

Democratic Party of Wilson County Voter Guide

2026 General Election — Accessible Edition

Tuesday, November 3, 2026

This PDF preserves the full content of the plain-text edition of this voter guide, formatted with real heading structure and PDF bookmarks for screen-reader and keyboard navigation. It uses a single column, black text on a white background, no color-coded elements, and no graphical tables.

ABOUT THIS EDITION This is a plain-text edition of the Democratic Party of Wilson County Voter Guide, formatted for screen readers, older devices, and email. It contains the same information as the full formatted guide, without visual design, page numbers, or tables. Boxed callouts are marked with [BOX] and [END BOX]. Data tables are marked with [TABLE] and [END TABLE] and rewritten as one line per row, in a "Label: value" format. Headings are marked as "SECTION:" (major sections) or "Subsection:" (sub-sections) since plain text cannot carry heading styles.

Note: Portions of this voters' guide were generated or edited with the assistance of artificial intelligence. All AI-assisted content was reviewed prior to publication. Questions or corrections? Contact the Democratic Party of Wilson County: wilsondemsgmail.com

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WILSON COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA: 2026 COMPREHENSIVE DEMOCRATIC VOTER GUIDE

Date: August 2026

Welcome to the official Democratic Voter Guide for Wilson County, N.C., for the November 2026 general election. Inside, you'll find every candidate on the Wilson County ballot, whether each race is contested or uncontested, and where candidates stand on the issues shaping our communities.

Why the November 2026 Election Matters

The November elections will have a real impact on everyday life here in North Carolina. For Wilson County residents, the 2026 ballot is a critical referendum on our economic future, public education, community safety, and fundamental rights. From downtown Wilson to our rural residential corridors, working families are feeling the squeeze of high housing costs, underfunded public schools, and a lack of economic mobility.

From a Democratic perspective, this election is about building an economy that works for everyone, not just corporations and the wealthy, and protecting our democratic institutions from partisan overreach. The choices Wilson County voters make this November will shape who represents us in Washington and Raleigh, who sits on our courts, who leads our Sheriff's Office, and whether three proposed constitutional amendments become a permanent part of North Carolina's founding document.

This guide is here to make sure every Wilson County Democrat, and every neighbor who shares our values, walks into the voting booth prepared.

N.C. VOTERS' BILL OF RIGHTS

Plain-language summary of the rights North Carolina law guarantees every voter. Source: Democracy NC (<https://democracync.org/resources/nc-voters-bill-rights-english/>). Bring this page with you when you vote.

- **Hours:** Your assigned Election Day polling place is open 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. You must be allowed to vote if you're in line or inside the polling place by 7:30 p.m. (or at closing time of any early voting site).
- **ID to vote:** You need an N.C. driver's license or other acceptable photo ID to vote a regular ballot. No accepted ID? You can still vote a provisional ballot after completing an ID Exception Form.
- **Provisional ballot:** If a problem arises — your name isn't on the rolls, or you're told you're at the wrong precinct — you have the right to cast a provisional ballot and to be told how to learn whether it was counted.
- **If you've moved:** Moved within your county more than 30 days ago? Vote in your new precinct. Moved less than 30 days ago? Vote in your old precinct or cast a provisional ballot. Moved to a new county? Re-register by the deadline, or register and vote the same day during early voting.
- **Name change:** If your name has changed since you registered, you still have the right to vote, even if you never reported the change.
- **Spoiled ballot:** Made a mistake? You have the right to a new ballot (you can spoil up to three).
- **Assistance:** You have the right to assistance from a family member, or if you have a disability or difficulty reading, from anyone of your choice except your employer or union agent.
- **Curbside voting:** If reaching the polling place is difficult due to age or disability, you have the right to vote curbside, from your vehicle.
- **Justice-involved voters:** In jail for a misdemeanor? You still have the right to vote. Convicted of a felony? Your right returns automatically once you complete your full sentence, including probation, parole, and post-release supervision.
- **Freedom from intimidation:** You have the right to vote without being threatened or forced to vote a certain way.

If You Are Not Yet Registered

You can register by mail if your form is postmarked 25 days before the election. Missed that deadline? You can still register and vote the same day at any early voting site in Wilson County (October 15–31, 2026). You cannot do same-day registration on Election Day itself. For registration, bring photo ID and one proof-of-address document (a current utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, or other government document).

How to Vote

- Check your registration and sample ballot anytime at ncsbe.gov (Voter Search).
- Vote early: Oct. 15–31 at any Wilson County early voting site — no excuse needed, and you can register there if you haven't already.
- Vote by mail: Request online at votebymail.ncsbe.gov; no excuse required.
- Vote on Election Day, Nov. 3, at your assigned precinct, 6:30 a.m.–7:30 p.m.
- Bring an accepted photo ID. Don't have one? Ask for an ID Exception Form and cast a provisional ballot — it still counts.
- Check both sides of your ballot: many Wilson County ballots are printed front and back. Local races and the constitutional amendments often appear on the reverse side.

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

A one-page snapshot from the Democratic Party of Wilson County to help you head into November ready. See the full sections later in this guide for details.

Key Dates

- Fri., Sept. 4, 2026: Absentee (mail) ballots begin mailing
- Fri., Oct. 9, 2026 — 5:00 p.m.: Voter registration deadline for the general election
- Tue., Oct. 20, 2026 — 5:00 p.m.: Deadline to request an absentee/mail ballot
- Thu., Oct. 15 – Sat., Oct. 31, 2026: Early voting in Wilson County (same-day registration available)
- Tue., Nov. 3, 2026 — 6:30 a.m.–7:30 p.m.: Election Day — polls open

Three Constitutional Amendments — DPWC Recommends VOTE NO on All Three

- Income Tax Cap Amendment
- Property Tax Growth Limit Amendment
- Voter ID (Mail Ballot) Amendment

See "Breaking It Down: The 2026 N.C. Constitutional Amendments" later in this guide for the full case on each.

