don't. I say this because I would hope they would not hurt the towns they represent. None of us have all the facts and I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that no one, I mean no one, would voice an opinion in the matter or say what they would or wouldn't do without having all the facts.</p> | <p>Here again is another question that without all of the facts I cannot give an honest answer. I am not the type of person that will make promises that I know that I may or may not get the keep. That is not fair for me nor is it fair for the citizens of this county that I would be representing.</p> | <p>The state of North Carolina has a high literacy rate, a high rate of high school dropouts along with a high rate of adults with no high school diploma or GED. Locally, we can work closely with RCC to have satellite areas with real time GED instructors for the adults that want to obtain their GED would be a big plus for us. The business and industry realm want workers with at least this qualification and they will provide on the job training. Since we have areas where the majority of the residents do not qualify, it hurts us tremendously. By providing this opportunity we would have a better chance of more business/industry coming in because we would be providing workers with the number one qualification. This would also open up the door for them, as we have already seen, to collaborate with RCC to provide training courses as well.</p> | <p>I came from a very dysfunctional family. I was told over and over by friends and family members that I would never amount to anything. This made me try harder to do the things I have done to prove not only to myself, but to them that I would do something with my life. I hold my students accountable and when they say they can't do something I tell them they can. Had I have listened to those that put me down and called me names I would not be where I am today. The fighter in me never gave up. I am a servant and will do everything I can to make sure everyone is successful. Most importantly I have the support and guidance from God. With him I will conquer without him I will fail. I ask for the opportunity to serve, and be given a chance, this wonderful county.</p> |
|  <p>Jeff Smart (R)</p> | <p>I would reach out to local municipality leaders to open up a line of communication with all intentions of creating teamwork between county officials and municipality officials. Because of my background as Mayor of Hamlet, I am very familiar with municipal government so I will understand the issues at hand. I know many of the current officials and have successfully worked with them in the past. I am confident that I will be able to create trust between all of the entities by making common sense decisions.</p> | <p>I would not be in favor of combining the funds to balance the budget. If expenses are higher than revenues in the budget process then costs must be eliminated to balance the budget. I am not one that believes in increasing revenues by raising taxes. Our taxes are high enough. The budget can be balanced by eliminating expenses.</p> | <p>Richmond County has lots to offer during the industrial recruitment process. We have invested lots of money in the past on our infrastructure and our Industrial Parks. Our Richmond Community College gives us a huge advantage over other areas with the opportunities they provide for employee development. The combination of our highways and railways are huge recruiting factors as well. If we combine teamwork with all of these assets, we can continue to be successful in recruiting the proper industries.</p> | <p>I am proud that I was the Mayor of Hamlet from 2007 to 2013. This provided me with municipal government management experience. I understand what it means to represent the people with smart business decisions and less financial dependence on taxpayers. My decisions as Commissioner will be all business and nothing personal. I was born here and raised here. I live, work, and play here. I am fully vested here. I am "All In" here in Richmond County!</p> |

2020 ELECTION GUIDE

A SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT TO THE RICHMOND COUNTY DAILY JOURNAL