

# NINERTIMES

Student-driven news since 1947 | Oct. 23, 2024

## 2024

# VOTER

## GUIDE

EVERYTHING YOU  
NEED TO KNOW  
FOR THE 2024  
ELECTIONS





# vote early, nc.

the easiest way to vote is early with your physical student ID.

**EARLY VOTING ENDS: SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2**

**ELECTION DAY: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5**

**What to bring:** Student ID or NC driver's license; the physical card, not a digital ID.

**Need to transfer your registration or register as a new voter?** Use same-day registration available only during Early Voting.

For more information, visit [progressnc.org/college](https://progressnc.org/college).

Problems at the polls? Ask to use a provisional ballot and call the Hotline: 888-OUR-VOTE

PAID FOR BY PROGRESS NORTH CAROLINA



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Niyathi Sulkunte/Niner Times File

## Upcoming election-related dates and events

**NBMBAA Charlotte Chapter  
Party at the Polls at University  
City Regional**  
301 E W.T Harris Blvd  
Friday, Oct. 25, 3:30 - 5:30 p.m.

**Donut Forget to Vote**  
Tuesday, Oct. 29  
Cone University Center

**Election Day**  
Tuesday, Nov. 5

**Early Voting**  
Cone University Center  
Oct. 17- Nov. 2  
8:30 a.m. - 7:30 p.m. weekdays  
8 a.m. - 3 p.m. Saturdays  
1 - 5 p.m. Sundays

## NOTES FROM THE NEWSROOM:

## Please, just vote

Davis Cuffe | Editor-in-Chief



It is no secret that young voter turnout has been lackluster in recent years.

According to the Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, in 2022, only 28% of young people voted. Politicians will only interpret these low figures as a sign that they can continue to be elected and re-elected on platforms that overlook the values of young Americans, not that young people dislike the system or view both candidates as unfit.

Things will not improve until young people claim their spot at the table by showing up and representing themselves at the polls.

Aside from the lack of representation, the lack of young voter turnout is embarrassing. Gen-Z prides itself on being outspoken and active. Yet, every election year, we cannot be bothered to go out and check a box, only reaffirming the misconception that we are lazy, held by older generations.

There will be no gold stars handed out to those who sit out the election because 'both candidates suck' or they feel too cool or unbothered to vote. Unfortunately, you either stand for something or you stand for nothing in American democracy.

Someone will take office whether you vote or not, and unless you have a solid plan to fix everything, voting is the only way to see progress.

Your vote is your voice; do not let it be silenced with inaction.

## About the Niner Times 2024 Voter Guide

Niner Times Editorial Board

This voting guide is the culmination of months of work from our staff. The information gathered and included in the issue is meant to inform the UNC Charlotte community while encouraging readers to vote.

While the issue contains opinion pieces, writers who contributed to these pieces did not influence the informational works, ensuring impartiality. All works of opinion endorsing candidates were written under the name 'Niner Times Staffer', placing the focus on the content's fairness, not the writer's bias.

All information in factual works was sourced from bipartisan sources only.

We at the Niner Times hope you will use the information in this guide to make informed decisions about who should represent our state and country. While the Niner Times does not endorse any candidate or party, we encourage the UNC Charlotte community to be active in democracy and get out and vote.

The Niner Times is UNC Charlotte's student-run news publication founded in 1947 and has received both state and national recognition.

We cover campus happenings, news and events in the city of Charlotte and North Carolina and topics that are important to students.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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# What's on the ballot?

# BREAKING DOWN THE PARTISAN ELECTIONS AND REFERENDA ON THE MECKLENBURG COUNTY BALLOT

Davis Cuffe | Editor-in-Chief

## Lieutenant Governor

The second-in-command to the governor, who serves on numerous important boards.

## Hal Weatherman (R)

Weatherman has no previous political experience. He previously served as chief of staff to former North Carolina Lt. Governor Dan Forest and former U.S. Representative Sue Myrick. Weatherman has also worked as an advisor on multiple Republican campaigns.

Weatherman hopes to set up an 'election integrity unit' and supports expanding restrictions on abortion.

**Rachel Hunt (D)**

Hunt currently serves as the state senator for North Carolina's District 42. She previously served two terms as a state house representative and worked as an attorney.

Hunt supports Medicaid expansion, abortion rights and efforts to increase the minimum wage. She hopes to invest in public schools and local small businesses.

## Auditor

Audits and investigates government agencies to prevent waste and ensure proper use of state tax dollars.

**Dave Boliek (R)**

Boliek has no past political experience and currently serves as a lawyer and member of UNC-Chapel Hill's Board of Trustees.

Boliek hopes to create a rapid response team to provide emergency support from the Auditor's Office and audit the North Carolina DMV on day one.

**Jessica Holmes (D)**

Holmes is the current auditor. She was previously the youngest-ever elected Wake County commissioner. Formerly, she worked as an attorney and oversaw workers' compensation claims while working with the North Carolina Industrial Commission.

Plans to ensure relief funds for Hurricane Helene victims reach those who need them and help give financial support to seniors and disabled people.

## Superintendent

Oversees the state's public school systems and implements public school laws for Pre-K to 12th grade.

## Michele Morrow (R)

Morrow has no previous experience in politics. She is a registered nurse and works as a homeschool teacher for high school students.

She has said she will work to remove CRT (Critical Race Theory), DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) and SEL (social-emotional learning) programming from schools if elected. According to CNN, Morrow called for the executions of multiple elected Democratic officials on a now-deleted social media post.

**Maurice 'Mo' Green (D)**

Green served as the superintendent for Guilford County Schools for seven years. Previously, Green worked for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools as general counsel, chief operating officer and deputy superintendent. Green also worked as a lawyer in private practice.

As superintendent, Green hopes to increase teacher pay and funding for public education. He also intends to ensure a safe learning environment and prepare students for their next steps.

## N.C. Supreme Court Associate Justice

This court oversees decisions made by all smaller courts, and all decisions they make on state law are final.

## Jefferson Griffin (R)

Griffin has served as a judge in various courts since 2015, including a position as a district court judge in Wake County. He is a veteran and serves as a Captain and Judge Advocate General Officer in the North Carolina Army National Guard.

Previously concurred with the court opinion that “life begins at conception” and wrote that the “law is colorblind.”

## Allison Riggs (D)

Riggs is currently serving a partial term after being appointed to the North Carolina Supreme Court by Governor Roy Cooper in September 2023. She worked with the Southern Coalition for Social Justice for 14 years.

Riggs said that bodily autonomy and rights to decision-making and privacy are constitutional. Previously argued cases involving racial and partisan gerrymandering in front of the U.S. Supreme Court.

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## Constitutional Amendment: Citizens-Only Voting

This amendment aims to revise the North Carolina Constitution to clarify that only U.S. citizens can vote in state elections. Currently, the constitution allows voting for “every person born in the United States and every person who has been naturalized,” but non-citizens are already prohibited from voting or registering. Supporters argue this change would enhance election security and prevent local governments from allowing non-citizens to vote in future elections, even though no municipalities in North Carolina are currently considering this option. Opponents claim the amendment addresses a non-existent issue and fosters discrimination against non-citizens.

A “yes” vote would solidify the restriction on voting to U.S. citizens. A “no” vote would leave the current situation unchanged, allowing local municipalities the potential to pass laws permitting non-citizen voting, although none are currently pursuing this.

This amendment aims to revise the North Carolina Constitution to clarify that only U.S. citizens can vote in state elections. Currently, the constitution allows voting for “every person born in the United

The proposal aims to fund \$238 million in transportation projects in Charlotte. Of this amount, \$55 million would support new initiatives, \$50 million would

enhance sidewalks, and \$20 million would focus on road safety improvements. The funding would come from an earlier property tax increase and would not raise tax rates. Supporters argue it will help repair infrastructure, reduce congestion and improve safety, while opponents believe it may create

A “yes” vote would solidify the restriction on voting to U.S. citizens. A “no” vote would leave the current situation unchanged, allowing local municipalities the potential to pass laws permitting non-citizen voting, although none are currently pursuing this.

A "yes" vote means the city will take on debt by selling bonds for these projects, while a "no" vote means the city will need to find alternative funding for transportation investments.

Charlotte. A significant portion, \$25 million, would be directed toward a city initiative to invest in six underserved areas. The funding comes from a previous property tax increase, meaning there would be no new tax rate changes. Supporters argue that this investment will enhance valuable projects in the city and support improvements in neglected neighborhoods, with

A “yes” vote means the fund will grow by \$100 million for these initiatives, while a “no” vote means the city will need to seek other funding sources for housing projects.

Charlotte voters will decide whether to add \$100 million to the city's Housing Trust Fund, doubling the previous cycle's contribution. This Housing Trust Fund provides financial assistance to developers who want to build and repair affordable housing in Charlotte.

This proposal seeks to fund \$61.7 million in neighborhood projects, primarily focusing on infrastructure renovations and business development across

Charlotte. A significant portion, \$25 million, would be directed toward a city initiative to invest in six underserved areas. The funding comes from a previous property tax increase, meaning there would be no new tax rate changes. Supporters argue that this investment will enhance valuable projects in the city and support improvements in neglected neighborhoods, with

A “yes” vote would allocate the new property tax revenue to bonds for these projects, while a “no” vote would mean that this revenue would not go toward infrastructure bonds, forcing the city to find alternative funding sources for similar initiatives.

# How to find your sample ballot

For North Carolina students who are not from the Mecklenburg County area and want to cast their ballot, there are three easy steps to view the sample ballot of the specific county needed.

- 1) Students first need to visit [ncvoter.org](http://ncvoter.org) and click on the “view your sample ballot” section on the home page.
- 2) Students will then need to fill out the voter search form, providing their full name, year of birth, county that they are voting in and if they are registered or not to vote. After doing so, hit the button labeled search to pull up the sample ballot.
- 3) Students will be led to a screen where they will need to click their name and scroll down to the section “your sample ballot,” where students will then be able to view the ballot in PDF form.

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Sofia DiStefano/Niner Times

# Former President DONALD TRUMP

## Republican Presidential Candidate

### Abortion

"We will oppose Late-Term Abortion while supporting mothers and policies that advance Prenatal Care, access to Birth Control, and IVF (fertility treatments)."

### Education

"Republicans will ensure children are taught fundamentals like Reading, History, Science and Math, not Leftwing propaganda. We will defund schools that engage in inappropriate political indoctrination of our children using Federal Taxpayer Dollars."

### Guns and law enforcement

"Republicans will restore safety in our neighborhoods by replenishing Police Departments, restoring Common Sense Policing and protecting Officers from frivolous lawsuits."

### Immigration

"President Trump and Republicans will reverse the Democrats' destructive Open Borders Policies that have allowed criminal gangs and Illegal Aliens from around the World to roam the United States without consequences. The Republican Party is committed to sending Illegal Aliens back home and removing those who have violated our Laws."

### Israel and Palestine

"We will stand with Israel, and seek peace in the Middle East."

"DEPORT PRO-HAMAS RADICALS AND MAKE OUR COLLEGE CAMPUSES SAFE AND PATRIOTIC AGAIN."

### Economy

"Republicans will immediately stabilize the Economy by slashing wasteful Government spending and promoting Economic Growth."

