ROCKINGHAM COUNTY - N.C. HOUSE (DISTRICT 65)

Bert Jones (R) (i)



Lives in: Reidsville

Contact: Bert.Jones@ncleg.net, BertJonesNCHouse@gmail.com; www.BertJonesNCHouse.com; Bert Jones on Facebook

Age: 52

Profession: Dentist

Highest Degree Earned: Doctor of Dental Surgery, UNC-Chapel Hill

Leadership experience: Kiwanis, 24 years, division lieutenant governor, three-time president, Eden and Reidsville; Rockingham County Free Clinic board; county Board of Health; Juvenile Crime Prevention board; county Dental Society, president twice; Rockingham Council of Bible Education, president; longtime youth sports coach, YMCA and Upward; scoutmaster; state representative; county commissioner; church deacon.

As a minority party member, how will you be able to get things done for your constituents? As a majority-party member, I've established good working relationships regardless of party. I would do the same if in the minority party. Serving my fellow residents well is a high priority for me. Constituent service is not a partisan issue. Our office delights in helping everyone.

How can the state's rivers and lakes be better protected from coal ash and other pollutants? The coal ash situation existed for several decades and cannot be fixed overnight, but our state is now leading the nation in pursuing a reasonable strategy to close basins and safely manage ash. A realistic, fact-based, scientific approach is important to identify the best options to protect our environment.

Would you support an independent commission for redistricting? Why or why not? Actually nobody is really "independent" or unbiased, so that approach is inadequate. The better approach is to pass and enforce redistricting laws based on court rulings that addressed decades of gerrymandering in North Carolina (under Democrats). There has clearly been more interest in this longstanding issue since Republicans won the majority.

Should NC expand Medicaid coverage? Why or why not? No. Almost one in five (1.8 million) North Carolinians are already on Medicaid, costing taxpayers $13 billion last year. Medicaid now pays for about half (48 percent) of all U.S. births and is rising. Medicaid costs are skyrocketing and are unsustainable according to nonpartisan studies. Medicaid needs reform, not expansion.

Are there parts of the 2013 voter reform that you would change? Preserving the integrity of our elections is foundational to our system of government of the people, by the people and for the people. These common-sense election reforms (including voter ID) were reasonable, necessary and fair to everyone. The reforms encourage free and fair elections, and I support them.

Would you support an increase to the state minimum wage? Why or why not? No. Liberal politicians promise to "raise the minimum wage" to get votes because it sounds good to promise more money. But the real effect would hurt the entry-level wage earners that would lose employment because businesses would cut jobs. The free market should determine prices and wages, not the government.

Should the state privatize its economic development efforts? It depends how you define "economic development efforts." The state's role has often been distorted. Taxpayer dollars should support education and infrastructure to make communities more attractive for businesses and jobs. Subsidizing some businesses with taxpayers' money while raising taxes on others is a flawed strategy that has largely failed.

North Carolina is 46th in teacher pay. What's the best way for North Carolina to improve teacher pay? The truth is that Republicans just raised teacher pay an average of 7 percent, moving North Carolina from 46th to 32nd. The Democrats left teacher pay near the nation's lowest when they were in the majority. Republicans have improved the pay to be more competitive with other states. Those are the facts.

What should be done about the funding crisis in the state's higher education system? Should tuition or statefunding be increased, or is there another solution? North Carolina's higher education system is well-funded compared to most states and the rest of the world. The real crisis will come as entitlement spending and the skyrocketing debt continues to drain federal and state budgets. The solution is for government to spend within its means.

Do you think other firearm law reforms are needed? I support sustained efforts protecting citizens' rights to bear arms, which are under constant attack. Gun rights are crucial to freedom. Common sense and examples of history (including Nazi Germany, communist China, Russia, and many others) teach us — when guns are outlawed, only outlaws and ruthless governments have guns.

Should the Moral Monday protesters have been arrested? Would you support changes to the legislative building rules to allow peaceful protests? I support having the same rules for such protests at the legislative building as are allowed in courthouses. At times the disruptions were substantial, and clearly many people wanted to be arrested and get media coverage at these orchestrated events.

What kinds of energy development should North Carolina support? State government does not need to subsidize some energy industries with taxpayer money at the expense of others. Free markets and competition work without government picking winners and losers. Government should remove unnecessary obstacles to innovation, such as overregulation, and unleash the power of the American entrepreneurial spirit.

ROCKINGHAM COUNTY - CLERK OF SUPERIOR COURT

J. Mark Pegram (D) (i)



Lives in: Reidsville

Contact: j.mark.pegram@nccourts.org; jmarkpegram-clerkofcourt.com

Age: Did not answer

Profession: Clerk of Superior Court 17-A Judicial District

Highest degree earned: AAS Criminal Justice, Rockingham Community College

Leadership experience: I have served as clerk of Superior Court for Rockingham County for the past 12 years and served as president of the North Carolina Conference of Clerks of Court in 2010 and 2011. I serve as chairman of Hospice of Rockingham County and serve on the N.C. Guardianship Association Board

How valuable is prior elected experience? If you have none, how will you overcome the lack of experience to be successful as clerk? The office of clerk is a very complex position. I wear many hats as clerk of court, so to speak. With a staff of 28, there is about 470 years of experience within our office. Experience plays a major role when issues arise to resolve them.

How have you worked with someone from another political party to accomplish a goal? If you haven't held elected office, how will you do this? In my opinion, political party has nothing to do with serving as clerk of court. I strive to provide the best service to all that come through our doors and will continue to do so as long as I'm clerk of court.

What will be your priorities as clerk? Continue the professional and dedicated service as I have for the past 12 years

How would you improve the public's access to public records? We currently have terminals for the public use. Anyone can visit our office and inquire about criminal, civil, estate matters at no charge.

How would you make the clerk's office more efficient? Implement any rules and regulations which are promulgated by the Administrative Office of the Courts.

Daniel Bailey (R)



Lives in: Reidsville

Contact: dkb1315law@gmail.com

Age: 65

Profession: Attorney

Highest degree earned: Juris Doctor

Leadership experience: Retired Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army; former president, Reidsville Kiwanis Club; honors graduate, N.C. State; member of Moot Court, UNC Chapel Hill Law School

How valuable is prior elected experience? If you have none, how will you overcome the lack of experience to be successful as clerk? Never having been previously elected is an asset. The only question is whether prior education and experience in the law qualify me for the position.

How have you worked with someone from another political party to accomplish a goal? If you haven't held elected office, how will you do this? I used to be a registered Democrat.

What will be your priorities as clerk? To serve the public efficiently.

How would you improve the public's access to public records? No answer given.

How would you make the clerk's office more efficient? Move into digital information processing and train selected clerks to speak and read Spanish.