OUR CANDIDATES

This section covers every candidate on the ballot, their platforms, and what each race means for Wilson County.

Federal Races

1. U.S. Senate

- Candidate: Roy Cooper (D)
- Status: Contested
- Bio: Former two-term Governor of North Carolina (2017–2025), former Attorney General, and former state legislator born and raised in Nash County. Running for the open U.S. Senate seat currently held by retiring Sen. Thom Tillis (Republican).
- Platform: Lowering costs for the middle class, expanding affordable health care (including Medicaid), strengthening public education and teacher pay, and supporting clean energy.
- Opponent: Michael Whatley (Republican)
- Why It Matters: Moving a proven leader like Roy Cooper to the U.S. Senate is vital for shifting the national legislative balance and protecting federal safety nets.
- Impact on Wilson County Communities: Essential for defending federal healthcare expansion (Medicaid), which supports low-income families and communities facing health care disparities. Protects federal civil rights legislation and funding for under-resourced rural and urban schools.
- Connect: Roy Cooper for Senate — campaign website (<https://roycooper.com>)

2. U.S. House of Representatives (N.C. District 3)

- Candidate: Raymond E. Smith, Jr. (D)
- Status: Contested
- Bio: U.S. Army combat veteran, former public school teacher, two-term former state legislator (N.C. House District 21), and former Wayne County Board of Education member.
- Platform: Affordable health care, stronger public schools, vocational training, and infrastructure investment connecting rural and urban communities in Eastern N.C.
- Opponents: Gregory Murphy (Republican, incumbent); Daniel Cavender (Libertarian)
- Why It Matters: Securing representation in Congress for Eastern North Carolina ensures that rural districts are not overlooked in federal budget allocations or economic legislation.
- Impact on Wilson County Communities: Vital for directing federal small business grants and workforce development funds to historically disadvantaged and minority-owned enterprises, while safeguarding Title I public school funding.

- Connect: Raymond E. Smith Jr. for Congress — campaign website (<https://raymondsmithfornc.com>)

State Legislative Races

3. N.C. State Senate (District 4 — Greene, Wayne, Wilson Counties)

- Candidate: Jessica "Jess" Rivera (D)
- Status: Contested
- Bio: Marine Corps veteran (two combat deployments), small business owner (The Garrison Barber & Parlor in downtown Wilson), and working-class candidate.
- Platform: Rebuilding trust in public service, closing the rural-urban economic gap, funding public education, and supporting veterans through transition services, housing stability, and fair pay.
- Opponent: Buck Newton (Republican, incumbent)
- Why It Matters: Breaking the legislative monopoly in rural-leaning state senate districts is essential for advancing progressive economic policies and curbing legislative overreach in Raleigh.
- Impact on Wilson County Communities: As a downtown small business owner, Rivera champions economic development, just resource distribution to public school classrooms, and stronger support for veterans through transition services, housing stability, and fair pay.
- Connect: Jess Rivera for NC Senate — campaign website (<https://www.jessfornc.com>)

4. N.C. House of Representatives (District 24 — Wilson & Nash Counties)

- Candidate: Dante Pittman (D) (Incumbent)
- Status: Contested
- Bio: Lifelong Wilsonian, UNC-Chapel Hill graduate, Captain in the N.C. Army National Guard, and chair of the Wilson County Department of Social Services board. Flipped this seat in 2024.
- Platform: Public education funding, Medicaid expansion, reproductive health care access, and rural economic development recruiting industry investment.
- Opponent: Blake Boykin (Republican)
- Why It Matters: Defending this newly flipped Democratic seat is critical to keeping a pro-public education and pro-healthcare voice in the General Assembly and checking right-wing majorities.
- Impact on Wilson County Communities: Focuses heavily on fair housing investments, expanding job pipelines in underserved neighborhoods, and protecting healthcare access for uninsured or underinsured residents.

- Connect: Dante Pittman for NC House — campaign website (<https://www.pittmanfornc.com>)

Judicial & Legal System Races

5. N.C. Supreme Court (Associate Justice Seat 1)

- Candidate: Anita Earls (D) (Incumbent)
- Status: Contested
- Bio: Civil rights attorney and current Associate Justice first elected in 2018. Founder of the Southern Coalition for Social Justice and former DOJ Civil Rights Division attorney. She is a graduate of Williams College and received her J.D. from Yale Law School.
- Platform: Preserving an independent, impartial court and protecting constitutional rights, with emphasis on voting rights and opposing discriminatory electoral practices.
- Opponent: Sarah Stevens (Republican)
- Why It Matters: Protecting the integrity of the state's highest court is the last line of defense against partisan gerrymandering and unconstitutional laws.
- Impact on Wilson County Communities: Essential for protecting voting rights, striking down discriminatory electoral maps, and ensuring fair ballot access for all Wilson County voters.
- Connect: Anita Earls for NC Supreme Court — campaign website (<https://earls4justice.com>)

6. N.C. Court of Appeals (Seat 1)

- Candidate: John S. Arrowood (D) (Incumbent)
- Status: Contested
- Bio: Attorney and judge first appointed in 2007 and 2017. Elected to a full term in 2018, becoming the first openly gay person elected to statewide office in North Carolina. He graduated from Catawba College and received his J.D. from UNC School of law.
- Platform: Preserving a fair, accessible, and independent court that adheres to constitutional principles and legal precedent.
- Opponent: Michael Byrne (Republican)
- Why It Matters: Maintaining experienced, moderate-to-progressive voices on the court of appeals prevents unchecked conservative rulings on civil liberties.
- Impact on Wilson County Communities: Ensures consumers, tenants, and workers receive unbiased interpretations of contract, housing, and labor protections, helping fight judicial bias.
- Connect: John Arrowood for NC Court of Appeals — campaign website (<https://www.keepjudgearrowood.com>)