"Republicans will reinstate President Trump's Deregulation Policies, which saved Americans \$11,000 per household, and end Democrats' regulatory onslaught that disproportionately harms low- and middle-income households."

### Energy and environment

"Under President Trump, the U.S. became the Number One Producer of Oil and Natural Gas in the World—and we will soon be again by lifting restrictions on American Energy Production and terminating the Socialist Green New Deal. Republicans will unleash Energy Production from all sources, including nuclear, to immediately slash Inflation and power American homes, cars and factories with reliable, abundant and affordable Energy."

All information courtesy of DonaldJTrump.com



## Vice President

# KAMALA HARRIS

## Democratic Presidential Candidate

### Abortion

“Vice President [Kamala] Harris and Governor [Tim] Walz trust women to make decisions about their own bodies, and not have the government tell them what to do.”

### Education

“She will strengthen public education and training as a pathway to the middle class. And she’ll continue working to end the unreasonable burden of student loan debt and fight to make higher education more affordable so that college can be a ticket to the middle class.”

### Guns and law enforcement

“She’ll ban assault weapons and high-capacity magazines, require universal background checks and support red flag laws that keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people. She will also continue to invest in funding law enforcement.”

### Immigration

“As Vice President, she supported the bipartisan border security bill, the strongest reform in decades. The legislation would have deployed more detection technology to intercept fentanyl and other drugs and added 1,500 border security agents to protect our border. As President, she will bring back the bipartisan border security bill and sign it into law. At the same time, she knows that our immigration system is broken and needs comprehensive reform that includes strong border security and an earned pathway to citizenship.”

### Israel and Palestine

“Vice President Harris will always stand up for Israel’s right to defend itself, and she will always ensure Israel has the ability to defend itself. She and President Biden are working to end the war in Gaza, such that Israel is secure, the hostages are released, the suffering in Gaza ends and the Palestinian people can realize their right to dignity, security, freedom and self-determination.”

### Economy

“Vice President Harris and Governor Walz are committed to ensuring no one earning less than \$400,000 a year will pay more in taxes. They believe that we need to chart a New Way Forward by both making our tax system fairer and prioritizing investment and innovation. They will ensure the wealthiest Americans and the largest corporations pay their fair share.”

“Vice President Harris knows rent is too high and will sign legislation to outlaw new forms of price fixing by corporate landlords.”

### Energy and environment

“As President, she will unite Americans to tackle the climate crisis as she builds on this historic work, advances environmental justice, protects public lands and public health, increases resilience to climate disasters, lowers household energy costs, creates millions of new jobs and continues to hold polluters accountable to secure clean air and water for all.”

All information courtesy of KamalaHarris.com





# Republican Candidate Bios

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES FOR PRESIDENT, VICE PRESIDENT, NC GOVERNOR AND ATTORNEY GENERAL

Clare Grealey | Copy Editor



## Former President Donald Trump

Donald Trump is the Republican candidate for president and is running for the second time for the presidency. The 78-year-old was born in Queens, N.Y., and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in economics from the University of Pennsylvania. During the Vietnam War, he deferred the draft four times due to being a student but was ultimately deemed medically unfit for military service.

Trump rose to prominence through business venues and a reality television show, "The Apprentice." He won the 2016 presidential election against Hillary Clinton, but his victory was clouded by Russian interference. During his presidency, he appointed three Supreme Court Justices, ordered a travel ban on individuals from countries with Muslim majority populations and cracked down on immigration at the Southern border through the construction of a wall. He also withdrew the United States from the

Trans-Pacific Partnership, the Paris Agreement for climate change and the Iran nuclear deal, aimed at restricting Iranian nuclear facilities.

Trump was impeached in 2019 for abuses of power and again in 2021 for his involvement in inciting the Jan. 6 insurrection in the U.S. Capitol. In both cases, Trump was acquitted. However, in a New York legal case in May of 2024, Trump was found guilty of 34 felony counts of falsifying business records. In the same vein, he was found liable for sexual abuse and defamation.

After losing the 2020 presidential election, Trump is running for a third time and has selected JD Vance as his running mate. During this campaign, Trump has experienced two assassination attempts: One during a rally in Butler, Penn., where a bullet grazed his ear, and another in Florida, where a man was observed and arrested on a golf course with a rifle.

## U.S. Senator JD Vance



JD Vance is Donald Trump's running mate for the 2024 election in the role of vice president. The 40-year-old was born in Middletown, Ohio, and served as a military journalist in the United States Marine Corps for four years. In his book, "Hillbilly Elegy," Vance wrote about a childhood riddled with addiction and poverty. After graduating from Ohio State University under the G.I Bill and later Yale Law School, he entered the world of law and contributed to business expansion and various journalistic ventures. In 2022, he began campaigning for his election to the U.S. Senate and

won over Democrat Tim Ryan. During his time in the Senate, he introduced and co-sponsored bills to lower the price of insulin and a later bill with Marjorie Taylor Greene to criminalize gender-affirming care, with penalties of up to 12 years in prison.

Vance's selection by Trump as running mate unearthed previous critical comments made by the senator, but Vance has since retracted these comments. Vance's allegations of Haitian immigrants eating pets in Springfield, Ohio, have caused multiple bomb threats and the spread of misinformation.

## U.S. Rep. Dan Bishop



Dan Bishop is running for North Carolina attorney general as the Republican nominee. The 60-year-old Charlotte native attended UNC-Chapel Hill for undergraduate and law school, graduating from the University of North Carolina School of Law in 1990. In 2015, he was elected to the North Carolina House of Representatives and, in 2016, to the North Carolina State Senate.

Bishop is perhaps most notable for his significant role in writing House Bill 2, also known as the 'bathroom bill,' banning transgender people from using

bathrooms that did not align with their sex at birth, as well as prohibiting any local North Carolina government from creating new protections for LGBT individuals. The bill was signed into law in 2016 by then-Governor Pat McCrory but was later repealed after many public figures and companies announced boycotts of the state, amounting to \$3.7 billion in lost revenue. On Jan. 6, 2021, Bishop was one of 147 Republican lawmakers who rejected the certification of electoral votes in the 2020 election.

## Lieutenant Governor Mark Robinson



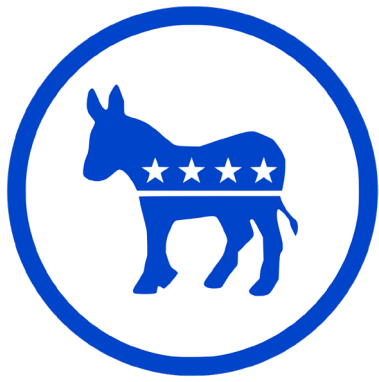
Mark Robinson is the Republican nominee for the position of North Carolina governor and is the first Black nominee for the position. The 56-year-old was born in Greensboro, N.C., and graduated from UNC Greensboro in December of 2022 after previously taking breaks to work and serve in the Army Reserves. Robinson rose to prominence in American politics after speaking in favor of gun rights in 2018, where organizers of a gun show were debating whether or not to cancel the event following the events of the Stoneman Douglas High School mass shooting.

In 2020, he ran for and was elected lieutenant governor of North Carolina. During his tenure in office, he established the FACTS (Fairness, Accountability in the Classroom for Teachers and

Students) Task Force to monitor and investigate reports of political bias during instruction in North Carolina public schools. Robinson has described his relationship with Governor Roy Cooper as "nonexistent," as Robinson serves as acting governor whenever Cooper leaves the state. Still, Cooper rarely informs Robinson of his travel plans.

During his 2024 gubernatorial campaign, Robinson was the subject of a CNN exposé regarding comments he had allegedly made on an online pornography forum, declaring himself as a "Black Nazi" and appearing to condone chattel slavery. Following this report, Robinson's staff withdrew from his campaign. However, Robinson is still running for the office of governor and will appear on the ballot.





# Democratic Candidate Bios

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES FOR PRESIDENT, VICE PRESIDENT, NC GOVERNOR AND ATTORNEY GENERAL

Clare Grealey | Copy Editor



## Vice President Kamala Harris

Kamala Harris is the Democratic candidate for president and currently serves as vice president of the United States. The 60-year-old was born in Oakland, Calif., and is Indian and Afro-Jamaican. Harris graduated from Howard University and then later from the University of California, Hastings College of the Law in 1989. She began as a district attorney in Alameda County.

In 2002, she ran for District Attorney of San Francisco and ran again in 2007, winning both times. During her time in this office, she closed loopholes in the legal system and advocated against the death penalty. From 2011 to 2017, she served as the California Attorney General, receiving endorsements from the late Senator Dianne Feinstein and then-Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi. During her terms, she advocated for reform of the criminal justice system.

Following her second term as Attorney General, she ran for senator and was elected, becoming the first South Asian American senator in the United States' history. During her tenure, Harris was notable for her pointed questioning during

federal hearings and her questioning of Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh during his confirmation hearings. In 2018, she sponsored a bill that would have made lynching a federal hate crime, but this later died in the House of Representatives.

Harris ran for president during the 2020 election before withdrawing in late 2019 due to a lack of funds. On Aug. 11, 2020, Joe Biden announced that he had selected Harris as his running mate. Later that year, Harris became the first woman, African American and Asian American to hold the position of vice president of the United States. During her time as vice president, Harris was frequently called upon to break ties in the Senate, as there was an even divide between Democrats and Republicans, casting a record 33 tie-breaking votes.

When President Joe Biden dropped out of the 2024 race, he endorsed Harris for president. During the first 24 hours of her campaign, she raised \$81 million. Harris secured the Democratic nomination on Aug. 5 and announced her running mate as Minnesota Governor Tim Walz the next day.

## Governor Tim Walz



Tim Walz is Kamala Harris's running mate for the 2024 election. The 60-year-old was born in West Point, Neb., and graduated from Chadron State College with a degree in social science education in 1989. He became a teacher, taught geography and coached the Mankato West High School football team, leading them to their first state championship. Walz served in the Army National Guard for 20 years and re-enlisted following 9/11, serving for four years, retiring with the rank of command sergeant major in 2005.

Walz was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 2006 and served Minnesota's first congressional district until 2019. In 2008, he endorsed Barack Obama's candidacy for president and voted in favor of the Affordable Care Act during Obama's presidency. In 2018, Walz announced his candidacy for governor of Minnesota and won the election against Republican Jeff Johnson. He was re-elected in 2022.

In August of 2024, Walz was announced and certified as Harris's running mate.

## U.S. Rep. Jeff Jackson



Jeff Jackson is the Democratic nominee for North Carolina attorney general. The 42-year-old was born in Miami but raised in Chapel Hill, N.C. He graduated from Emory University and received his law degree from the University of North Carolina School of Law in 2009. He is a member of the United States Army Reserve, enlisting in 2002 and currently holding the rank of Major.

Following Senator Dan Clodfelter's resignation in 2014, Jackson sought to fill his State Senate seat. He won by a single vote and then ran unopposed later that year. He was re-elected in 2016 and introduced the bill to repeal House Bill 2 in 2017. In 2020, he was

re-elected to the North Carolina State Senate for a third term. In 2021, Jackson ran for United States Senate to replace Richard Burr but ultimately suspended his campaign after 12 months.

In 2022, he was elected to the United States House of Representatives for North Carolina's 14th congressional district, which includes most of southern Mecklenburg County. He became notable for promoting himself on the social media platform TikTok. He later voted in favor of the alleged 'TikTok Ban,' alienating himself from many supporters. In 2024, Jackson announced his run for North Carolina Attorney General.

## Attorney General Josh Stein



Josh Stein is the Democratic nominee for the position of North Carolina governor after choosing not to run again for state attorney general. The 58-year-old was born in Washington, D.C., before moving to Charlotte and later to Chapel Hill, N.C. He graduated from Dartmouth College in 1988 and later graduated from Harvard Law School and the Kennedy School of Government.

In 2001, Stein was appointed Senior Deputy Attorney General for Consumer Protection by Governor Roy Cooper and served as such until 2008. In 2008, he was elected to represent

the 16th district in the North Carolina State Senate and was re-elected in 2010. In 2016, he was elected as the North Carolina attorney general and led multiple bi-partisan efforts. In 2019, he was the first attorney general in the country to sue e-cigarette manufacturer JUUL for their marketing to minors that was deemed unlawful.

In January 2023, Stein announced his run for governor and has been endorsed by Roy Cooper, the Reverend Dr. Jay Augustine and the North Carolina Association of Educators.



# N.C. Lieutenant Governor MARK ROBINSON



Courtesy of Mark Robinson/Wikipedia

## Republican N.C. Governor Candidate

### Educational Background

Robinson has a bachelor's degree in history from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

### Professional Experience

Robinson is the lieutenant governor of North Carolina. He was elected to this position in 2020 and is serving his first term.

He previously worked in the furniture manufacturing industry.

### Infrastructure

"We must ensure the state has the infrastructure to handle the tremendous growth we are experiencing. This means investing in rural broadband, safe and wide roadways, coastal protections, robust bridges and well-maintained ports."

### Economy

"Our country is struggling under inflation, stifling regulations and high taxes. It's time to ease inflation's grip, reform the regulatory system to free businesses and cut taxes for all North Carolinians. We need real solutions that put families and businesses first."

### Education

"We need to invest in education by increasing teacher pay and ensuring our educators are valued. It's time to provide more options and opportunities for students, including advocating for career and technical education to prepare them for real-world success."

### Environment

"Environmental, Social and Governance investing (ESG) puts ideological goals ahead of creating a return on taxpayer dollars. It is nothing more than a tool of the extreme left to push political agendas. We must do everything possible to stop ESG from harming our state's taxpayers."

### Public safety and law enforcement

"To reduce violent crime, we must stand up for law enforcement and give them the support they need. This means training and equipping our officers while holding them to the highest professional standards to keep our communities safe."

### Small businesses

"For a long time, we have seen the metropolitan areas of our state grow rapidly while communities in rural areas have all too often been left behind. In fact, some areas have seen population decrease as people leave to find more opportunities elsewhere. As governor, I want to ensure that EVERYONE has an opportunity for success no matter where they are from or where they live."

All information courtesy of [MarkRobinsonForNC.com](https://MarkRobinsonForNC.com) & [ncvoter.branch.vote](https://ncvoter.branch.vote)



# N.C. Attorney General JOSH STEIN

## Democratic N.C. Governor Candidate

### Educational Background

Stein is a graduate of Harvard Law School, Harvard Kennedy School of Government and Dartmouth College.

### Professional Experience

Stein is the current attorney general of

North Carolina. Before serving as attorney general, he was a state senator for seven years, serving from 2009 to 2016.

Prior to becoming an elected official, Stein was a senior deputy attorney general for consumer protection in the North Carolina Department of Justice for eight years.

### Abortion

"Every North Carolinian deserves to live in a state where they have the freedom to vote, to make their own health care decisions and to live their lives free from discrimination."

### Education

"We must increase access to high-quality early childhood education so kids start kindergarten healthy and ready to learn. We must support our educators and give teachers meaningful pay raises to recruit and keep the best and brightest teachers for our kids. We must also invest in other critical school staff, including counselors, nurses, social workers and bus drivers."

"No child should show up to the classroom hungry, which is why I will work to invest in universal, healthy school meals for all public school students."

### Public safety and law enforcement

"To reduce violent crime, we must stand up for law enforcement and give them the support they need. This means training and equipping our officers while holding them to the highest professional standards to keep our communities safe."

### Economy

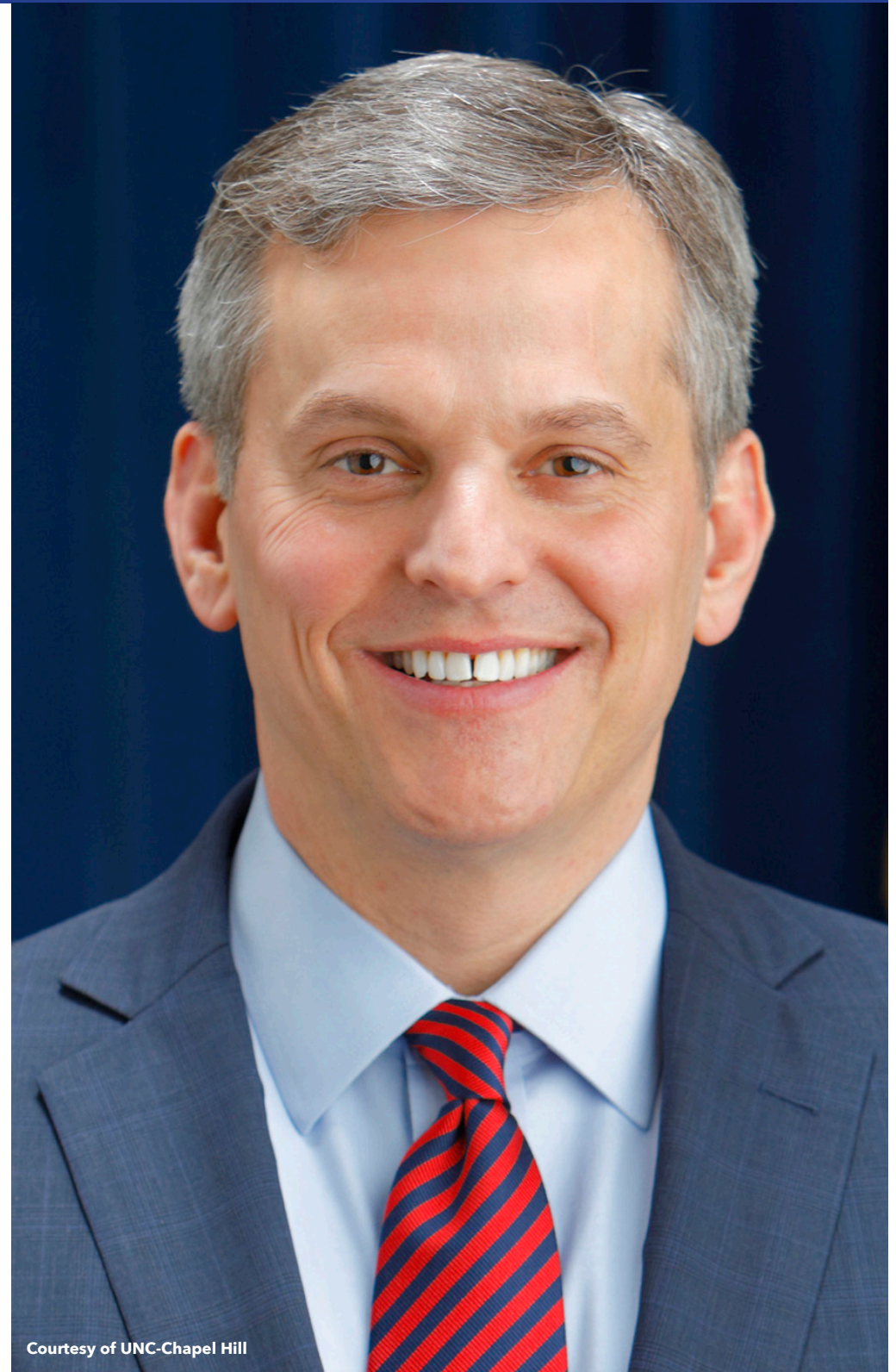
"Instead of waging job-killing culture wars, I'll keep fighting to invest in our people—who are our greatest asset. As Governor, I'll work to bring new business to the state, continue building a strong workforce and create job opportunities for folks in every corner of the state."

### Environment

"As your Governor, I'll continue to push for clean air and clean water. Unlike politicians like Lieutenant Governor Mark Robinson, who deny the climate crisis, I will put North Carolina on a path toward carbon neutrality by 2050. I will work to prepare our state for the impacts of climate change and natural disasters by investing in resilient infrastructure."

### Small businesses

"As Governor, I'll fight to ensure entrepreneurs have every opportunity to build wealth by reducing red tape, investing in innovative strategies for economic development and increasing resources for technical assistance and mentorship programs. I'll also provide small, minority and women-owned businesses a fair shot at competing for state contracts."



Courtesy of UNC-Chapel Hill

All information courtesy of JoshStein.org & ncvoter.branch.vote



# Opinion: Downvoting is not just for Reddit

Ruhshona Soledjonova | Opinion Editor

With election season in full swing, many instantly know which presidential candidate to vote for but ignore state and local candidates down the ballot. Filling out the full ballot is important because local governments affect everyday lives, especially for college students.

Down (ballot) voting, or the lack thereof, is a timely issue that contributes to not knowing our local government and its influence in school boards, law enforcement and judicial courts.

Roughly one-third of eligible voters do not bother to vote for local candidates. This is a major problem because local elections hold the power to take or give away civil rights to American citizens. Completing the entirety of the ballot matters now more than ever as we see the political sphere become further polarized.

Just because local votes are lower on the ballot does not mean that they are less important. For example, state legislatures pass laws that affect voting, economic, reproductive and educational rights.

### Importance for college students

Voters, especially first-time voters, should pay

careful attention to who they vote for down the ballot as these are the people in control of their surrounding communities. For college students, downvoting could play an important role in education, whether it is funding, curriculum, graduation requirements or others.

According to the Washington Post, “In the 2020 election, 66% of college students who were registered to vote cast their ballots—an increase of 14 percentage points over the 2016 presidential election.”

Undoubtedly, college students are encouraged to vote, but practicing civic duty means completing the full ballot. It is much more likely that students face interactions with local laws than the federal government. The youth can make lasting impacts on their communities by voting on issues that directly affect them.