7. N.C. Court of Appeals (Seat 2)

- Candidate: Toby Hampson (D) (Incumbent)

- Status: Contested
- Bio: Attorney elected to the Court of Appeals in 2018; noted for his independent judicial record on electoral and constitutional disputes. He graduated from American University and received his J.D from Campbell University School of Law.
- Platform: Maintaining an unbiased, professional court free from political interference and protecting civil liberties and due process.
- Opponent: George Bell (Republican)
- Why It Matters: Re-electing judges who base decisions on constitutional principles and precedent rather than partisan pressure preserves the rule of law.
- Impact on Wilson County Communities: Safeguards equal protection under the law and unbiased judicial reviews for civil rights cases and public sector workers.
- Connect: Toby Hampson for NC Court of Appeals — campaign website (<https://www.judgetobyhampson.com>)

8. N.C. Court of Appeals (Seat 3)

- Candidate: Christine Marie Walczyk (D)
- Status: Contested
- Bio: Wake County District Court judge for 19 years, running for the open seat currently held by retiring Judge Allegra Collins. She graduated from Boston College Carroll School of Management and received her J.D. from UNC School of Law.
- Platform: A strong, independent, balanced judiciary safeguards individual liberties and due process.
- Opponent: Craig Collins (Republican)
- Why It Matters: Holding an open appellate seat prevents an increase in conservative dominance of the state's appellate court.
- Impact on Wilson County Communities: Protects due process rights and ensures balanced legal proceedings for everyday citizens.
- Connect: Christine Walczyk for NC Court of Appeals — campaign website (<https://www.judgechristine.org>)

9. Senior Resident Superior Court Judge, Judicial District 8B, Seat 1

- Candidate: L. Lamont Wiggins
- Status: Uncontested
- Bio: Undergraduate degree from North Carolina State University and his J.D. from North Carolina Central University School of Law. Before taking the bench, he practiced law for 30 years and served 20 years on the Rocky Mount City Council. He was appointed by Governor

Roy Cooper in 2018 and since elected to a full term.

- Platform: Administration of complex civil and criminal matters, maintenance of judicial fairness, and upholding of public service standards across diverse demographics.

10. N.C. District Court Judge, Judicial District 8, Seat 1

- Candidate: Pell Cooper
- Status: Uncontested
- Bio: Graduated from the UNC- Chapel Hill with a Bachelor of Arts and earned his J.D. from the UNC School of Law. He has served continuously as a district court judge since 1999.
- Platform: Committed to efficient local court dockets, impartial dispute resolution, and community-based judicial administration.

11. Chief District Court Judge, Judicial District 8, Seat 2

- Candidate: Wayne Boyette
- Status: Uncontested
- Bio: Serves as a chief district court judge managing judicial operations across the multi-county district. He has extensive experience presiding over regional district court cases. He graduated from UNC-Chapel Hill and received his J.D. from Campbell University School of Law.
- Platform: Enhancing courtroom efficiency, effective case management, and ensuring access to justice within local courts.

12. N.C. District Court Judge, Judicial District 8, Seat 6

- Candidate: Caroline Farris Quinn (Incumbent)
- Status: Uncontested
- Bio: A longtime Wilson-based attorney, she graduated from UNC-Chapel Hill and received her J.D. from Campbell University School of Law. She has more than three decades of legal experience specializing in criminal law and local advocacy.
- Platform: Upholding rigorous standards for due process, equitable legal representation, and transparent judicial proceedings.

13. N.C. District Court Judge, Judicial District 8, Seat 3

- Candidate: Tia Hudgins Taylor (D) (Incumbent)
- Status: Contested
- Bio: Appointed to the bench by Gov. Josh Stein, handles juvenile, domestic, and local civil-criminal matters. She graduated from Queens University of Charlotte and received her J.D. from Elon University School of Law.

- Platform: Impartial and empathetic administration of justice in family and district court matters.
- Opponent: Mark Osterhout (Republican)
- Why It Matters: District court judges handle matters closest to everyday citizens, including family law, juvenile cases, and minor infractions.
- Impact on Wilson County Communities: Directly impacts children and parents navigating sensitive family law and juvenile justice proceedings, preventing minor infractions from ruining futures.
- Connect: Tia Hudgins Taylor — campaign Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/p/Tia-Hudgins-Taylor-District-Court-Judge-61575880211852/>)

14. District Attorney (Prosecutorial District 8 — Nash, Edgecombe & Wilson Counties)

- Candidate: Rena Spellman (D)
- Status: Contested
- Bio: Assistant district attorney and private defense attorney with deep roots in community action networks across Nash, Edgecombe, and Wilson counties. She graduated from Elizabeth City State University and received her J.D. from North Carolina Central University School of Law,
- Platform: Fairness, safety, and community trust in prosecution.
- Opponent: Jeffrey A. Marsigli (Republican, incumbent)
- Why It Matters: Local prosecutors dictate courtroom priorities; electing a reform-minded DA changes how criminal justice is administered locally.
- Impact on Wilson County Communities: Vital for addressing racial disparities in sentencing by expanding diversion programs, restorative justice alternatives, and mental health interventions while preserving community safety.
- Connect: Rena Spellman for District Attorney — campaign website (<https://www.renaspellman.com>)

15. Clerk of Superior Court

- Candidate: Karen F. Wellington (D) (Incumbent)
- Status: Uncontested
- Bio: Appointed incumbent running to secure full-term managing court records, administrative proceedings, and estate/special proceedings. She graduated from North Carolina Central University and received her J.D. from North Carolina Central University School of Law.
- Why It Matters: The Clerk of Superior Court is essential for the transparent, efficient administration of local justice, overseeing court documentation, records management, and probate proceedings.

- Impact on Wilson County Communities: Ensures fair, accessible services for everyday citizens navigating court systems without legal representation, and safeguards public trust in local legal administration.