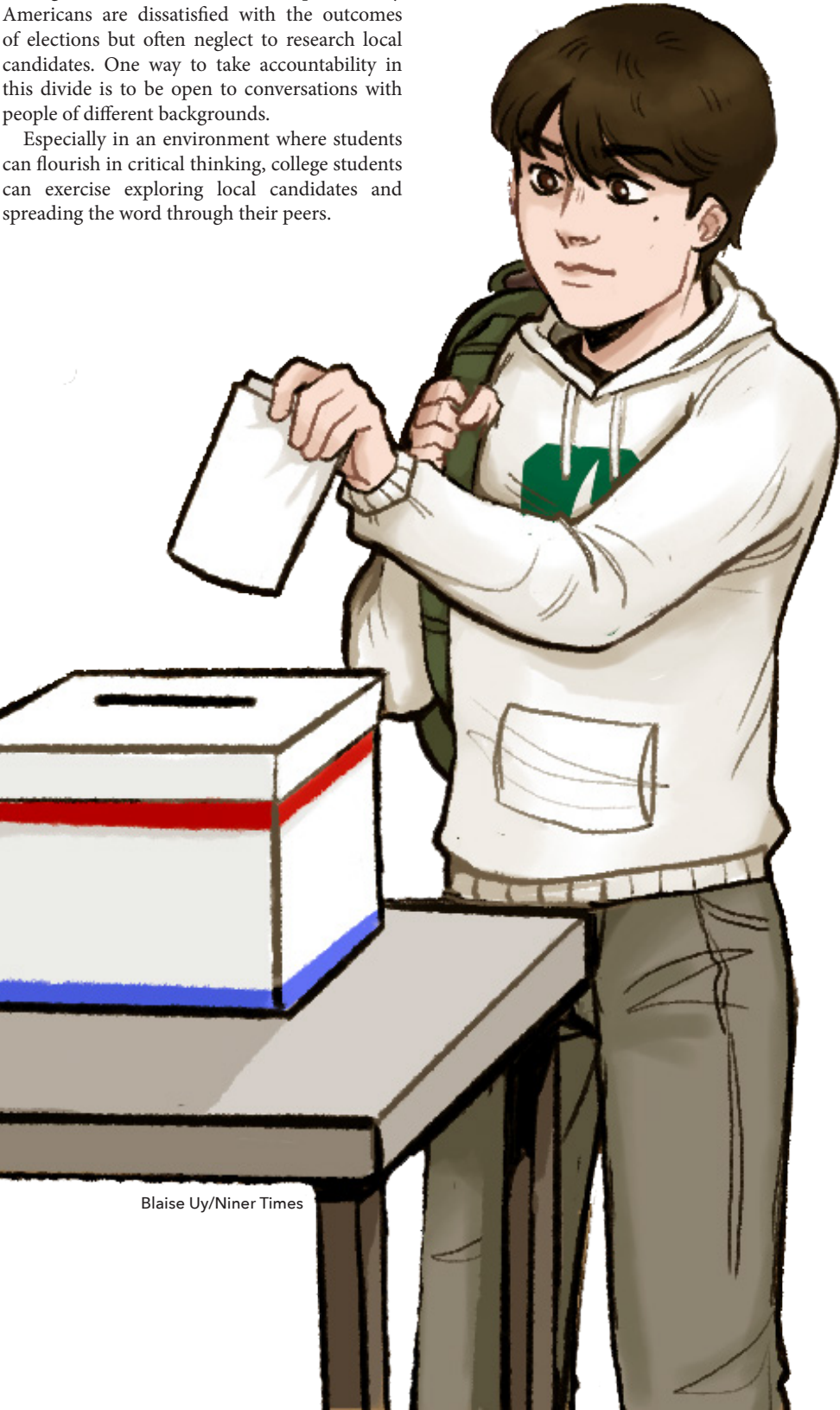
### A shift in mindset

Exercising your right to vote is a civic duty. Shifting this mindset of prioritizing local candidates takes time and effort. However, if more individuals participate in downvoting, we can see impactful changes toward a brighter future and more effective representation. These


ballots are intended for individuals to voice their opinions; it is time to take advantage of that.

Reinstating a level of trust is a heavy weight that government officials must pull. Many Americans are dissatisfied with the outcomes of elections but often neglect to research local candidates. One way to take accountability in this divide is to be open to conversations with people of different backgrounds.


Especially in an environment where students can flourish in critical thinking, college students can exercise exploring local candidates and spreading the word through their peers.




Blaise Uy/Niner Times



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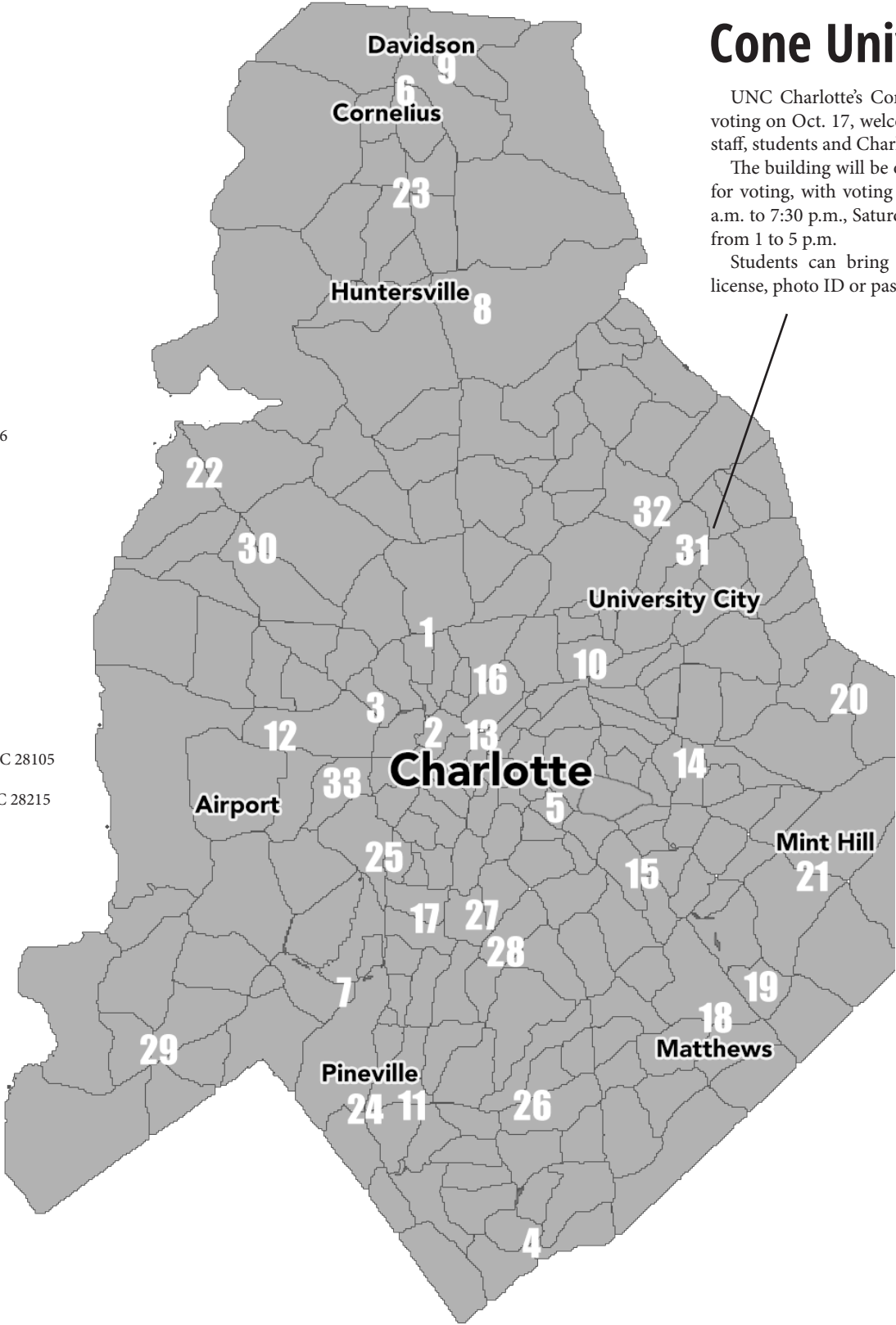


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# Mecklenburg County VOTING LOCATIONS

1. Allegra Westbrooks Regional Library  
2412 Beatties Ford Rd, Charlotte, NC 28216
2. Bank of America Stadium  
800 S Mint St, Charlotte, NC 28202
3. Bette Rae Thomas Rec Center  
2921 Tuckaseegee Rd, Charlotte, NC 28208
4. Blakeney Crossing  
9941 Rea Rd #D, Charlotte, NC 28277
5. Bojangles Entertainment Complex  
2700 Independence Blvd, Charlotte, NC 28205
6. Cornelius Town Hall  
21445 Catawba Ave, Cornelius, NC 28031
7. CPCC Harper Campus  
315 W Hebron St, Charlotte, NC 28273
8. David B Waymer Rec Center  
14008 Holbrooks Rd, Huntersville, NC 28078
9. Davidson Town Hall & Community Center  
251 South St, Davidson, NC 28036
10. Eastway Regional Recreation Center  
3150 Eastway Park Dr, Charlotte, NC 28213
11. Pineville Founders Hall at Pineville Church  
8614 Pineville-Matthews Rd, Charlotte, NC 28226
12. Goodwill Opportunity Campus  
5301 Wilkinson Blvd, Charlotte, NC 28208
13. Hal Marshall Annex  
618 N College St, Charlotte, NC 28202
14. Hickory Grove Library  
5935 Hickory Grove Rd, Charlotte, NC 28215
15. Independence Regional Library  
6000 Conference Dr, Charlotte, NC 28212
16. Camp North End Junior Achievement  
1701 North Graham St, Charlotte, NC 28206
17. Marion Diehl Center  
2219 Tyvola Rd, Charlotte, NC 28210
18. Matthews Library  
230 Matthews Station St, Matthews, NC 28105
19. Matthews Corners  
2332 Matthews Township Pkwy #B, Matthews, NC 28105
20. Mecklenburg Shrine Club  
5200 Mecklenburg Shrine Club Rd, Charlotte, NC 28215
21. Mint Hill Masonic Lodge  
10224 Lawyers Rd, Charlotte, NC 28227
22. Mt. Island Library  
4420 Hoyt Galvin Way, Charlotte, NC 28214
23. North County Regional Library  
16500 Holly Crest Ln, Huntersville, NC 28078
24. Pineville Library  
505 Main St, Pineville, NC 28134
25. South Boulevard Library  
4429 South Blvd, Charlotte, NC 28209
26. South County Regional Library  
5801 Rea Rd, Charlotte, NC 28277
27. Southpark Area Rexford Rd  
2101 Rexford Rd, Charlotte, NC 28211
28. Southpark Regional Library  
7015 Carnegie Blvd, Charlotte, NC 28211
29. Steele Creek Masonic Temple  
13611 Steele Creek Rd, Charlotte, NC 28273
30. The Bradshaw Center at Hillcrest  
8501 Bellhaven Blvd, Charlotte, NC 28214
31. UNC Charlotte Cone Center  
9025 University Rd, Charlotte, NC 28223
32. University Area Kohls  
9315 Tryon St, Charlotte, NC 28262
33. West Boulevard Library  
2157 West Blvd, Charlotte, NC 28208



## Cone University Center

UNC Charlotte's Cone University Center opened for early voting on Oct. 17, welcoming a solid crowd of UNC Charlotte staff, students and Charlotte community members.

The building will be open seven days a week through Nov. 2 for voting, with voting hours Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Sundays from 1 to 5 p.m.

Students can bring their physical 49er ID card, driver's license, photo ID or passport to vote.

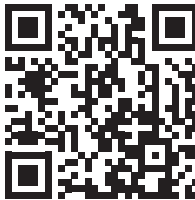
## Early voting versus Election Day voting

The in-person early voting period for the 2024 general election ends 3 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 2, 2024.

Voters may cast a ballot at any early voting site in Mecklenburg county. During early voting, those eligible may also register to vote at the same time with identification showing proof of where they live in addition to photo ID.

However, on Election Day, registered voters must vote at their assigned polling place. Same-day registration is not available.