County-Level & Local Races

Wilson County Board of Commissioners

District 1

- Candidate: Leslie Thomas Atkinson (D) (Incumbent / Vice Chair)
- Status: Uncontested
- Why It Matters: Longstanding commissioner experience ensures stability in county governance, sound budgeting, and property tax management.
- Impact on Wilson County Communities: Directly impacts East Wilson neighborhoods by prioritizing funding for historic infrastructure repairs and community center programs.

District 2

- Candidate: Sherry Lucas (D) (Incumbent)
- Status: Uncontested
- Why It Matters: Retaining strong Democratic representation maintains accountable local governance and responsive oversight of county services.
- Impact on Wilson County Communities: Ensures diverse neighborhoods have an active voice in managing zoning laws, public utilities, and infrastructure investments.

District 3

- Candidate: JoAnne Daniels (D) (Incumbent)
- Status: Contested
- Opponent: Patrick VanHook (Republican)
- Why It Matters: Retaining experienced local leadership ensures continuity in managing county resources, health and human services programs, infrastructure, and public safety.
- Impact on Wilson County Communities: Crucial for low-income residents relying heavily on county health and social services, safety nets and public housing support.
- Connect: JoAnne Daniels for Board of Commissioners District 3 — campaign Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/reelectJoAnneDaniels>)

District 4

- Note: There is no Democratic candidate in this race.
- Candidate: Mick Rankin (Republican) — Uncontested

District 5

- Candidate: Rob Boyette (D) (Incumbent / Board Chair)
- Status: Uncontested
- Why It Matters: Provides experienced county-wide leadership guiding broad budgetary frameworks, public school funding allocations, and intergovernmental coordination.
- Impact on Wilson County Communities: Vital for steering county-wide health initiatives, economic development block grants, and county employment standards affecting working families.

District 6

- Note: There is no Democratic candidate in this race.
- Candidate: Christopher Hill (Republican) — Incumbent / Uncontested

District 7

- Candidate: Richard Fulghum (D)
- Status: Contested
- Opponent: Michael T. Wetherington (Republican, incumbent)
- Why It Matters: Contesting suburban and rural-urban fringe districts like District 7 is vital for Democrats aiming to shift or maintain the balance of power on the board, ensuring broader representation for working families.
- Impact on Wilson County Communities: Ensures that rural agricultural workers and suburban families have representation on decisions involving county growth, clean water access, and public investments.
- Connect: Richard Fulghum for Board of Commissioners District 7 — campaign Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61560655336216>)

Wilson County Sheriff

- Candidate: Brandon L. Barbrey (D)
- Status: Contested
- Bio: Major at the Wilson County Sheriff's Office, endorsed by retiring Sheriff Calvin Woodard, won the primary in a three-way race.
- Platform: Public safety, accountability, transparency, and community-oriented policing.
- Opponent: Bobby Knight (Republican). Note: Knight's eligibility was legally contested and reviewed by the State Board of Elections before he was finalized on the ballot.
- Why It Matters: The Sheriff's Office sets the tone for community safety, county jail conditions, and local law enforcement culture across both urban and rural parts of Wilson County.

- Impact on Wilson County Communities: Directly combats historical distrust by implementing community-oriented policing, total transparency, and modern de-escalation models for mental health crises.
- Connect: Brandon L. Barbrey for Wilson County Sheriff — campaign Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/brandon.barbrey.for.wilson.county.sheriff>)

Non-Partisan Local Elections (School Board & Conservation)

While these races are officially considered non-partisan, the following are Democratic candidates running for these positions.

- School Board District 1: Debora Powell (Incumbent)
- School Board District 3 (select one of the following two): Tekicey Jones
- School Board District 3 (select one of the following two): Luranita Glenn
- School Board District 5: Beverly Boyette (Incumbent)
- School Board District 7: Maria Salazar
- Soil and Water Conservation Supervisor: Robert Bryan Lamm

CORE ISSUES FACING WILSON COUNTY

1. Housing & Neighborhood-Level Issues

- The Challenge: Housing costs are rising, wages have stayed flat, and much of the rental housing is aging. Together, these problems make it hard for Wilson County families to afford a place to live. Downtown and the city's east side need real investment: to fix up run-down buildings, help first-time buyers, and build more truly affordable homes.
- The Democratic Approach: We support grants that help build affordable housing, incentives for mixed-income developments, and stronger protections for renters. Pender Crossing is a good example: a 48-unit affordable apartment community built with state tax credits, for residents earning 40–60% of the area's average income. It shows what's possible when public and private partners work together — and we need more projects like it. Safe, stable housing is the foundation of a healthy community and a strong economy, and we will prioritize neighborhoods hurt most by past redlining and disinvestment.

Note: Source: Woda Cooper Companies / NC Housing Finance Agency documentation on the Pender Crossing development (Pender St. S, Wilson, NC): 48 units financed with federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, for residents earning 40–60% of area median income.

2. Crime & Community Safety

- The Challenge: Wilson County residents want safe neighborhoods. But real safety means addressing the root causes of crime — economic hardship, substance use, and a lack of programs for young people — not just relying on jail.
- The Democratic Approach: We support smart, modern policing. That means funding mental health co-responder teams, expanding youth mentorship and after-school programs, and holding the justice system accountable — while giving nonviolent offenders a real path back into society.

3. Schools & Education

- The Challenge: Wilson County Schools struggle to recruit and keep good teachers, maintain buildings, and close achievement gaps. Years of underfunding from Raleigh have made these problems worse. North Carolina now ranks 46th in the nation in school funding per student. The state's new budget raises are a start, but they won't be enough on their own to reverse the decline.
- The Democratic Approach: Democrats believe public tax dollars belong in public schools. We support raising teacher pay to the national average, expanding pre-K, and upgrading school buildings and technology. We also support strong vocational and technical training, alongside traditional college-prep classes, so every student has an equal path to success, no matter their background.

Note: Source: Education Law Center, "Making the Grade" annual state school-funding report.