Find your assigned polling place by scanning the QR code below.







## Breaking down the presidential election process

Brendan Mullen | Writing Managing Editor

Just like any other election year, the 2024 election's stakes are high, and reminders to vote are increasing. However, when the ballots are cast and the time to vote comes to an end after Nov. 5, one might be left to wonder: How does the election work?

Despite the chaos citizens may see on television and in the headlines, there is a systematic process that occurs after voting season via the Electoral College to decide which candidate will be president of the United States.

Unlike other elections, the votes cast by citizens, known as the popular vote, do not directly determine the outcome of the presidential election. Instead of voting directly for the president, citizens elect who they want their state to vote for. Members of the Electoral College vote for a presidential candidate on their state's behalf.

Each state is assigned an Electoral College membership equal to its total number of congressional members. For example, North Carolina has 14 representatives and two senators, which total 16 electors in the Electoral College. Currently, there are 538 electors divided among 50 states and Washington, D.C., in the entire country.

According to the Constitution, Electoral College members cannot be members of Congress or have held a position in the United States federal government. Otherwise, it is up to the state to decide who will be part of the Electoral College.

Often, state party conventions hold votes for electors. Political parties usually choose someone they may want to reward for their service or someone personally or professionally connected to the party to be a potential elector.

For most states, the candidate electors vote for is decided by whoever wins the popular vote in the elector's state. The exceptions for this are Nebraska and Maine, which allow for split votes on behalf of the state. Electors are not constitutionally obligated to vote for the candidate that won the popular vote in their state, but state laws and party affiliations normally prevent them from doing so.

After being appointed to the Electoral College by the executive of the state, members will vote in their state on Dec. 17. One vote each for president and vice president will be granted to electors. On Jan. 6, votes will be read and tallied during a joint congressional session. Finally, on Jan. 20, the candidate with more than 270 Electoral College votes will be sworn into office during the presidential inauguration.

In short, the popular vote decides who the state will vote for in the presidential election instead of simply who will be the president. Although citizens are not directly voting for the president, their vote is still incredibly influential in the process because states use general election results to appoint the electors.

# Opinion: Get excited for this election, everyone else already is

Emsley Jackson | Asst. Opinion Editor

Each election season, many voters make their way to the polls half-heartedly or not at all. The younger voting demographic is typically absent from discussion and action.

This cycle seems to be humming a different tune, as polls and reports show voter enthusiasm increasing on both sides of the aisle. Voters are actively voicing their opinions on what policies matter most in this election through discourse, involvement and endorsement.

Just a few months ago, mentions of the upcoming election were met with worry and exasperation. The idea of a 'Trump versus Biden: The Sequel' was not revving many engines. Joe Biden was showing rapid signs of aging and decreased strength needed to run the country, and Donald Trump was as polarizing to voters as ever. The political violence, competitors and problems at hand were all too familiar. This time was what political commentators might refer to as '2024 B.K.' (Before Kamala Harris).

A poll done by Data for Progress showed huge jumps in voter enthusiasm as Harris joined the race, and stated "Before Biden dropped out, an average of 41% of Democrats, 28% of Independents who lean toward Democrats and 20% of Independents who don't lean toward either party said they were more enthusiastic about voting in 2024 than usual. Since Biden's exit, these numbers have risen to an average of 61%, 47% and 27%, respectively."

Harris's entering the presidential race changed the outlook on both sides. Democrats now have a more lively chance, and Republi-

cans have a more lively opponent.

Aaron Floyd, a former PBS student reporter, believes that Harris's replacing President Biden has added new layers of importance for voters.

"It's a momentous point in history, not only because there's a female candidate, but also because there's a former president running with a rich history," said Floyd. "America is not only fighting a political war but a cultural war as well. I think most people are rooting for themselves to win because they see some aspect of themselves in a candidate."

The silent demographic, younger voters, are getting more involved and informed about politics than ever through conversations with friends and family, in classrooms and on social media. Polls everywhere have seen surges in young voter support and enthusiasm, especially for Harris, as the election approaches.

UNC Charlotte second-year Elijah Simon is a big believer in taking this involvement to the booth.

"I think democracy is a privilege, and the fact that we get to exercise our voice, I think it's an important thing," said Simon. "As young people, it's our job to create a future that we want to see. Voting is a big part of that."

Social media has greatly affected voter connection with TikTok, Instagram and X accounts by both campaigns reaching audiences in a more relaxed format. For example, former President Trump has famously been known to utilize social media presence to speak and connect more directly with voters on issues.

Similarly, Kamala HQ's TikTok page refor-

mats her platform on climate change, reproductive rights, gun safety and more into content that is easily digestible for younger demographics. A poll done by the Pew Research Center noted that 59% of X users say that they are on the app to keep up with politics or political issues. Social media is becoming more political for all users, bringing more policy to your scroll and food for your thoughts.

Abstaining from the election process is not something to be justified by your alleged moral compass. The wheels of democracy will still turn, the sun will still rise and no gold stars will be given. Voting is not just about the figurehead on your ballot but also about the policies they will enact, the administration they run and the legacy they will leave. Even for some voters who are not fueled by backing a certain candidate, the passion to vote is still present.

"Neither of them is the best option for our country. Both get certain things done, but not enough done, so to speak," said Charlotte second-year Colin Johnson. "One way or another, something is going to better a part of our country, whether it's infrastructure or the economy; it doesn't matter. So, it's important to vote regardless."

Whether you are backing your choice, fulfilling your civic duty, exercising your right or simply plotting for that sticker, your vote matters. Make sure to join millions of other democracy fans come November at a polling station near you.

# Breaking down major candidate platforms

Brendan Mullen | Writing Managing Editor

## TRUMP VANCE

Former president and current Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump's platform largely continues the one from his previous campaign in 2020, putting 'America First' in most of his policies.

Economically, Trump believes imposing tax cuts will help stimulate economic growth. He also supports becoming energy-independent by increasing the production of oil and natural gas. Additionally, Trump prioritizes American manufacturing and aims to reduce America's reliance on foreign supply chains.

Naturally, Trump's emphasis on achieving energy independence through fossil fuels means he opposes the Green New Deal, as he believes it harms the economy.

Regarding Trump's foreign policy, his 'America First' ideology holds strong. Trump wishes to entirely reduce America's involvement in foreign conflict and build alliances where necessary or beneficial but expects appropriate contributions from said allies.

Trump's hard stance against China has not softened since his time in office, as he seeks

to address trade imbalances between the U.S. and China. Furthermore, Trump believes China's security threats to America must be combated if he re-enters the Oval Office.

By lessening America's involvement in foreign conflicts, Trump plans to swiftly enact stricter border and immigration policies. This includes stronger border security via the continuation of the southern border wall and other policies that limit immigration.

Trump also wishes to enact merit-based immigration reforms and mass deportations of illegal immigrants.

Trump believes in fully backing law enforcement and opposes reforms that he views as too lenient. He supports tough-on-crime policies and wishes to crack down on violent protests and organized crime.

He opposes government-run healthcare systems like Medicaid for All or the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Trump would instead replace systems such as the ACA with market-based solutions that lower premiums while increasing healthcare options.

## HARRIS WALZ

Kamala Harris, the 2024 Democratic candidate for the presidential election and current vice president of the U.S., pushes a progressive platform that aligns with her affiliated party.

Harris's economic interests address Trump's tax cuts, which he believes exempt the wealthiest Americans from paying their fair share, thus creating an unfair advantage for the upper class. Additionally, Harris supports raising the minimum wage and decreasing the pay gap for women and minorities.

Harris advocates for accessible healthcare for all Americans, particularly through her support of strengthening the ACA. She also calls for systems that allow private insurance to coexist with government healthcare.

Unlike Trump, Harris wholeheartedly supports the Green New Deal in hopes of drastically reducing carbon emissions by 2050. However, Harris's environmental plans do not stop there; she also seeks to address the disproportionate impact of pollution and climate change on low-income communities.

Harris's drive to create opportunity for everyone extends into her support for more accessible education through programs that create free preschools and community colleges. Increasing teacher pay is another aspect of Harris's plans for America's education system.

Socially, Harris is a proud supporter of women's reproductive rights, especially regarding abortion. Her policies regarding gun control call for in-depth background checks, assault rifle bans and mandatory licensing in order to buy a gun.

Her support for LGBTQ+ rights is apparent in her support of the Equality Act, which would protect members of the LGBTQ+ community from discrimination in the workplace or housing facilities.

Harris's foreign policies involve multilateral relationships with foreign entities through global institutions like the United Nations, for example, to address human rights issues, climate change or trade, among other things.

## MARK ROBINSON

The current lieutenant governor of North Carolina, Mark Robinson, is also the Republican gubernatorial nominee. Should he win as governor, many of Robinson's plans reflect his conservative values and blue-collar background.

Robinson believes in tax cuts and lowering various costs to alleviate inflation's impact on the working class. He believes that Capitol Hill's rampant spending is suffocating the average American and plans to take steps that will make living more affordable.

Robinson's vision for North Carolina includes reworking the state's education system by removing progressive ideologies from the

classroom and allowing freedom of expression of one's faith.

Robinson believes that subjects like critical race theory or gender identity should be exempt from classroom curriculum. Instead, classrooms should focus strictly on academic subjects like math and reading to better prepare students for their careers and college.

Robinson's conservative ideologies extend into his steadfast support of the Second Amendment and outward opposition against limiting firearm ownership. Robinson also advocates for pro-life policies and opposes abortion rights.

## JOSH STEIN

Robinson is not the only gubernatorial candidate with previous government ties. Josh Stein is the current attorney general of North Carolina and the Democratic gubernatorial nominee.

Stein's economic policies aim to invest in clean and renewable energy and infrastructure to improve the quality of life for North Carolinians. Stein also believes that these investments will generate jobs across the state.

Stein does not stop at creating more jobs but also wishes to raise the minimum wage for North Carolina workers. Another benefit Stein aims to promote includes better access to paid family leave.

As mentioned, Stein plans to utilize clean energy systems to help combat climate change by reducing North Carolina's carbon footprint. Stein also believes in preserving and protecting North Carolina's natural resources, such as clean water and air.

Socially, Stein takes a progressive stance, promoting reproductive freedom and abortion rights. He supports LGBTQ+ rights, including protection from discrimination in workplaces and schools.

Stein also advocates for reforms in the North Carolina criminal justice system that hold law enforcement accountable while ensuring public safety.



# Charlotte political science professors discuss the 2024 presidential election

Kendall Maye | Asst. Arts & Culture Editor

Blaise Uy/Niner Times

With the upcoming election, opinions are a dime a dozen. It seems like everywhere you look, someone is sure to be giving their take on who should be in office or whether voting makes a difference. What if you asked someone who has devoted their life to studying this topic?

UNC Charlotte's Department of Political Science and Public Administration offers a wide range of degrees in the discipline. With years of experience under their belt, the professors in this department have much to say about the current state of the country.

Dr. Eric Heberlig is a political science professor who has been teaching at UNC Charlotte for 25 years. With a knack for social studies and an interest in how society changes, he decided to pursue this discipline as a career.

Elections have always been important to Heberlig. However, there are key differences in this process compared to previous elections.

"There are dramatic differences in the leadership styles of [the] candidates, their policy views and their commitment to the practices of democracy," said Heberlig.