4. Immigration & Our Local Economy

- **The Challenge:** Wilson County's farms, factories, and service businesses rely on a diverse workforce. Anti-immigrant rhetoric and harsh state enforcement bills threaten community stability, worker rights, and our local economy. This isn't just a talking point: a new state law passed in June 2026 requires state corrections officers to take part in the federal 287(g) immigration enforcement program. It also tightens the rules for notifying ICE before releasing people from jail. That means the next Wilson County Sheriff will have real say over how closely local law enforcement works with federal immigration agents.
- **The Democratic Approach:** Democrats support immigration reform that is thorough and humane. It should secure our borders while giving legal pathways to workers who contribute to our local economy. We see our immigrant neighbors as vital members of the Wilson community, whose cultural and economic contributions make our county stronger.

Note: Source: North Carolina Session Law enacted June 2026 (287(g) participation and jail-release notification requirements).

5. Rural Healthcare Access

- **The Challenge:** Wilson County was set to receive \$105 million for a new rural health center, as part of a 2023 partnership between UNC and ECU health systems. But state lawmakers redirected that money this year to children's hospital funding instead. Meanwhile, federal Medicaid cuts are straining rural hospitals across the state. This threatens services like maternity care, behavioral health, and emergency care — services our community relies on heavily through Medicaid.
- **The Democratic Approach:** Democrats fought for the original rural health investment, and we'll keep pushing to restore it. We support protecting Medicaid expansion and opposing further cuts to rural hospital funding. Wilson County residents should not lose access to care just because Raleigh chose to spend the money elsewhere.

Note: Source: North Carolina General Assembly budget documents; UNC System / UNC Health–ECU Health partnership reporting.

6. Economic Opportunity & Distressed-County Investment

- **The Challenge:** Wilson County is classified as a Tier 1 economically distressed county — the state's most distressed tier — alongside neighboring Nash County. Our poverty rate is nearly 20%, nearly double the state average by some measures. The state's economic development tools, meant to help counties like ours, have come under scrutiny for being outdated and poorly targeted.
- **The Democratic Approach:** Democrats want to strengthen, not weaken, the state's commitment to distressed counties. That means business recruitment incentives, workforce development funding, and infrastructure investment — reaching downtown Wilson and rural communities alike, not just the state's wealthiest cities.

Note: Source: NC Department of Commerce county tier designations; U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) poverty estimates.

BREAKING IT DOWN: THE 2026 N.C. CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

What Republicans Don't Want You to Notice — A Wilson County Voter's Guide

November 3, 2026 general election. Every amendment below was written and pushed onto the ballot by Republican legislators, over Democratic objections, using a tactic Democrats can't stop — the Governor has no veto power over constitutional amendments.

What's Actually on Your Ballot

Republicans tried to load the ballot with eight amendments to drive their base to the polls in a tough midterm year. Only three made it through before the session ended. The other five stalled, but Republicans could bring them back next session, so don't let your guard down.

- On your ballot this November: Income Tax Cap Amendment; Property Tax Growth Limit Amendment; Voter ID (Mail Ballot) Amendment.
- Republicans tried and failed — for now: Right to Work Amendment; Right to Farm Amendment; Council of State Appointment Amendment; Elect SBE/Superintendent as Chair Amendment; Permitless Carry Amendment.

ON THE BALLOT — VOTE NO

1. Income Tax Cap Amendment

- Sponsor: Senate Republican leadership, passed on a straight party-line vote.
- Sounds like: Tax relief.
- Actually is: A permanent handcuff on the state's ability to respond to a crisis. The current 7% cap isn't even being used, the real tax rate is already far lower. This amendment doesn't solve a real problem. Instead, it's a trap: it locks in low revenue no matter what happens — a recession, a hurricane, a school funding crisis — unless a future legislature can find a supermajority to undo it.
- Why it's bad for N.C. and Wilson County: Wilson County's median household income is roughly 20% below the state average. Nearly 1 in 5 residents live below the poverty line. Income tax falls more on higher earners. When the state can't raise it, lawmakers turn to sales tax, property tax, and fees instead. Those hit working families here harder than they hit wealthier counties. This is a tax shift dressed up as tax relief.
- Who's hurt: Working families, seniors on fixed incomes, anyone who depends on state-funded schools, Medicaid, or disaster relief that would be left competing for a shrinking, inflexible pot of money.

2. Property Tax Growth Limit Amendment

- Sponsor: House Republican leadership.

- Sounds like: Protecting homeowners from tax hikes.
- Actually is: A blank check. The amendment doesn't set any actual limit. It just orders the legislature to write one later, with no numbers specified yet. What it really does is take budget control away from Wilson County commissioners and the Wilson City Council, and hand that power to Raleigh Republicans, sight unseen.
- Why it's bad for N.C. and Wilson County: Local property tax is how Wilson County funds schools, the sheriff's department, and EMS. If the cap Republicans eventually write doesn't keep up with real costs, the county gets squeezed, and the first things to go are usually classroom funding and public safety staffing, not administrative overhead.
- Who's hurt: Public school students and teachers, renters (who don't get any of the promised homeowner relief but live in the same underfunded county), and anyone who relies on county emergency services.

3. Voter ID (Mail Ballot) Amendment

- Sponsor: Senate Republicans passed 30-19 on a party-line vote.
- Sounds like: Basic election security.
- Actually is: A new, unnecessary barrier aimed at exactly the voters who rely on mail ballots because in-person voting is hardest for them. Mail ballots already require signature verification, this isn't closing a fraud loophole, because there isn't one. It's the same playbook Republicans ran in 2018.
- Why it's bad for N.C. and Wilson County: About 1 in 5 Wilson County residents are 65 or older. A large share of the county is rural, far from the nearest ID office. Barton College and Wilson Community College students who vote absentee from home would also hit this new hurdle. This amendment doesn't stop fraud, it stops votes.
- Who's hurt: Seniors, voters with disabilities, rural residents without easy access to a DMV, and college students — the same groups Democracy North Carolina and voting rights advocates warned about in 2018.

REPUBLICANS TRIED, AND FAILED — WATCH FOR THESE TO COME BACK

4. Right to Work Amendment

- Sponsor: Sen. Ted Alexander (R-Cleveland)
- Sounds like: Workplace freedom.
- Actually is: A solution in search of a problem. When directly asked in committee, Republican sponsors could not name a single real threat to N.C.'s existing right-to-work law. This is about symbolism and turnout, not substance. But if it comes back and passes, it will make it permanently harder for N.C. workers to organize or bargain together, locking in some of the lowest union membership in the country. That matters for manufacturing and warehouse

workers right here in Wilson County.

5. Right to Farm Amendment

- Sponsor: Sens. Brent Jackson (R-Sampson), Lisa Barnes (R-Nash), Buck Newton (R-Wilson)
- Sounds like: Protecting family farmers.
- Actually is: Another symbolic amendment that restates a law already on the books; sponsors couldn't identify a real threat either. The real risk is how "protecting farming" language could be used down the road. It could make it harder for neighboring families and small or Black-owned farms to challenge problems caused by large corporate agricultural operations — odor, runoff, truck traffic — all under the banner of "protecting" the industry. One of its own sponsors represents Wilson County directly, so this one would hit close to home.

6. Council of State Appointment Amendment

- Sponsor: House Republican leadership.
- Sounds like: Government reform.
- Actually is: One more move in a years-long pattern: the legislature stripping power from the governor's office, no matter who holds it, in ways designed to lock in partisan control over vacancy appointments.

7. Elect SBE/Superintendent as Chair Amendment

- Sponsor: Reps. Hugh Blackwell, John Torbett, Neal Jackson, Mark Brody
- Sounds like: Giving voters more say over education.
- Actually is: A restructuring that ties State Board of Education seats to congressional districts. Those districts are drawn by the same legislature that draws gerrymandered maps. Instead of a board chosen for expertise, N.C. would get a board whose makeup depends on how the district lines are drawn, with real consequences for Wilson County Schools policy.

8. Permitless Carry Amendment

- Sponsor: Sens. Moffitt, Lazzara, Britt
- Sounds like: Protecting gun rights.
- Actually is: Elimination of the permit requirement for concealed carry, including the background check and safety training that come with it. Law enforcement voices, including Durham County Sheriff Clarence Birkhead, have warned this makes officers' jobs more dangerous. Officers can no longer assume that someone carrying concealed has passed a background check. In a rural county like Wilson, where response times are longer, that risk lands harder.

Quick Reference

- #: 1; Amendment: Income Tax Cap; Status: On ballot — VOTE NO; Sponsor Party: R
- #: 2; Amendment: Property Tax Growth Limit; Status: On ballot — VOTE NO; Sponsor Party: R
- #: 3; Amendment: Voter ID (Mail Ballots); Status: On ballot — VOTE NO; Sponsor Party: R
- #: 4; Amendment: Right to Work; Status: Stalled — watch for it; Sponsor Party: R
- #: 5; Amendment: Right to Farm; Status: Stalled — watch for it; Sponsor Party: R
- #: 6; Amendment: Council of State Appointment; Status: Stalled — watch for it; Sponsor Party: R
- #: 7; Amendment: Elect SBE/Superintendent Chair; Status: Stalled — watch for it; Sponsor Party: R
- #: 8; Amendment: Permitless Carry; Status: Stalled — watch for it; Sponsor Party: R

TAKE ACTION: Check your registration and confirm what's actually on your ballot at ncsbe.gov or the Wilson County Board of Elections. Every amendment above was written by Republicans, passed only with Republican votes where it passed at all, and every Democrat in the legislature voted against it.

Fair note: Republican sponsors describe these very differently — as tax certainty, election security, local control, and constitutional rights — and people do disagree on some of these questions (state vs. local control, permit requirements vs. gun rights). This guide reflects the Democratic Party's case against these amendments.

VOTER ACTION CHECKLIST FOR NOVEMBER 2026

1. Verify Your Registration

Check your registration status at the Wilson County Board of Elections (112 Douglas St. E, Wilson, N.C. 27893 — mail: PO Box 2121, Wilson, N.C. 27894; phone (252) 399-2836; elections@wilsoncountync.gov) or through the NCSBE Voter Search tool at [ncsbe.gov](https://www.ncsbe.gov) (<https://www.ncsbe.gov>). The registration deadline for the November 3, 2026 general election is 5 p.m., Friday, October 9, 2026. Missed it? You can still register and vote the same day during early voting (see below).

2. Know Your ID Requirements

North Carolina requires photo ID to vote in person or by mail. Acceptable forms include:

- Driver's license: N.C. driver's license or other DMV-issued ID (address doesn't need to match your registration).
- Passport: U.S. passport.
- Military / veteran ID: Military or veteran ID card.
- Tribal ID: Tribal enrollment card from a state or federally recognized tribe.
- Student / employee ID: Approved college/university student ID or government employee ID (check the current approved list at [ncsbe.gov](https://www.ncsbe.gov) — nearly 100 institutions statewide are approved through Dec. 31, 2026).
- Free voter ID: A free N.C. Voter Photo ID Card, available at the Wilson County Board of Elections office.

Don't have an accepted ID? You can still vote: complete an ID Exception Form at your polling place and cast a provisional ballot, which will count unless the county board unanimously finds the form was falsified. Expired IDs are also accepted if expired one year or less (or, if you're over 65, if the ID was valid on your 65th birthday).