"We have a convicted felon running for pres-

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**"Politics is about dealing with conflict. It's about developing methods to pursue the public good despite disagreements about priorities and preferences about what policies are moral and effective."**

**- Dr. Eric Heberlig, political science professor**

ident and an incumbent president who was pushed out by his own party just before the party convention," said Heberlig. "We also have a polarized electorate which does not react in public opinion polls to major events like convictions of candidates, wars, changes in the economy, assassination attempts, debates or other events that typically cause voters to reconsider their choices."

Heberlig applies what is students are learning to make sense of real world events.

Dr. Jason Giersch is another political science professor who has been teaching at UNC Charlotte for over a decade. He teaches classes on research methods and American politics.

"No matter which candidate for president wins, they'll be a 'first' in some regard," said Giersch. "For example, [Kamala] Harris will be the first in terms of her gender while [Donald] Trump would be a first in terms of having been impeached in a previous term. People might argue whether those things matter in choosing a president, but they make it a different election."

Similarly to Heberlig's teaching method, Giersch focuses on discovering facts by applying scientific methods to understand political science. While his students do study policies and ideology, his classes are not about determining which candidate would be best suited to lead the country.

"If I do anything differently, I probably put a little more emphasis on the importance of civility, tolerance and keeping faith in institutions like elections," said Giersch.

Giersch is so passionate about educating his students on democracy that he also encourages them to participate in early voting with him on campus.

Joshua Miller is a political science professor who has been teaching at UNC Charlotte for six years. He credits his professors at Stetson University for getting him interested in the subject as an undergraduate.

Miller notices how the rhetoric surrounding this election sounds more consequential than it has before. He cites the lasting impact of Jan. 6, the increased influence of presidents in foreign policy and the events of 2020 as reasons for this.

"So, you could see this election as a referen-

dum on how the country is going to address problems that really scare people," said Miller.

Heberlig loves helping students understand why the system works the way it does so that they can go on and effectively advocate for change. While teaching politics and film, Giersch enjoys the conversational aspect, especially when students interpret things differently than him. Miller is interested in showing students how complex it is to shape a principle into a rule with the ability to change people's lives.

Being a political science professor during this age comes with the opportunity to conduct meaningful conversations with young people about civics and the current political climate.

Conversations surrounding politics can become tense, but these professors have learned how to navigate these topics in the classroom.

Regardless of how divisive American politics have become in society, the discussions in their classrooms have remained respectful.

"In some of my classes, we debate policy and reforms to the political process," said Heberlig. "We learn to debate civilly using evidence."

As humans, disagreements are inevitable. While Miller's students certainly debate passionately with each other, he could only think of a few moments where they argued over topics. However, when conversations in his class do get intense, they always end in a resolution.

"Without any prompting from me, each of those students apologized to one another for getting heated, and they continued their conversations after class," said Miller. "In my experience, students here do an excellent job of modeling the principle of treating one another as people and community members first."

Despite its name, the United States is a fractured nation, becoming increasingly divided as the election arrives. To some individuals, the prospect of party members reconciling with each other on each side seems bleak. However, Heberlig believes that problem-solving by confronting differences head-on is crucial to creating unity.

"Politics is about dealing with conflict," said



Heberlig. "It's about developing methods to pursue the public good despite disagreements about priorities and preferences about what policies are moral and effective."

To Giersch, issues will always divide people, but what is different now is how these problems are more aligned along political parties than they were before.

"A few things could change this," said Giersch. "One is if Americans found a common enemy to unite against, which is not necessarily a happy prospect. Another would be if some issue cut through rather than between the parties, resulting in some Republicans and Democrats finding common ground across party lines."

The political science professors at UNC Charlotte understand the significance of participating in democracy. It is a responsibility that they cherish and do not take lightly.

"Individually, I treat voting a little like a ritual in which I recommit myself to the optimism and faith I had in American democracy when I was a kid," said Miller. "The feminist philosopher bell hooks observes that children are great political theorists because they're so imaginative. Casting your ballot is a little moment to imagine a better world without feeling too utopian about it."

"One of my favorite professors once pointed out that the odds of my vote ever mattering are minuscule," said Gierch. "I think that even if my vote doesn't determine the winner, by showing up, I am sending the message that I'm paying attention, I have an opinion and I want those in power to listen. Even better, I get to play a tiny role in this amazing experiment in self-government."



# Opinion: A vote for Harris is a vote for progress

Niner Times Staffer

On July 4, 2024, the United States of America celebrated 248 years since ratifying the Declaration of Independence, popularly known as America's 'birthday.' On this day, America's founding fathers sought to create a nation of liberty and equality.

In those centuries since its conception, America has repeatedly fallen short of its foundational values of freedom and inclusivity that it claims to uphold. In the face of the ever-growing division this failure has fostered, there is a dire need for a leader with proven dedication to unity and an unwavering commitment to those this country has left behind.

2024 Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris not only represents a historic moment as a trailblazing woman of color but also an icon of inclusion, equity and equality. A vote for Harris is a vote for progress, justice and a vision for a more inclusive and united America.

Harris's victory over her opponent, Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump, would bring many firsts to the Oval Office. However, she is by no means new to the realm of political leadership. Harris's experience as vice president, U.S. senator and California attorney general testifies to her outstanding leadership skills and qualified position as a leader in this country.

Leadership is not the only quality this country needs in its president. Luckily, Harris's platform demonstrates a steadfast dedication to inclusivity, understanding and opportunity for all.

Harris marks a significant moment in American history as the first South Asian, Black and woman vice president. Voting for Harris brings a necessary diversity to Capitol Hill and gives voice to minorities that have been forced to stay far too silent for far too long.

Additionally, Harris brings a drive for accessible healthcare to the table. She advocates for lowering the cost of prescription drugs and providing quality healthcare for populations left to fend for themselves.

Of course, Harris's position as a champion of fair healthcare means unwavering support

for women's reproductive rights. She strongly opposed the 2022 overturning of Roe v. Wade, which stripped women of their constitutional right to abortion and holds strong in her fight for legal, accessible and equitable abortion services for women across America.

Harris will not only ensure that women's bodies remain out of government control but also continue to fight for women's rights in the workforce. Her outward advocacy for extended parental leave, closing the wage gap and protection against harassment or discrimination in the workplace all make for stellar reasons to mark Harris's name on your ballot.

Other reasons include Harris's desire to provide resources for immigrants seeking haven in America. This means creating accessible pathways for legal citizenship and opposing the separation of immigrant families. This is opposed to the Republican Party's plan to protect their beloved 'Land of the Free' through what their official platform terms "[T]he Largest Deportation Program in American History."

Environmentally, Harris has continually pushed for better treatment of America's ecosystems through her drive to build clean energy systems. Her support for the Green New Deal shows that Harris has what it takes to stand against big corporations and prevent them from further poisoning the earth.

Additionally, Harris and the Green New Deal aim to create high-paying jobs for Americans and address economic disparities in communities.

As we approach the 2024 presidential election, the right choice is unmistakable.

A vote for Kamala Harris is a vote for the foundational principles of freedom and equality that this great nation was built upon. In stark contrast, a vote for Trump represents a continued retreat into hateful and oppressive ideologies. This is our time to make a stand. Seize the moment and make the right decision. And if my message is not clear yet, let me state it plainly: Vote for Kamala Harris.



# Opinion: A vote for Donald Trump is a vote for America

Niner Times Staffer

Think back to four years ago when Donald Trump was in the Oval Office: low gas prices, secure borders, little overseas conflict and liberal nonsense in our country. Vote for a return to what America should be, and vote for Trump as our next president.

America needs a strong leader to help navigate the ever-changing world that we live in. Are we confident Vice President Kamala Harris is really that leader?

Supporters of Harris describe Trump as incompetent and ineffective, yet Harris is having the hardest of times pulling away from Trump in polls.

If Harris cannot lead an effective campaign against the bumbling idiot that her supporters view Trump as, then why should she lead this country?

On the other hand, we have already seen Trump in office, where he led the country to great success. During his presidency, no major international conflicts started, and Trump formed relations with global leaders like Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong-Un.

Under the current administration led in part by Harris, we have only seen international conflicts boil over, with the Russia-Ukraine invasion and Israel's assault on Gaza both ongoing.

We cannot continue to use taxpayer money to fund wars that do not concern the American people. Our country has enough problems to throw money at as it is; let us use that money for something that benefits our nation's population and not whoever is providing us with oil.

Along with improving security overseas, a Trump presidency would ensure security on our country's borders.

Border security is a major concern in this election cycle and this presidential race. In comparing border security from Trump's and Biden-Harris administrations, Trump is plainly better.

According to the Washington Post, during Trump's time in office, illegal crossings at the U.S.-Mexico border never reached one million total in a year, but Biden and Harris let in an all-

time high of 2.2 million in 2022 alone.

Immigrants are the backbone of our country, but there are proper processes for border crossings and immigration. We must install some security on our country's border, and Trump is the best person to do it.

But before we move forward to a brighter, safer future, let us again think back to what was under Trump, especially regarding the economy.

Filling up your car with gas and getting groceries has never been cheap, but under the Biden-Harris administration, you almost need to take out a loan before every trip to the grocery store.

According to CBS News, in May of 2020, when Trump was president, gas prices went below \$2 per gallon on the East Coast, reaching record lows. That number has nearly doubled in 2024 under the Biden-Harris administration and may only rise if Harris is allowed to take office.

The same goes for groceries, where the price of eggs has risen by 176% since 2019.

Voting for Trump is not only voting for leadership and peace but also affordability.

A former successful businessman, Trump is the best person to get our economy on track.

We already have a sample of Harris fumbling our economy into inflation and regression as the vice president. Why allow her to have more control and allow this to continue with her as president?

As we look ahead to this election, let's remember the prosperity and stability we experienced under Trump. With his proven track record of low gas prices, secure borders and a focus on America first, he is the leader we need to restore our nation's greatness. Do not settle for ineffective leadership. Vote for Trump and bring back the success we deserve.





## Opinion: Josh Stein is a candidate you can be proud to vote for

Niner Times Staffer

Voting for the lesser of two evils is something Americans have grown accustomed to in recent election cycles and races. However, for North Carolina residents, Josh Stein is a candidate to get excited about as the state's next Democratic governor.

Stein, is running against current North Carolina lieutenant governor and self-proclaimed "Black Nazi" and "perv" Mark Robinson, and currently serves as North Carolina's attorney general.

As attorney general, Stein has led his Department of Justice in securing \$50 billion to help with the opioid crisis nationwide and led law enforcement in keeping local communities safe. He also wrote the School Safety Act and the Identity Theft Protection Act, which helped keep kids safe online and kept interest rates fair.

He also won over \$3.2 billion from scam artists while in office and won back more than \$295 million in restitution for Medicaid fraud. Stein also worked to take on the nation's most considerable backlog of untested rape kits bringing justice to the victims and putting criminals behind bars. Piling on to historic success, Stein led the most extensive coal ash cleanup in the country's history and got it paid for with a \$1.1 billion settlement from Duke Energy to pay for the cleanup. Stein has done nothing but bring success and safety to the state.

Meanwhile, Robinson has yet to do much as lieutenant governor. Robinson was absent from many meeting sessions. State Treasurer Dale Folwell, who serves on many of the same committees as Robinson, went as far as to say that Robinson was "the most absent elected official in my 16 years in Raleigh."