3. Make a Plan to Vote

- Early Voting (Wilson County): Thursday, October 15 – Saturday, October 31, 2026. Mon–Fri: 8:00 a.m.–7:30 p.m. Weekend hours Sat. Oct. 17, and Sat. Oct. 31: 8:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m. and Sun. Oct. 25: 1:00–4:00 p.m. Same-day registration is available at any early voting site if you're not yet registered; bring proof of residency (a document with your current name and address, like a utility bill, bank statement, or paycheck).
- Early Voting Locations: You may vote at either site, regardless of your home precinct — Wilson County Board of Elections, 112 Douglas St. E, Wilson, N.C.. 27893; and American Legion Post 13, 2331 U.S. Highway 301 S, Wilson, N.C. 27893.

- Election Day: Tuesday, November 3, 2026. Polls are open 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. — if you're in line by 7:30 p.m., you can still vote. Find your assigned polling place through the NCSBE voter lookup tool, since precinct locations can change (Wilson County's Stantonburg precinct, for example, moved to Stantonburg Elementary School earlier this year).
- Vote by Mail: Any registered N.C. voter can request an absentee ballot, no excuse needed. Ballots begin mailing September 4, 2026. Request one online at votebymail.ncsbe.gov or by paper form returned to the Wilson County Board of Elections. The request deadline is 5 p.m., Tuesday, October 20, 2026, and completed ballots must be received by 7:30 p.m. on Election Day, November 3.
- Curbside voting: Available at every polling location for voters unable to enter, and voters with disabilities or literacy needs may bring an assistant of their choice or ask a poll worker for help.
- Check both sides of your ballot: many Wilson County ballots are printed front and back — judicial races and the constitutional amendments often appear on the reverse side, so don't stop after the first page.

A Few Wilson County–Specific Notes

- Restoration of rights: If you have a past felony conviction, your right to vote is automatically restored once you complete your full sentence, including probation, parole, or post-release supervision.
- Redistricting: Wilson County was redrawn from the 1st Congressional District into the 3rd District in late 2025 — double-check your sample ballot even if you've voted here before, since your federal races may look different than in past cycles.
- Confirm before you go: Your polling place and sample ballot can both be confirmed at the same NCSBE Voter Search tool: ncsbe.gov → Voter Search.

WHY YOUR CONGRESSIONAL BALLOT LOOKS DIFFERENT THIS YEAR

If you've voted in Wilson County before, you may notice a change on your 2026 ballot: you're voting for a different U.S. House seat than in past elections.

In October 2025, the North Carolina General Assembly redrew the state's congressional maps roughly halfway through the decade, a process known as mid-decade redistricting. As part of that redraw, Wilson County moved out of the 1st Congressional District and into the 3rd Congressional District, along with neighboring Greene, Lenoir, and Wayne counties. In exchange, several coastal counties (Beaufort, Carteret, Craven, Dare, Hyde, and Pamlico) moved out of the 3rd District and into the 1st.

What This Means for You

- Old representation: Wilson County is no longer represented by Rep. Don Davis (D), who represents the 1st District.
- New representation: Wilson County is now part of the seat held by Rep. Gregory Murphy (R-Greenville), who is running for reelection against Democrat Raymond E. Smith Jr. and Libertarian Daniel Cavender (see our U.S. House entry above).
- Why it happened: This shift moved the district in a more Republican-leaning direction, a deliberate outcome of how the new lines were drawn, according to independent analysts who reviewed the map.

The bottom line: if the name on your ballot for U.S. House isn't the one you remember from 2024, this is why. It's not a mistake; it reflects new district lines that took effect for the first time in the March 2026 primary and apply again in this November's general election. Everything else on your ballot (state legislature, county races, judicial seats) is based on your regular home address and is unaffected by this change.

For questions about which district you're in or to see your full sample ballot, visit ncsbe.gov and use the Voter Search tool, or contact the Wilson County Board of Elections at (252) 399-2836.

INFORMATION PAGES

Assistance for Voters with Disabilities in North Carolina

North Carolina and federal law guarantee every voter with a disability the right to vote privately, independently, and with any assistance they need. Here's what's available to Wilson County voters:

- Accessible voting equipment: Every Election Day precinct and early voting site in Wilson County must have at least one accessible voting machine that can be operated with audio controls, push buttons, or other assistive technology.
- Curbside voting: If you're unable to enter the polling place without physical assistance due to age or disability, an election official will bring a ballot to your vehicle. This is available at every Election Day polling place and early voting site — just sign an affidavit affirming your need.
- Bring your own helper: You may bring any person of your choice to help you vote — except your employer or your union agent. Family members, friends, or caregivers are all permitted.
- Ask a poll worker: If you don't have someone to bring, you can ask a poll worker for assistance, both inside the voting booth and preparing your ballot.
- Accessible absentee (mail) voting: Blind or visually impaired voters may request, mark, and return an accessible absentee ballot online through the N.C. Absentee Ballot Portal, which works with screen readers and allows a digital or typed signature.
- ID Exception Form: If a disability makes it difficult to obtain a qualifying photo ID, you can complete an ID Exception Form (also called a Reasonable Impediment Declaration) at the polls and cast a provisional ballot that still counts.

Questions, Concerns, or Accessibility Problems

- NCSBE accessibility line: (866) 522-4723 (toll-free) or (919) 814-0700, or email elections.sboe@ncsbe.gov.
- Disability Rights North Carolina: An independent advocacy organization that can help if you believe your accessibility rights were violated at the polls.
- Wilson County Board of Elections: (252) 399-2836, 112 Douglas St. E, Wilson, N.C. 27893.

Source: NCSBE — Help for Voters with Disabilities
(<https://www.ncsbe.gov/voting/help-voters-disabilities>)

Language Access Resources

Federal law (Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act) requires certain jurisdictions to provide election materials and assistance in languages other than English. Whether or not Wilson County is a covered jurisdiction for a particular language, every voter has the right to bring an assistant of their choice — except an employer or union agent — to help translate or explain the ballot.