As a former Attorney General, Stein hopes to keep North Carolina safe while improving the quality of life for North Carolina residents, making Medicare and housing affordable, improving the economy and protecting fundamental rights. If Stein stays true to the campaign promises shown on his platform, a vote for him will be a vote for you and a vote that will improve our state. Stein's history of bringing mon-

ey to the state through legal work will only work in making these promises come true. Bringing money into the state's schools and families will be easy work for Stein, who is setting himself up for success as North Carolina's next governor.

On the other side of the ballot, according to Robinson's campaign website, he hopes to "Stop Ideologically-Driven Investing," which would remove money from social and environmental programs that help North Carolina residents. And, of course, like any other MAGA Republican, Robinson would hope to push far-right values if allowed to become North Carolina's governor. Robinson has said he wants to make abortion illegal at zero weeks and has called same-sex marriage "wickedness."

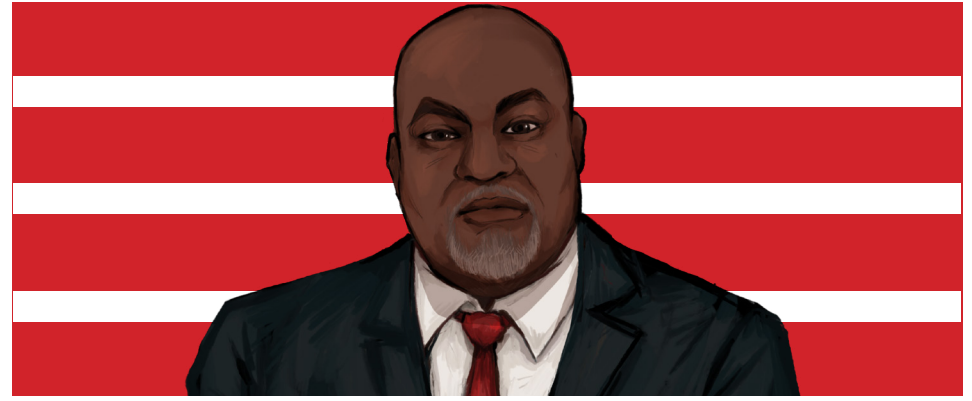
These uncalled-for comments from Robinson are a stamp of the candidate's career. The former furniture factory worker got his start in politics when he gave a speech at a Greensboro City Council meeting in 2018 advocating for a gun show following a school shooting.

Robinson has said that abortion came down to "killing the child because you weren't responsible enough to keep your skirt down," called gay and transgender people "filth," and wrote that "Slavery is not bad. Some people need to be slaves. I wish they would bring it [slavery] back. I would certainly buy a few."

While it may make him boring to some, Stein is the ice to Robinson's fire; Stein's record is straightforward and far from inflammatory.

His most controversial moment came in 2022 when he was accused of running a campaign advertisement with false information about his opponent. The investigation into Stein and his ad did not produce any results.

It is easy to vote against Robinson, but Stein would be a strong candidate for your vote even if his opponent were average. Stein has been a strong advocate for North Carolina residents in past positions and will continue to do so as the state's next governor.



## Opinion: Why you should vote for Mark Robinson

Niner Times Staffer

For decades, American politicians have adopted symbols of blue-collar work and hard-earned success to appeal to the working-class individuals who run this country. Yet despite their blue jeans and rugged boots, rising costs, stale wages and dwindling work opportunities have shown that these slick politicians are only cosplaying to get the working man's vote. Luckily, there is hope for the backbone of American society, and it lies in Lieutenant Governor and North Carolina Republican gubernatorial nominee Mark Robinson.

Unlike many politicians, Robinson's journey from working-class roots to public office means he does not have to pretend to be a hardworking American citizen to relate to blue-collar citizens. Robinson knows the hardship of having a family and falling into economically hard times, just like many American workers are experiencing now. He is a guiding voice that values the genuine day-to-day challenges of the working people that are necessary to eliminate the disconnect between Washington and the working class.

Robinson has several plans to help alleviate the working class from the strain of inflation. Of course, tax cuts will give individuals and small businesses room to support themselves rather than create a need to rely on government handouts.

Aside from tax cuts, Robinson hopes cutting energy expenses will help remove inflation's suffocating grip on American households. Overall, Robinson will bring better budget management to eliminate irresponsible government spending and make living more affordable for everyone.

Blue-collar workers are not the only individuals for whom Robinson advocates. Robinson is steadfast in his support for improving the quality of life for veterans.

As a veteran, Robinson sees room for improvement in the healthcare veterans receive and their transitions into civilian life. He advocates for providing better training for veterans on finding jobs. Robinson recognizes the necessary skills during service and strives for sup-

port that helps apply those skills to the civilian workforce.

Aside from speaking for the little guy, Robinson is a proud protector of the familial values that prevent this country from descending into chaos and despair. He places the family's well-being at the center of his decision-making because a strong family unit is essential for a strong society.

As a father and grandfather, Robinson's commitment to these values is not just theoretical—it is lived. The uncertainty he experienced with an abusive and alcoholic father in his home as a child shaped him to fight so that no child ever has to grow up the way he did. Robinson is not only a hardworking man, he is a champion of family values.

Robinson's role as a guardian of traditional values does not cease at a familial level; it extends into the rights of American citizens. His strong advocacy for the protection of the Second Amendment shows that Robinson prioritizes America's God-given right to defend itself.

His alignment with conservative ideologies extends into Robinson's fight for the freedom to express one's faith and his drive to preserve the Christian values that are the glue holding the moral fabric of America together.

Robinson's headstrong battle against 'woke' culture aims to restore traditional family values to America and undermine the promotion of anti-Christian motives in North Carolina schools. According to Robinson, schools should not focus on subjects about LGBTQ+ rights, gender identity or any other 'woke' curricula. Instead, Robinson calls for a return to a strictly academic focus to better prepare students for college and a career.

The current lieutenant governor of North Carolina is the gubernatorial candidate who brings a no-nonsense attitude to government and a voice to those Capitol Hill has left to rot. Robinson's vision for North Carolina reflects not just empty words and props like other politicians but a man who has lived and learned what it is like to be a hardworking American.

# 90 students share their thoughts on the 2024 election

Sunnya Hadavi | Layout Editor  
Visualizations by Sunnya Hadavi/Niner Times & illustrations by Blaise Uy/Niner Times

With North Carolina considered a key swing state in the 2024 election, political candidates have spent much of their time and resources garnering North Carolinians' votes, especially the youth vote.

Ninety UNC Charlotte students shared their thoughts on this election and voting plans. While they represent a small percentage of the student population, their perspectives highlight some of the key issues on the minds of younger voters.

"We are very polarized as a nation, and it's causing people to lose sight of what values are at stake and how the future will look," said a third-year Democrat. "This election is not just about Kamala Harris and [Donald] Trump but the way our nation will function and how the same ideals this nation was founded on will be respected in the future."

When asked, 89% of these students said they were worried about the state of the nation. For one student, the lack of young politicians is a concern.

"I'm honestly horrified to see where our country is going to go next," said a fourth-year Democrat. "I have faith that over the next few decades, Gen Z will step up, but in the meantime, I think the current generations in leadership are trying to hold onto their last few ounces of power rather than have the younger generations (Gen Z/ Millennials) lead us forward."

While feeling worried about the nation, some students are still excited about this election, especially first-time voters.

46% of these Charlotte students are first-time voters in this election, a demographic anticipated to influence election results nationwide, especially in North Carolina.

"I feel excited. This is the first time I am able to vote for president, and I feel very privileged to be able to do so," said an independent/unaffiliated second-year student.

Of the 90 students who spoke to the Niner Times, many expressed

their struggles of feeling patriotic and interested in politics.

Some of these students' newfound excitement comes from specific candidates.

"For years now, I've felt a sense of worry and have struggled to feel patriotic," said a second-year Democrat. "For the first time in a while, I feel optimistic about the future. Kamala Harris has given me hope for the future and has created a positive environment, and as a voter, I'm very thankful for that."

80% are planning to vote for Democratic presidential and vice presidential candidates Kamala Harris and Tim Walz. The remaining students are split between the Republican ticket and third-party options or are still undecided.

Students not voting for Harris said she has not done enough to help the nation while vice president.

"The last four years have been horrible for our economy with inflation," said a second-year Independent planning to vote for Donald Trump and Mark Robinson. "No matter what anyone says, Vice President Harris has had a say in policies these four years and has no answers to make a change for the next four."

As of Oct. 20, Harris leads Trump by 2% in national polling averages. The race has been close for much of the campaign season.

"It is insane to me how this election is down to the wire when one side is ranting about Hannibal Lecter and people eating cats and dogs in Springfield while the other side is just regular politicians," said a graduate student Democrat. "I don't agree with Kamala Harris on every issue, but to me, it is obvious that she is far more qualified, and I don't understand how anyone could say otherwise. I am seeing polling data that favors her, but I'm still holding my breath, especially since Hillary Clinton had a similar lead in polls in 2016. If Trump does win, I genuinely fear for the country."

Independent and third-party vot-

46% are first-time voters

"This is the first time I am able to vote for president, and I feel very privileged to be able to do so."

Second-year, Independent/Unaffiliated



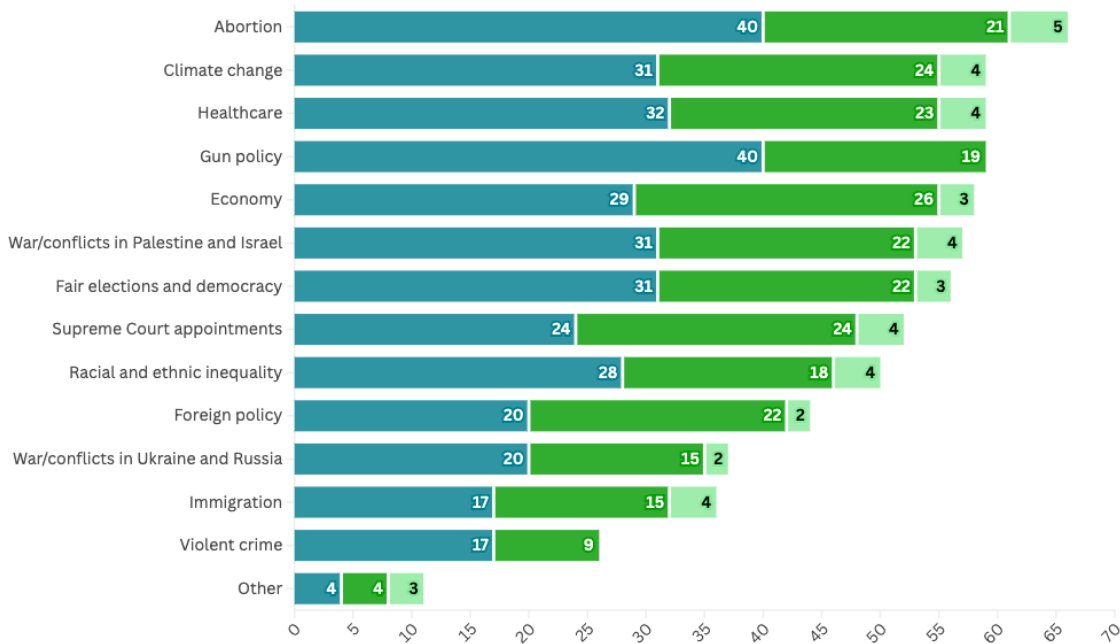
"This election is not just about Kamala Harris and [Donald] Trump, but the way our nation will function and how the same ideals this nation was founded on will be respected in the future."