Recursos en Español (Spanish-Language Resources)

- Formulario Nacional de Registro de Votantes por Correo: El formulario de registro de votantes de la Comisión de Asistencia Electoral de EE. UU. (EAC) está disponible en español y otros 20 idiomas.
- Guía del Votante para las Elecciones Federales: La EAC ofrece un folleto de frases comunes usadas en la administración de elecciones, disponible en español.
- Boletín "Voto 101" (Voting 101): Una guía imprimible para votantes nuevos, traducida al español y otros 19 idiomas.
- Glosario de Terminología Electoral: Casi 1,300 términos electorales traducidos al español, disponible a través de la Comisión de Asistencia Electoral (EAC).

Where to Find These Resources

- U.S. Election Assistance Commission — Language Access Resources (<https://www.eac.gov/language-access-resources>)
- NCSBE Voter Search (sample ballots, registration status) (<https://www.ncsbe.gov>)
- Wilson County Board of Elections: (252) 399-2836 — ask about interpreter availability at your polling place.

If you or someone you know would benefit from voting materials or assistance in a language other than English or Spanish, contact the Wilson County Board of Elections or the NCSBE accessibility line at (866) 522-4723 to ask what's available.

Dates to Remember — Quick Sheet

Tear out or photocopy this page and keep it on your fridge. Every date below applies to the November 3, 2026 general election in Wilson County.

Date: September 4, 2026; What Happens: Absentee (mail) ballots begin mailing to voters who have requested one.

Date: October 9, 2026 — 5:00 p.m.; What Happens: Deadline to register to vote for the general election.

Date: October 15 – October 31, 2026; What Happens: Early voting period in Wilson County. Mon-Fri, 8:00 a.m. – 7:30 p.m. Same-day registration available at any early voting site.

Date: Sat. Oct. 17, and Sat. Oct. 31; What Happens: Weekend early voting hours: 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Date: Sun. Oct. 25.; What Happens: Weekend early voting hours: 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Date: October 20, 2026 — 5:00 p.m.; What Happens: Deadline to request an absentee (mail) ballot.

Date: November 3, 2026 — 6:30 a.m.–7:30 p.m.; What Happens: Election Day. Polls open at your assigned precinct. If you're in line by 7:30 p.m., you can still vote.

Date: November 3, 2026 — by 7:30 p.m.; What Happens: Deadline for completed mail ballots to be received by the county board of elections.

Early Voting Locations

Any registered Wilson County voter may vote at either site during the early voting period — you are not limited to a site near your home precinct.

- Wilson County Board of Elections: 112 Douglas St. E, Wilson, N.C. 27893
- American Legion Post 13: 2331 U.S. Highway 301 S, Wilson, N.C. 27893

Key Contacts

- Wilson County Board of Elections: (252) 399-2836 · 112 Douglas St. E, Wilson, N.C. 27893 · elections@wilsoncountync.gov
- NCDP Voter Assistance Hotline: 1-833-868-3462 (1-833-VOTE4NC)
- Statewide voter lookup, sample ballots, registration: ncsbe.gov
- Vote by mail portal: votebymail.ncsbe.gov
- Accessibility questions: (866) 522-4723

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Plain-language definitions of terms used throughout this guide, so every Wilson County voter knows what's on the ballot.

- Absentee Ballot / Vote by Mail — A ballot requested and completed away from a polling place, then returned by mail or in person. Any registered North Carolina voter may request one — no excuse or reason is required.
- Board of Commissioners — Wilson County's governing body, made up of seven members elected by district, responsible for the county budget, property taxes, and county services such as social services, health, and public safety.
- Clerk of Superior Court — An elected county official who manages court records, probate (estate) matters, and special legal proceedings. Distinct from a judge — the Clerk oversees administration, not verdicts.
- Contested Race — An election in which two or more candidates from different parties (or otherwise opposed) appear on the general election ballot for the same seat.
- Curbside Voting — A voting option for people unable to enter a polling place due to age, illness, or disability; an election official brings a ballot to the voter's vehicle.
- District Attorney (DA) — The elected chief prosecutor for a multi-county Prosecutorial District, responsible for bringing criminal charges and directing courtroom priorities for that district.
- Early Voting — A period before Election Day (October 15–31, 2026 in Wilson County) when registered voters may cast a ballot in person at designated sites, and unregistered but eligible voters may register and vote the same day.
- ID Exception Form — A form a voter without an accepted photo ID can complete at the polls (also called a Reasonable Impediment Declaration) to cast a provisional ballot that will still be counted, absent a finding of false information.
- Incumbent — A candidate who currently holds the office being contested in that race.
- Mid-Decade Redistricting — The redrawing of election district boundaries in the middle of a ten-year census cycle, rather than only once per decade. North Carolina's congressional map was redrawn this way in October 2025, moving Wilson County from the 1st to the 3rd Congressional District.
- NCSBE — The North Carolina State Board of Elections ([ncsbe.gov](https://www.ncsbe.gov)), the state agency that oversees elections, maintains the statewide voter registration database, and publishes sample ballots and polling place information.
- Precinct — A local voting district within the county tied to a specific Election Day polling place; precinct boundaries and locations can change between elections.

- Prosecutorial District — A multi-county judicial grouping (Wilson County is part of Prosecutorial District 8, with Nash and Edgecombe Counties) served by one elected District Attorney's office.
- Provisional Ballot — A ballot cast when a voter's eligibility cannot be immediately confirmed at the polls (for example, due to an ID issue); it is counted once the county board of elections verifies eligibility.
- 287(g) Program — A federal program allowing local or state law enforcement agencies to enter agreements with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), under which trained personnel may perform certain immigration enforcement functions, most often involving individuals already in custody at a local jail.
- Tier 1 County — The most economically distressed of three tiers (Tier 1, 2, and 3) under North Carolina's county economic development ranking system, based on measures like unemployment, income, and population growth. Wilson County is classified as a "persistent" Tier 1 county.
- Uncontested Race — An election in which only one candidate (or one candidate per party, with no opposing party candidate) appears on the general election ballot, effectively deciding the outcome without a head-to-head contest.