Third-year, Democrat



## Which topics are 'very important' to you in this election?

Student Gender: ■ Women ■ Men ■ Other





ers were a significant portion of these students planning to vote for Harris. Many of them expressed voting out of necessity and Harris as the 'lesser of two evils.'

"I feel stuck. It's going to be either Harris or Trump, and both options suck," said a third-year student who is third-party. "Harris has plans to mess with the economy in ways I don't agree with. On the other side, however, Trump's extreme conservative views on everything and the Project 2025 plan horrify me. I think I'll end up voting for Harris just so that Trump doesn't win, just because Harris is the lesser of two evils, but I feel like the country is screwed either way."

Of the 90 Charlotte students, 39% are affiliated as independents, unaffiliated or third-party.

"You simply must have brain damage to be excited about either of these candidates," said a fourth-year Independent. "Barely anyone wanted either of these two idiots running and here we are. Again. Every election cycle has gotten worse since I was a kid, and I don't see things getting better because the general public doesn't see the bigger picture. Ultimately, both parties are bought and owned by corporations and money."

The concern about voting for the 'lesser of two evils' spans across various political affiliations.

Data collected in 2022 from the Pew Research Center shows that almost half of young adults "wish there were more parties to choose from" and are dissatisfied with the two-party system.

"Lack of rank-choice voting makes it impossible for me to support a candidate who largely holds my political views," said an Independent second-year. "This leads me to vote for the 'lesser evil,' which is incredibly demoralizing and feels un-democratic."

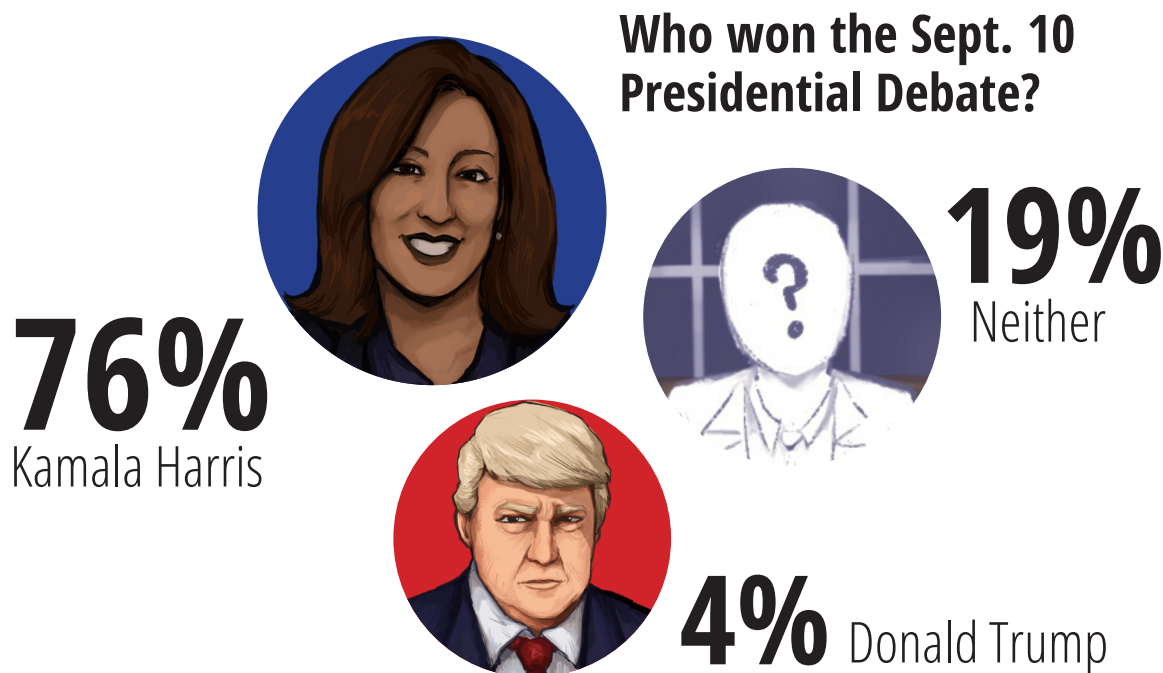
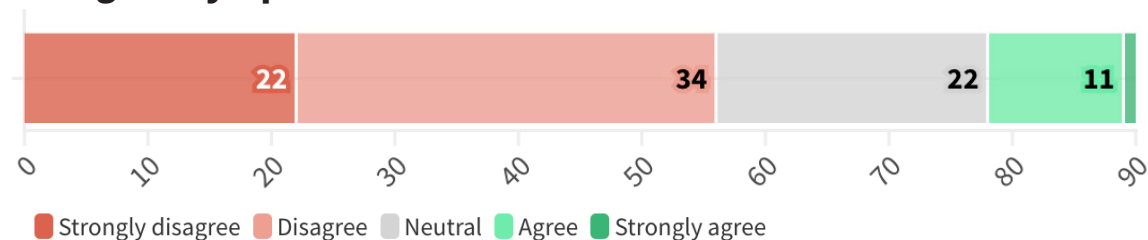
One student's dissatisfaction with elections is the emphasis on only two parties rather than the way elections are conducted.

"I would say that I am confident in our elections and that they are fair and free," said a third-year Democrat. "I will say that the nation has been more divided since 2016 and that the two-party system has to go. We cannot keep choosing between the lesser of two evils."

While some students plan to vote for Democratic or Republican candidates, they still see a bleak outcome for America following this election.

"We are not a true democracy, and I am afraid that if we do not change, then this country will fall, sooner or later, somewhere down the line," said a fifth-year student planning to vote for Harris. "Maybe that is necessary to get to a better place. Either way, it's a scary time to be alive."

## "The Sept. 10 Presidential Debate between Harris and Trump changed my opinions on either candidate."



"Politics has gotten out of control and only serves as a factor of division. All politicians are bought by large companies and PACS anyways."

Second-year, Republican

"If there was a guarantee of a peaceful transfer of power, I would be more comfortable in the state of our democracy. After Jan. 6, I fear the possibility of a civil attack on democracy by the MAGA extremists."

Graduate student, Democrat

"I think the extreme gerrymandering and voter suppression in so many states, especially our own is incredibly harmful and is minimizing the voices of marginalized communities."

Third-year, Democrat





# UNC Charlotte's Cone Building draws crowds and canvassers for early voting

Davis Cuffe | Editor-in-Chief

UNC Charlotte's Cone University Center opened for early voting on Oct. 17, welcoming a solid crowd of UNC Charlotte staff, students and Charlotte community members.

The building will be open seven days a week through Nov. 2 for voting, with voting hours Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Sundays from 1 to 5 p.m.

If registered, students can bring their physical 49er ID card, driver's license, photo ID or passport to vote.

At noon on the first day of early voting, a line of ready voters led out the door of the first floor of the Cone University Center, where voting was held in room 112.

High voter turnout is nothing new to the Cone Center. Following the 2022 midterm elections, Charlotte was recognized for excellence in student voter engagement by the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge for its student voting rate falling between 30-39%.

In 2022, Charlotte was also recognized for having the highest voter registration rate for Conference-USA, their athletic conference at the time.

This high engagement has grown through past elections. According to the National Study of Learning Voting and Engagement, in the 2018

midterms, the campus saw a 33.4% voting rate, a 15.2% jump from the 2014 rate.

Encouraged by these high rates is canvasser and former UNC Charlotte professor Jo Ann Lee, who said she has been canvassing for over 20 years.

On Oct. 17, Lee stood outside the Cone Center with the line of voters, handing out pamphlets with information about Democratic candidates on the ballot.

Lee is part of a larger group campaigning for Democratic candidates that has sent volunteers to Cone for the first two days of early voting. As of Oct. 18, they are the only group canvassing at the location.

Lee first started canvassing to be a more engaged citizen.

"I think it is our civic duty to vote and to make certain our leaders of this country do take care of citizenry," said Lee. "I believe that we need to canvass because many people aren't aware of who the candidates are, and they aren't aware of what's at stake."

First-year UNC Charlotte students Abby Austin and Myah Kidd were two engaged citizens who voted at Cone on Oct. 18, the second day of early voting.

Kidd and Austin were excited about Cone voting and its accessibility to students.

"It's really beneficial because for students who,

like me, don't have a car on campus, right? So just it being here makes it a difference," said Austin.

"People don't have a reason not to [vote] because, I mean, it's right here. All you need is your ID," said Kidd. "I think there's no reason not to."

With the high stakes of the 2024 elections emphasized by both voters and canvassers and UNC Charlotte's history of voter engagement, crowds are expected to continue at Cone through the early voting period of Oct. 17 to Nov. 2.







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# Opinion: As a young person in a swing state, your vote is more valuable than most

Davis Cuffe | Editor-in-Chief

You have heard it a million times, but your vote matters. This is even more true if you are a young North Carolina resident.

Swing states are states that could lean either way in elections. With a margin of victory of just 1.8% in the past four presidential elections, North Carolina has earned its title as a swing state.

For presidential candidates, winning North Carolina is paramount, as the state's 16 electoral college votes put it as No. 9 among all states. Eight of the last 12 winners of North Carolina ended up in the White House.

According to the most recent polling data by FiveThirtyEight, Donald Trump leads over Kamala Harris in N.C. by just half a percentage point. In 2022, 3,786,904 North Carolinians voted, so that half-percentage margin between

Trump and Harris would be just under 19,000 voters.

With North Carolina's importance in the election, these 19,000 voters could decide our president for the next four years and the future of the country.

While your vote is already critical as a North Carolinian, being a young person makes your decision all the more important.

In 2024, political candidates have put their money where their mouth is in showing how they value the youth vote. Check any candidate's social media campaign to see advertising marketed specifically towards young people. From Chappell Roan edits to podcast appearances, candidates have not been shy about going after the youth vote.

This grapple for the support of young voters

is not without reason. In the 2022 election, Joe Biden's win over Trump was catapulted and, by some measures, decided by a 24% margin of support from voters under 30.

In 2024, the U.S. Census Bureau projects a 48.5% potential of the voting population to be Gen-Z and Millennial. This is a 7.5% leap from 2020, when the number was just 41.5%. In 2028, this number is projected to jump up another 5.6%.

It is easy to feel that your vote is insignificant amidst the millions who participate, but as a young person in a swing state, it cannot be emphasized enough how much your vote matters.

While young people make up an increasingly large portion of the voting population, this population has not always made its mark at the polls.

In the past 13 elections, 18-29-year-old voter

turnout has averaged around 47.7%. That being said, this number has fluctuated.

From 2008 to 2012, the percentage of young voters dropped by 6.1%, only for the percentage to jump up by 11% from 2016 to 2020.

Young people have been and will be a sleeping giant and wildcards throughout the history of American elections. With the deviation in young voter turnout, young voters can swing the election to their choosing and against what the polls may say.

As the election approaches, the influence of young voters in North Carolina is undeniable. Seize this moment and get out and vote. Your vote could determine the course of our nation for years to come.